

History 333M
U.S. Foreign Relations, 1920 to the Present
Unique #39815
Spring 2014
Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.
GDC 2.216

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 2-3:30 p.m.; Thursday, 11 a.m.- noon;
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Supplemental Instructors
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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 First World War to the present. During this period, the United States fully joined the ranks of the great powers and then, following a period of hesitation, surpassed all its rivals in exerting influence around the world. We will explore the course, causes, and consequences of this rise to power and seek to understand current dilemmas and debates within their historical context. In this way, the course provides general background on matters of crucial importance and prepares students for further study of international affairs and U.S. foreign policy.

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 about the history of U.S. foreign relations in argumentative essays. Students will be evaluated largely on the basis of a series of such essays (both a take-home paper and essays written as parts of the midterm and final exams).

There are no prerequisites for the course, but students should have a basic grasp of U.S. history from 1920 to the present.

Requirements

1. six reading quizzes (10 percent of term grade; lowest score dropped)
2. attendance and participation in SI sections (20 percent)
3. midterm exam (20 percent)
4. final exam (30 percent)
5. one essay of 1,200-1,600 words (20 percent)

Supplemental Instruction

This course has a special feature that sets it apart from other History Department lecture courses. All students will be required to attend a weekly discussion section led by one of the two Supplemental Instructors assigned to the class. These “SIs” – formally William P. Clements Jr. Teaching Fellows – are funded by the William P. Clements Jr. Center for History, Strategy, and Statecraft, a new institution at UT-Austin focused on the study of international affairs and foreign policy.

During the first week of class, each student will be assigned to an “SI section.” Students are required to attend that section thereafter, though they are allowed two absences. Beyond two absences, each missed session will result in a two-point deduction from a student’s term grade.

Sections will focus on a variety of topics across the term. Most of the time, sections will be devoted to discussion of readings and lectures. At other points, we will focus on study skills, paper-writing techniques, or preparation for exams.

Required texts

Eugene Burdick and Harvey Wheeler, *Fail-Safe* (1962)

Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote* (1993)

Thomas L. Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum, *That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back* (2011)

Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* (2008)

Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917-1953* (1994)

James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet* (2004)

Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (2009)

Photocopied reading packet (available at Jenn’s Copy & Binding, 2200 Guadalupe, and on Blackboard)

Important notes

- The instructor may hand out photocopies for use during class. These should be treated as required reading.
- During lecture, the professor will occasionally open up the floor for discussion. Participation is not a course requirement, but students should be aware that regular and constructive participation can improve their semester grades. (Participation in the SI sessions is a course requirement.)

- Quizzes will be given during the first 10 minutes of the class periods in which they take place. Students arriving late will not be allowed to take the quiz, and there will be no makeups under any circumstances. Each student's lowest quiz score will not count toward her/his term grade.
- Each quiz will cover the reading for the day on which the quiz is given, as well as the readings and lectures from the two previous class sessions.
- Neither the professor nor the Supplemental Instructors 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.
- 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), or George C. Herring's *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (2008). The latter is available online through PCL. 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) or another introductory textbook.
- 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 course will use the new UT-Austin grading system, which permits the use of pluses and minuses (A-, B+, etc.).
- 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. Students requiring special accommodations should raise this issue with the professor at the beginning of the term.
- 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.
- 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>.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Setting the Stage

January 14 Introduction

January 16 Ideas and Interests: U.S. Foreign Relations before 1920

READING: Friedman & Mandelbaum, chapters 1-3; document 1

The 1920s

January 21 The Collapse of Wilsonianism and the “Return to Normalcy”

READING: Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 to 2000*, pp. 275-333 (reader); document 2

January 23 Conflicting Impulses

READING: Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945*, chapter 8 (reader); Leffler, preface-chapter 1; document 3

Isolation and Intervention

January 28 The Great Depression and “Isolationism” [QUIZ 1]

READING: Rosenberg, chapter 9 (reader); document 4

January 30 Overcoming Isolation

READING: Kennedy, 333-343 (reader); Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, chapter 15 (reader); document 5

The Second World War

February 4 The Rise of a Superpower

READING: Kennedy, 347-372 (reader); Thompson, preface-chapter 2; document 6

February 6 The Collapse of the U.S.-Soviet Alliance

READING: Leffler, chapter 2; Kissinger, chapter 16 (reader); document 7

The Early Cold War

February 11 Years of Crisis [QUIZ 2]

READING: Leffler, chapter 3; Thompson, chapters 3-6; document 8

February 13 NSC-68 and the Korean War

READING: Leffler, chapter 4; Thompson, chapters 7-10; document 9

Strategies of Containment

February 18 The New Look

READING: Burdick & Wheeler, chapters 1-10; document 10

February 20 To the Brink: Berlin and Cuba

READING: Thompson, chapter 11; Burdick & Wheeler, chapters 11-20; document 11

The Nationalist Challenge

February 25 Nationalism, Decolonization, and the Cold War [QUIZ 3]

