

**History 333L**  
**U.S. Foreign Relations, 1776-1920**

Unique number 39745

Fall 2013

TTh, 11-12:30, PAI 3.02

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This course has two major objectives. First, it aims to introduce students to the history of American foreign relations from the eighteenth century to the First World War – a period too often overlooked by commentators professing expertise in world affairs. During its first century and a half, the United States established many of the patterns of thought and behavior that have characterized the nation in more recent times. Understanding these early years of America's relationship with the wider world can help us gain important insight into current dilemmas, debates, and controversies.

Second, the course aims to encourage students to think like historians. That is, it requires students to evaluate readings of different types, weigh competing interpretations of historical events, and defend their own conclusions in argumentative essays. Students will be evaluated largely on the basis of a series of such essays (both the take-home paper described at the end of this syllabus and essays written as parts of the midterm and final exams).

There are no prerequisites for the course, but students are expected to have a basic grasp of U.S. history from 1776 to 1920. Ideally, students will follow this course with History 333M, which covers U.S. foreign relations from 1920 to the present.

Requirements

1. attendance at lecture
2. midterm exam

3. final exam
4. one essay of 5-8 pages (1,200-1,600 words)

#### Required texts

H.W. Brands, *Woodrow Wilson* (2003)

Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (1985)

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (2000)

Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World from Its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (2006)

Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (1998)

Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America* (2011)

Reading packet available after September 4 at Jenn's Copy Shop, 2200 Guadalupe

#### Important notes

- The instructor will routinely hand out photocopies for use during class. These should be treated as required reading.
- Class time will occasionally be devoted to discussion. Participation is not a course requirement, but students should be aware that regular and constructive participation can improve their semester grades.
- Each student will be required to sign in at the start of each lecture period. This sign-in process will verify attendance at that day's class. Each student may miss three class periods without explanation. Each unexcused absence thereafter will result in a one-point deduction from his/her term score.
- Neither the instructor nor the teaching assistants will provide lecture notes under any circumstances.
- Students who attend class are required to arrive on time, stay for the entire session, and to obey basic rules of civility and decorum. Students may enter or leave in the middle of the class period only with permission of the instructor. Using cell phones, sending or receiving text messages, and using laptops for purposes unrelated to the course are strictly forbidden.
- Late papers will be penalized one-third of a grade (for example, from a B+ to a B or from a B- to a C+) for each day they are overdue.
- The University of Texas provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 or 471-4641.
- This syllabus and all materials presented in lectures are copyrighted by Dr. Mark A. Lawrence. No materials may be directly or indirectly published, posted to internet or intranet distribution channels, or rewritten for publication or distribution in any medium. Neither these materials nor any portion thereof may be stored in a computer except for personal and non-commercial use.
- This course does not require a textbook. However, students who would like to read a basic narrative of U.S. foreign relations may wish to consult Walter LaFeber, *The American Age* (2nd ed., 1994). Students who wish to read a basic narrative of American

history more generally may wish to consult Davidson, et al., *Nation of Nations* (any edition).

- Students must be fully aware of university rules regarding academic dishonesty. The instructor assumes full compliance throughout the semester and will rigorously enforce all university procedures in cases of violations. If you have questions about university rules and procedures, please visit <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>.
- The course will use the new UT-Austin grading system, which permits the use of pluses and minuses (A-, B+, etc.).

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

August 29: Introduction to the Course

### Part I: Securing the Republic

September 3: Ideology and Interests

READING: Kagan, introduction-chapter 1

September 5: Colonial America and the European Powers

READING: Dull, chapters 1-4

September 10: Rebellion and the Problem of Allies

READING: Dull, chapters 5-12

September 12: The French Alliance and the Treaty of Paris

READING: Dull, chapters 13-17

September 17: Institutions and Foreign Policymaking: The Articles of Confederation

READING: Dull, chapters 18-20

September 19: Institutions and Foreign Policy: The Constitution

READING: Kagan, chapter 3

September 24: The Federalist Era

READING: Kagan, chapter 4

September 26: Jefferson and Madison

READING: Kagan, chapter 5

October 1: A Second War for Independence?

