

**21:512:298:01      *HISTORY OF AMERICAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
II: FROM WORLD WAR ONE TO THE “WAR ON  
TERROR”***

*Tuesday/Thursday 2.30-3.50pm, Conklin 342. SPRING 2015*

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**Office hours** Tuesday 1.30-2.30pm; Thursday 4.30-5.30pm; other times by appointment

**Course Description**

The twentieth century has frequently been described as the “American Century.” After World War I, the US became, first, one of several great powers and after 1945 one of only two superpowers. With the collapse of the USSR, the US found itself the world’s single most powerful state. What propelled the United States into this position, and how long can America expect to enjoy global primacy? Has it, perhaps, already ceased to do so?

This class will consider enduring debates about the US as a global power. Did America rise to pre-eminence on the world stage reluctantly or aggressively? Are there enduring tensions between isolationism and interventionism? Is American power predominantly economic, military or cultural? Does the US discharge a unique democratizing mission, bringing freedom to the oppressed and delivering aid to the needy? Or is America better understood as an imperial power, structuring a world system in its own image and in line with its own interests?

These questions lie at the heart of our examination of US foreign relations from World War I to the present day. The key aim of the course is to encourage critical thinking about what the US is and does in the world: how Americans understand this country’s world role, and how others in turn perceive US objectives. Over the course of the semester, we will consider the nature and variety of “foreign relations” engaged and practised by the US: economic, military, diplomatic and cultural. “Foreign relations” enmesh all of us—not just diplomats, states-people, and soldiers—and are inextricably linked to domestic politics and culture. The course makes use of film material to highlight the cultural dimensions of politics within and across the boundaries of the United States.

Readings comprise primary source materials and historians’ contending analyses of the motives, dynamics, and consequences of America’s global actions and interactions.

**Class Format**

This class will comprise elements of both lecture and discussion. The aim of the classes is to provide a framework for understanding key issues in US foreign relations; to analyse primary sources; and to explore debates among historians over the dynamics that explain US foreign policy decisions and their repercussions. As an important aspect of class is *group discussion* this makes it especially important that you read the specified materials before class. The emphasis is on *reading closely*, rather than reading a lot of material quickly.

## Learning Outcomes:

- ^ students will develop an understanding of the overall course of US foreign relations from 1914 to the present
- ^ students will hone critical thinking and reasoning skills, learning to make informed arguments, based on evidence, about both particular historical episodes and about the broad contours of US foreign relations
- ^ students will understand the difference between primary and secondary sources and be able to appreciate how historians use the form to substantiate particular claims about the past, cultivating their own skills in reading closely and critically
- ^ students will improve their oral communication skills by participation in small group exercises, "team quizzes," class debates and ongoing interaction in class, amongst peers and with the instructor
- ^ students will hone their writing skills by producing regular short response papers, a longer essay and exam questions, receiving detailed feedback from the instructor with a view to improving performance

## Assessment:

- 1) Mid-term exam (20%)
- 2) Response papers and in-class writing exercises (40%)
- 3) Class participation (10%)
- 4) Final exam (30%)

## Homework assignments, quizzes, and exams:

Over the course of the semester there will be a number of **short response papers** based on the materials studied in/for class. These will count towards your overall grade for the class. You should take them seriously, handing in thoughtful, well-written responses on the day due. No e-mail attachments!!

Over the semester you can have two "free passes"-- days when you don't submit a response paper. However, failure to submit three of the response papers will result in your grade being reduced.

## Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):

I take all forms of cheating, including plagiarism, very seriously indeed. The minimum penalty for students who engage in any form of academic dishonesty will be award of an **F grade** for the class. Serious violations will be referred for further disciplinary action, which could result in suspension from the university.

You will be required to sign an Honor Pledge affirming that your written work is your own, produced in conformity with academic integrity standards.

