

The U.S. and World Power
HIST 387: 011/HIST 389: 004
Fall Semester, 2017
Sam Lebovic

Class Details

Time: Tu/Thu: 1:30-2:45 pm.

Location: Krug Hall 210

Office Hours: Thursday, 3-4, or by appt

Contact Details

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Office: Robinson Hall B 375C



Time Magazine, May 15 1950

Course Description

Was America's rise as a global superpower a force for good or for ill? How did America's global relations shape the modern world, and how did they transform American politics and culture at home? Is America still a world power today? This course surveys America's foreign relations from the late nineteenth century to the present in order to understand the complex and controversial history of America's international role. We will cover traditional topics in the history of foreign relations – such as wars and diplomacy– as well as international cultural and economic relations. The aim of the course is to see America's global role as a political and moral problem – ever present but constantly evolving – and to understand the creative and destructive ways in which Americans have made sense of their relations with the rest of the world. We will also endeavor to understand America and Americans as subject to global forces – what we would now call globalization – that were not always under their control. Through close readings of primary and secondary sources, we will explore such topics as the World Wars, the Cold War, the War on Terror, imperialism and decolonization, international law, cultural globalization, and transnational commerce.

Learning Goals

In this course, students will:

- Become familiar with the history of the United States' global relations, including basic events, trends, and developments.
- Demonstrate understanding of global patterns and processes, and of the place of the U.S. within them.
- Through studying moral and political controversies about U.S. foreign policy, identify and articulate one's own values about the role of the U.S. in the world, and reflect on how those values shape their interactions and relations with others. (*)
- Demonstrate understanding of the interconnectedness, difference, and diversity of a global society, and how the patterns of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within global societies. (*)
- Through close reading and comparison of a variety of sources, explore the history of U.S. understandings of its responsibilities within global society, including criticisms of the role of the U.S., and reflect on the development of contemporary notions of individual and collective responsibilities within a global society. (*)
- Think critically about the relationship between politics, economics, and culture in both domestic and global contexts, and about the nature of the U.S. foreign policy.
- Critically analyze, in both essays and classroom discussion, a range of primary and secondary sources making arguments about the role of the U.S. in the world, and about global interconnectedness.

* = Fulfills Global Understanding Requirement for Mason Core (for those registered for HIST 387)

Class Requirements

Readings for the course are a selection of primary sources and academic articles. You must read the articles listed for each class *before* class so that we can discuss them collectively.

If you have no previous background in this subject, I would recommend reading relevant sections of an introductory text alongside our readings: Walter Lafeber's *American Age*; George C. Herring's *From Colony to Superpower*; or Robert D. Schulzinger's *U.S. Diplomacy Since 1900*.

Class outlines will be posted as word documents on the course website by 5pm on the day prior to class. They are designed to provide a broad overview of the day's class and to help you take notes during class—printing or downloading them prior to class is recommended. They are not summaries of the readings or my lecture, and will not help you to make up missed classes.

1) Participation (15% of final grade)

Participation is essential to the success of this class as well as your success in it. I will not lecture a great deal; instead we will discuss the readings and issues in the course as a group. In the first place, then, you should feel free to ask me questions at any point. And you must come to class having completed the reading assignment for the day and ready to talk about the arguments and ideas in the texts. The better you read the class materials, the better the conversation, and the better the conversation, the better the class. Come to class with questions about the readings (including sections or ideas that you found to be unclear or confusing), comments and thoughts about their arguments (including their strengths and weaknesses), and notes on how these readings connect to the themes of the course and other readings in the semester.

During discussions, I expect everyone to respect the contributions, questions, and comments of others – disagreements are great, but they must be expressed respectfully and thoughtfully.

The lectures and discussions are designed to help you learn, and I expect you to take advantage of them. There is no formal penalty for missing a class, out of respect to you, but missing numerous classes will reduce your participation grade and will inevitably have an impact on the quality of your preparation for the assessments.

