

Syllabus, US Foreign Affairs I

1. Course Information

21:512:297

Saturdays 12:30 to 3:45 in Conklin 446

United States Foreign Affairs I

Rutgers University Newark

We will survey the interaction of the United States with the rest of the world, considering perceived national interests, political culture, domestic politics, military power, and diplomatic arrangements.

These are our learning outcomes:

Task	Desired Learning Outcome
Assigned Readings	familiarity with use of primary sources, especially the connections between the author's goals and his or her arguments and his or her method of argumentation
Lectures and Debates	basic knowledge of US foreign policies from the relevant era, recognition of some common interpretations of those policies, and ability to engage critically with others who often do not share the same interpretations of events
Research Essay	skills in synthesizing and communicating historical information, constructing sound arguments, and using the English language demonstrably well

2. Instructor Information

Ray Ojserkis, PhD

ray.ojserkis@gmail.com

Office Hours on Thursdays, 2:30-3:30, Conklin 326

3. Grading Policy

Attend class. Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

These are the graded components of your course:

Unannounced Reading Quizzes	25%
Debate Notes	Cancels two lowest reading quiz grades.
Midterm Exam	25%
Final (non-cumulative) Exam	25%
Research Essay	25%

Quizzes

If you're doing the assigned reading, you will almost certainly pass the quizzes. If you are absent or tardy your score for a quiz will be an F unless the absence is excusable. According to the Rutgers catalog, "The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions." Documentation will be required.

Debate

We will discuss the details of the debate in class, and collectively agree on topics and teams.

Exams

Take the exams in the designated session. If you miss an exam for any reason other than those specified in the Rutgers catalog, you will lose a full grade on your make-up exam.

Research Essay

Your research essay will address one question from a list of topics that I will post on the course page in Blackboard.

Your research essay is due on or before Friday, December 11th. We don't have class that day, and you will email me your essay as an attachment (not in the body of the email, please), in MS Word.

I call the essay a "research essay" to emphasize that the quality of your essay is largely dependent upon the quality of your research. Use at least four scholarly articles or published books. The phrase "at least" means you are allowed and encouraged to use more than four sources.

Cite your sources wherever you rely on them, using footnotes, parenthetical notes or end notes. Be very specific when citing a source, using either the Chicago, APA, or MLA format throughout. For details, please consult the [Rutgers Library Guide](#). Cite a source every time you make use of someone's ideas. Failure to do so will result in an F grade for plagiarism.

The length of the essay should be 2,500 to 4,000 words.

4. Classes

Class sessions will be used for examinations and lectures. For each of the topics listed in the schedule below, I will review terms on a handout that I upload to Blackboard at the start of class. Some of these handouts will include primary reading in addition to that assigned below.

Learning can be a collaborative process, and I will involve the class in discussions. Never feel that your comments or questions aren't appreciated.

5. Primary Sources

Primary sources are first-hand accounts, often created by participants or witnesses of events, and sometimes created by first-recorders of events. Examples include, but aren't limited to, memoirs, speeches, documents, data, polls, and contemporary newspaper accounts. Secondary sources are sources created by people who didn't participate or witness events, but often have the benefit of perspective, and typically draw from a variety of sources to create a nuanced and complex history that can account for multiple interpretations. Examples include history books and lectures.

We'll try to balance the lectures (which are secondary sources) by focusing almost exclusively on primary sources for our out-of-class reading. We will discuss many primary sources in class. If you think it will be difficult to read from the screen in the front of our room, bring printed copies or a laptop that is Internet-accessible.

6. Statement of Academic Integrity

For each exam, and on your research essay, you must agree in writing to the following:

"On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination/essay."

Tentative Calendar

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
	Sep 5	No Class – Labor Day weekend	
1	Sep 12	Foreign Policies of the new nation (1776 to 1795) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efforts to bring more colonies into the union • search for recognition and allies • foreign policy under the Articles and Constitution 	n/a
2	Sep 19	The US and the Napoleonic Wars (1795 to 1815) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neutrality arguments • Louisiana Purchase, reaction to Haitian Revolution • War of 1812 	B F Bache, letters defending the French Revolution, 1792 and 1793 Jay Treaty, 1795 G Washington, Farewell Address, 1796 (Hint: you are only responsible for the part from “Observe good faith and justice . . .” to the end.)
3	Sep 26	US as emerging continental power (1803 to 1845) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attitudes towards American Indians and land • Seminole Wars • Indian Wars of the Midwest (also select debate topics and teams)	T Jefferson, Message to House of Representatives [concerning American Indians], 1803 Tecumseh, speech to Osage, 1811 J Street letter to Illinois Governor on “Indian Affairs,” 1832 (I have placed a PDF on your Blackboard home page, rather than using a link.)
4	Oct 3	US relations with eastern hemisphere (1803 to 1860) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbary Wars • “Holy Alliance” and Monroe Doctrine • Perry’s mission to Japan 	Treaty of Peace, Signed in Algiers, 1815 J Monroe, The Monroe Doctrine, 1823 Treaty of Amity and Commerce Between the United States and Japan, 1858
5	Oct 10	Debate (start)	Draft debate notes.
6	Oct 17	Debate (finish, and review for exam)	Prepare questions to ask in our review for the midterm.
7	Oct 24	Midterm Exam	Study.

8	Oct 31	US as dominant power on the continent (1845 – 1860) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> possible origins of “manifest destiny” ideas war with Mexico negotiating the Canadian border 	J L O’Sullivan, Great Nation of Futurity, 1839 J K Polk, Special Message to Congress on Mexican Relations, 1846 S Chamberlain, Recollections of Fall of Monterrey, 1846
9	Nov 7	Civil War Diplomacy (1861 to 1865) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> foreign policies differences in lead-up to war isolating the Confederacy diplomatically Emancipation Proclamation as foreign policy 	1861 Harper’s cartoon on Slidell-Mason Affair (Hint: also read the commentary by Kennedy below) R Cobden, a British Member of Parliament, letters to US Senator C Sumner, 1861-62 (I have placed a PDF on your Blackboard home page, rather than using a link.) A Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, 1863
10	Nov 14	From continental power to world power (1865 to 1898) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> end of treaty-making with American Indians Alaska purchase, Hawaii annexation naval buildup and war with Spain 	Chief Young Joseph, An Indian’s View of Indian Affairs, 1879 A T Mahan, The United States Looking Outward, 1890 NY Times, editorial on sinking of USS Maine, 1898
11	Nov 21	Formal Empire and occupations (1899 to 1916) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> colonial war in Philippines and US empire in Asia “Open Door” in China and Panama Canal formal and informal empire in Caribbean basin 	J Hay, First Open Door Note, 1899 W J Bryan, The Paralyzing Influence of Imperialism, 1900 R Lansing and W Wilson correspondence on sending US troops into Mexico, 1916
	Nov 28	No Class – Thanksgiving break	Relax. Eat. Spend time with your family.
12	Dec 5	First World War (1917 to 1918) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilson’s efforts at peace negotiations causes of US entry US military role 	In the American Ambulance Field Service, 1916 Text of the Holtzendorff Memo, 1917 (Hint: Read the information at the top of the page, to give you some background, and then read the text of the memo.) W Wilson, Address to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War Against Germany, 1917
	Dec 11*	Research Essay Due	Wikipedia entry on plagiarism (read before submitting essay)
	Dec 19	Final Exam (11:45am, in our regular classroom)	n/a

*We do not have class this day.