For the Rutgers' Academic Integrity Policy, please see:  
<http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/oas/ai>

## **Attendance Policy:**

Rutgers University requires students to attend class. If you miss more than one class for medical or other valid reasons, you should bring evidence (e.g. a doctor's note) to exonerate your absence. **Four or five unexcused absences from class will result in your overall grade for the class being lowered (eg from a B+ to a B). Six absences will result in failure of the class.**

Please take due note of the following guidelines for respectful classroom behavior:

### **\*PUNCTUALITY\***

Attendance records will be taken within the first five minutes of class starting. Please be punctual. Parking at Rutgers can be horrible, but it's nevertheless very disruptive when the first 20 minutes of class is punctuated by a string of late-comers arriving.

### **\*NO CELLPHONES; i-PODS; i-PHONES, CELL- or POD-LIKE DEVICES!!\***

They're also very distracting—to everyone, including the user. So, please turn them off, keep them off the desk, and wait until after class to resume use.

## **COURSE TEXT:**

The course text is Dennis Merrill and Thomas G. Paterson (eds), *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations: Vol. II, Since 1914* (Wadsworth/Cengage, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2009). ISBN-13 978-0-547-21823-6

It's vital that you acquire the SEVENTH edition. Earlier editions contain different readings, so you'll be adrift if you don't have the newest version of the book.

### **\*PLEASE BRING THE BOOK WITH YOU TO EVERY CLASS\***

## **Office hours/communication:**

I hold twice-weekly office hours. Please feel free to make use of them. If the material isn't making complete sense to you, we went over something too quickly in class, or you want to talk about the assignments or exams, please let me know. You may schedule an appointment if the office hours don't fit your schedule.

Please remember that it's much better to air your concerns at an early stage than to have the mid-term grade reveal that something's seriously awry. The chances are that if you haven't understood something in class or in the reading, others haven't either. You shouldn't feel abashed about saying so. That way, you will also help the instructor figure out whether the pace is too fast, and if key concepts or historical developments require more discussion time.

## Syllabus

### Week 1

Tues 01/20 Introduction

Thurs 01/22 **US Foreign Relations: an overview**

Start reading Merrill & Paterson, ch.1

### Week 2

Tues 01/27 **Approaching the Study of US Foreign Relations II**

Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.1. (pp.1-30)

Work due: Writing assignment due: a one-page response outlining which of the approaches (world-systems, gender, race etc) you found most enlightening, explaining what your preferred essay explains that the others don't.

Thurs 01/29 **US entry into World War I**

Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.2 (pp.33-41)

### Week 3

Tues 02/03 **Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations**

Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.2 (pp.41-69)

Thurs 02/05 **The Interwar Years: Isolationism and/or Expansionism?**

Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.3

Work due: One-page response paper: drawing on both the documents and the essays in the latter part of the chapter, state whether you believe the US is best characterized as "isolationist," "interventionist," or "unilateralist" (or some combination of these). Refer to both the primary and secondary sources in making your argument.)

### Week 4

Tues 02/10 **US entry into World War II**

Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.4

Thurs 02/12 **World War II**

Film screening: *The Battle of Russia*

Reading: start Merrill & Paterson, ch. 5 (documents)

Warren B. Walsh, "What the American People Think of Russia,"

*Public Opinion Quarterly* 8, iv (Winter, 1944-45): 513-22

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/pdfplus/2745305.pdf>

### Week 5

Tues 02/7 **World War II: Defeating the Axis, Planning the Peace**

Reading: Finish Merrill & Paterson, ch.5

Work due: Based on both the Capra film viewed in class and the Walsh article, discuss how Americans' views of the USSR changed-- and were

encouraged to change-- during WWII. How does Capra encourage feelings of empathy, and how good a job do you think he does?

Thurs 02/19 **Origins of the Cold War I**  
Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.6 (pp.186-205)

Week 6

Tues 02/24 **Origins of the Cold War II**  
Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.6 (pp.205-32)  
Work due: Preparation for in-class debate. Prepare to argue either the orthodox, revisionist or revisionist case, based on both the primary and secondary sources included in ch.6.