READING: Burdick & Wheeler, chapters 21-23; Lawrence, chapters 1-2; document 12

February 27 Into the Quagmire

READING: Lawrence, chapters 3-5; Thompson, chapters 12-13; document 13

The Vietnam War

March 4 MIDTERM

March 6 The American Failure in Vietnam

READING: Lawrence, chapters 6-8; document 14

The 1970s

March 18 Coping with Setbacks at Home and Abroad

READING: Thompson, chapter 14; Mann, introduction-chapter 3; document 15

March 20 The Rise and Fall of Henry Kissinger

READING: Thompson, chapter 15; Mann, chapter 4-5; document 16

Confrontation Renewed

March 25 The Carter Experiment and the Reagan Revolution [QUIZ 4]

READING: Thompson, chapter 16; Mann, chapter 6; Danner, chapters 1-3; document 17

March 27 The “Second Cold War” (Guest lecturer: Simon Miles)

READING: Danner, chapters 4-7; Mann, chapters 7-10; document 18

The End of an Era

April 1 Confrontations in the Third World (Guest lecturer: Blake Scott)

READING: Danner, chapters 8-9

April 3 Reagan, Gorbachev, and the End of the Cold War

READING: Thompson, chapter 17-epilogue; Mann, chapter 11; document 19

The Post-Cold War Decade

April 8 The Search for Post-Cold War Priorities [QUIZ 5]

READING: Mann, chapters 12-13; document 20

April 10 Enlargement and Indecision: Clinton Years

READING: Mann, chapters 14-15; document 21

The Return of History

April 15 September 11

READING: Mann, chapters 16-19; document 22

April 17 Neoconservatism, the Bush Doctrine, and Iraq

READING: Mann, chapter 20-conclusion; document 23

The War on Terror

April 22 The Iraq War [QUIZ 6]

READING: Friedman & Mandelbaum, chapters 4-7; document 24

April 24 The “Global War on Terror”

READING: Friedman & Mandelbaum, chapters 8-10; document 25

Contemporary Challenges

April 29 The Struggle for a New Vision

READING: Friedman & Mandelbaum, chapters 11-13; document 26

May 1 Contemporary Dilemmas in Historical Context

READING: Friedman & Mandelbaum, chapters 14-16

ESSAY TOPICS

Each student must write ONE essay on a topic drawn from the list of five below. The essay should be between 1,200 and 1,600 words in length (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, even for the “role play” papers that ask you to assume the persona of a individual in the past. Please provide a title, bibliography, and a word count.

1. (DUE February 6.) Imagine it is September 1939, just after the outbreak of war in Europe. You are a member of the Senate participating in a debate over whether to relax the Neutrality Acts regulating trade with belligerent powers. Your challenge is to write a brief speech laying out your opinion on the matter. Write your paper as that speech. You may choose any position you wish (including one that you may not endorse with the benefit of hindsight). The important thing is to make an argument that would have been plausible at the time.
2. (DUE February 27.) Watch any TWO of the following movies from the early 1960s: “On the Beach,” “Fail-Safe,” and “Dr. Strangelove.” Write an essay comparing and contrasting the films. You are free to write about any issue(s) that you find especially interesting or important, but be sure to develop a coherent argument and to support your point with specific evidence from the films. You may wish to consider the films’ depictions of nuclear weapons, their dangers, and the individuals who control them. Additionally, you may address the novel version of *Fail-Safe*, but be sure to keep your focus on the films.
3. (DUE March 25.) Imagine that it is January 1969, and you are a columnist for a major American newspaper such as the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*. Your assignment is to write an op-ed advising the incoming Nixon administration how to respond to the severe setbacks and problems that have afflicted the nation – especially its international position – over the previous three or four years. How would you advise the president to handle U.S. foreign policy in light of problems in Vietnam and elsewhere?
4. (DUE APRIL 8.) Evaluate Mark Danner’s claim that the story of the massacre at El Mozote should be viewed as “a central parable of the Cold War” (p. 10). To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? In considering your answer, be sure to decide what you think Danner means by this statement and what he sees as the defining features of the Cold War as a whole. Do you agree with his judgments?

5. (DUE April 24.) Many commentators have labeled the Bush Doctrine a “radical” departure in U.S. foreign relations – a set of ideas, in short, with little precedent in the long flow of American policymaking. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this assertion? In considering your answer, think about the history of U.S. foreign relations all the way back to 1920. If you feel comfortable addressing earlier phases of U.S. history as well, you are free to do so.