READING: Kagan, chapter 6

October 3: The Monroe Doctrine

READING: Sexton, introduction-chapter 2

### Part II: The Era of Territorial Expansion

October 8: Empire-Making and the “Indian Problem”

READING: Joseph Ellis, *American Creation: Triumph and Tragedies at the Founding of the Republic*, chapter 4; Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion*, chapter 8 (reader)

October 10: Empire-Making and the Problem of Slavery

READING: Kagan, chapter 7

October 15: The Texas Revolution

READING: Kagan, chapter 8; Sexton, chapter 3

October 17: The Mexican War

READING: Kagan, chapter 9

October 22: MIDTERM

October 24: The Diplomacy of the Civil War

READING: Kagan, chapter 10; Sexton, chapter 4

### Part III: The Making of a Global Power

October 29: The Second Industrial Revolution

READING: Kagan, chapter 11; Jacobson, introduction-chapter 1

October 31: Industrial Crisis and the Economics of Empire

READING: Sexton, chapter 5; Jacobson, chapter 2

November 5: Ideological Motives of Empire

READING: Kagan, chapter 12; Jacobson, chapters 3-4

November 7: The Spanish-American War

READING: Pérez, preface-chapter 1; Sexton, chapter 6-conclusion

November 12: Varieties of Empire: Colonial Conquest

READING: Pérez, chapters 2-3

November 14: The Insular Cases (Guest lecturer: Professor Bartholomew Sparrow)

READING: Pérez, chapters 4-5

November 19: Anti-Imperialism

READING: Jacobson, chapter 5

November 21: Varieties of Empire: The Open Door

READING: Jacobson, chapter 6-conclusion

November 26: Varieties of Empire: Semi-Colonialism

READING: Brands, chapter 1

December 3: From Neutrality to Intervention

READING: Brands, chapters 2-3

December 5: America's False Start: The Collapse of Wilsonianism

READING: Brands, chapters 4-5

## ESSAY TOPICS

Each student must write ONE essay on a topic drawn from the list below. The essay should be between 1,200 and 1,600 words in length (roughly 5-8 pages of double-spaced, 12-point type). No matter which question you choose, be sure to state a clear thesis and to support your argument with specific evidence drawn from readings and lectures. Also, be sure to use either footnotes or parenthetical notes to cite all information, argumentation, and quotations drawn from your sources. Provide a title and a word count.

1. DUE SEPTEMBER 24. One of the best books on U.S. diplomacy in the Revolutionary era is entitled *The Great Improvisation* (Stacy Schiff's 2006 book on Ben Franklin). To what extent do you think that the word "improvisation" is appropriate to characterize U.S. diplomatic behavior in the period? In planning your essay, think about what might be the alternatives to "improvisation" to capture the essence of American diplomacy and how American leaders of the period would likely have understood their actions. (Rest assured you are under no obligation to consult Schiff's book for this paper.)
2. DUE OCTOBER 1. Imagine you are living in the United States in 1803 and you have just learned that your government is planning to acquire the Louisiana Territory. Write an op-ed column for your local newspaper commenting on the plan. You are free to support the acquisition, to oppose it, or to advance some other view. The key is to use what you have learned and to develop a line of argument that would have been plausible at the time. You are free to define your character as you see fit. (Are you a man or woman? An elite or a working person? White or black? Etc.) Do your best to capture the tone and syntax of the day.
3. DUE OCTOBER 17. How well has Hollywood done in depicting the Texas Revolution? Answer this question by comparing what you have learned about the history of Texas from lectures and readings with the two most celebrated films about the Alamo, the 1960 version starring John Wayne and the 2003 version starring Billy Bob Thornton. Be sure to consider how Hollywood has distorted the history of the battle and why you think it has done so. You may also wish to think about how interpretations have changed over time. Please note that these films may be borrowed from the AV library but are widely available in local video shops.
4. DUE NOVEMBER 12. Examine the political cartoons dealing with the Spanish-American War in the course reader and write an essay analyzing the contents of at least six of them. Be sure to include discussion of cartoons from both sides of the Atlantic. What do the cartoons tell us about the opinions of Spaniards, Americans, and others at the time? What major issues are raised? What symbols are used to represent the two combatants? Explore the cartoons imaginatively,

but remember that your essay requires a clearly stated and supported central argument.

5. DUE NOVEMBER 19. Imagine that an editor of a scholarly journal or national newspaper has asked you to review Louis Pérez's *The War of 1898*. Write a review that would be suitable for such a publication. You may wish to read a few reviews from recent weeks to get a feel for what a newspaper of that caliber might expect. In any case, be sure to take a clear position on the book and to write in a lively way. Among the questions you might consider addressing: What are the book's strengths and weaknesses? How well does it achieve its aims? To what extent does the book depart from the conventional wisdom about the Spanish-American War? What's new and notable in it? Do you agree with its argument?