Thurs 02/26 **Paul Robeson's Cold War**  
Short readings: See BlackBoard for readings from Robeson and contemporary coverage of the Peekskill incident

Week 7

Tues 03/03 **The Korean War**  
Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch. 7  
Work due: Based on both the readings on Robeson and the film clip shown in class, discuss why Robeson chose not to denounce the USSR despite extreme pressure. What does Robeson's subsequent treatment tell us about the "domestic" Cold War in the US?

Thurs 03/05 **The United States and the Middle East: the 1940s and 1950s**  
Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch. 9 (docs, 1-6, pp.315-27; essay 1, 333-42)

Week 8

Tues 03/10 Review for mid-term (covering material up to & including week 6)

Thurs 03/12 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 9 ***SPRING BREAK!***

Week 10

Tues 03/24 **The Cuban Missile Crisis**  
Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.10  
Work due: Write a one-page response paper, in preparation for in-class debate, outlining the motives of either Washington, Moscow or Havana throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis (including the decision to place missiles in Cuba, their discovery, the diplomatic stand-off and its ultimate resolution)

Thurs 03/26 **The Vietnam War I**  
Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.11

Week 11

Tues 03/31 **The Vietnam War II: *Hearts and Minds*** (1974)

Thurs 04/02 **The Vietnam War III: The War at Home**  
Reading: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Vietnam  
[http://stanford.edu/group/King/publications/speeches/Beyond\\_Vietnam.pdf](http://stanford.edu/group/King/publications/speeches/Beyond_Vietnam.pdf)

Work due: 2pp [counts for double credit!]

Choice of topic: Option a) Listen to Dr. Martin Luther King's Riverside speech on the War and read Senator William Fulbright's "Arrogance of Power" speech (in the textbook). Compare and contrast the nature of the two men's criticisms of the war. Which speech do you find more persuasive, and why?

Option b) With reference to Peter Davis's film and the contemporary reviews of it, discuss how Davis went about the business of trying to show Americans what they had done both in and to Vietnam. How persuasive do you find his critique of why the United States went to war in Asia and how it fought there? Back up your argument with reference to specific scenes from the film.

Week 12

Tues 04/07 **Nixon, Kissinger and Détente**  
Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.12

Thurs 04/09 ***The Trials of Henry Kissinger***  
"Was Kissinger a War Criminal?" Discuss.

Week 13

Tues 04/14 **The Rise and Fall of the Cold War**  
Reading: Merrill & Paterson, ch.13

Work due: Having read the historians' essays in chapter one, offer a one page verdict as to who or what you believe deserves most credit for having ended the cold war. (Reagan? Gorbachev? Social movements in eastern Europe?)

Thurs 04/16 **Iran, Iraq, and the United States (1979-99)**  
Readings on BB

Week 14

Tues 07/21 **Islamic Radicalization/“anti-Americanism”**

Merrill & Paterson, ch. 14, docs 1&2, pp.554-58; doc.6,  
pp.565-67

Usama Makdisi, “Anti-Americanism in the Arab World: An  
Interpretation of a Brief History,” *Journal of American History*, vol.  
89 (Sept. 2002), pp.538-557

<http://www.historycooperative.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/journals/jah/89.2/makdisi.html>

Work due: With reference to Bush's "Why Do They Hate Us?" speech and Makdisi's article, offer a one-page paper offering your critical response to Bush's remarks. (Why did Bush frame the issue this way? What do you make of his argument that envy and hypocrisy fuelled the attacks of 9/11? How persuasive do you find Makdisi's counter-argument?)

Thurs 04/23 **The “War on Terror” I: The Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan**

Merrill & Paterson, ch.14; docs 4&5, pp.560-65; essays by Gaddis and Herring, pp.578-94

Week 15

Tues 04/28 **The War on Terror II**

Laura Poitras' *My Country, My Country Film* (2006) screening & discussion

Thurs 04/30 Review for final exam.

Work due: Based on both the film viewed in class and on the readings, discuss why the war in Iraq failed to deliver the quick and clean victory anticipated by Washington, and why hostility and misunderstanding quickly escalated between Iraqis and Americans.

**FINAL EXAM TUESDAY MAY 12, 3-6pm**