In class, I expect you to show courtesy to me and your fellow students – please turn your cellphones off, please use laptops only for taking class notes and accessing readings, and please do not arrive late or leave early. If you need to leave early on a particular day, are waiting on an urgent call etc., please bring this up with me before class begins. If students are using laptops for anything other than accessing readings or taking class notes, I reserve the right to ban laptop use and require students to bring printed copies of the reading to class.

You must bring copies of the readings to class so we can refer to them during our discussion (e-copies are completely fine).

2) 3 Mini-exams (15% of final grade, combined) – Sep 28, Nov 7, Dec 7.

On three occasions we will have twenty-minute mini-exams in class. The format for these mini-exams will be identical – there will be five short-answer questions, of which you must answer four. Each question will be worth 2 points. The questions will ask you to identify and explain the significance of central ideas, developments, and events in the history of American global relations. To prepare for these exams, you should revise both your lecture notes and the readings in consultation with my class outlines.

Each mini-exam will examine only the material we have covered since the previous exam (i.e., they are not cumulative).

Sample short questions:

What was the Platt Amendment, and why was it significant?

Who was Aguinaldo, and why was he significant?

Name and briefly describe 2 of America's international interventions in the 1890s.

3) First Paper (15% of final grade) DUE in class on Oct 17**4) Second Paper (30% of final grade) DUE in class on Nov 30**

Both papers will ask you critically analyze some of the primary sources we have read in class. I will distribute the list of questions (you will have options) and more detailed instructions in advance of each assignment. But to help you prepare for this assignment as you are doing your class reading pay attention to broad themes and developments in the course and our discussion, and think comparatively about the readings. How do they fit together? Where do they agree and disagree? What connections or contradictions do you notice? What assumptions do they share? The essays will ask you to make an argument about the material for the course, so the more engaged you are with the course and the readings all semester, the easier this task will be.

Papers will be due in class, in hard copy.

5) Take home exam (25% of final grade) DUE Dec 14, by 5pm

The final for this course will be a take-home exam, issued on the last day of class. From a selection of questions that I provide, you will write one essay that makes an over-arching argument about the history of the media and that synthesizes the course material. We will discuss the exam further towards the end of the semester, and we will devote a portion of the final class to review. The paper needs to be emailed to be (slebovic@gmu.edu) as a word doc by the due date.

There will be no final written exam during the scheduled exam period.

Textbooks

There is one book required for this course:

1. Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*, Penguin Classics, 2004, 978-0143039020

All other readings for the class are available as pdfs on the course site on Blackboard (<https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>)

Make-Up Exams and Extensions

If you cannot attend an exam for any reason you must contact me **before** the exam begins. If you miss an exam without contacting me in advance, you will receive a zero for the assignment. If it is impossible for you to make an exam, speak to me well in advance.

Essays are due in class on the day they are due. I will not accept late papers, and will only grant extensions in advance, and on a case-by-case basis.

In general, if something happens in your life to interfere with your work for this course, please inform me as soon as possible so we can work together to make sure you stay on track to succeed in the class.

On Academic Integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity (<http://oai.gmu.edu/>) for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions.

You should familiarize yourself with the Honor Code, which is available at: <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/masons-honor-code/>.

If you have any questions, concerns or confusion about this policy during the semester, please bring them directly to me – I'll be happy to help, and it is better to be safe than sorry.

Communications

Students in this class need to check their GMU email accounts regularly throughout the semester – I will rely on the mailtool in blackboard to communicate all announcements, such as changes to the syllabus or to class meetings.

I will endeavor to respond to all emails within one working-day of receiving them. I am regularly away from my mail in the evenings and on the weekends, so while I *will* respond to your mail, I may not do so instantaneously. (I generally deal with my email between 3 and 5 in the afternoon.) I will check and respond to email more regularly in the immediate lead-up to exams and assignments in order to handle more urgent questions.

Please feel free to stop by my office hours if you want to discuss anything related to the course or your studies. If your schedule is tight, you are welcome to email me so that we can arrange an appointment at a particular time. Throughout the semester, I am also more than happy to meet by appointment if you cannot make my office hours – just send me an email or speak to me after class.

Special Accommodations

If any of these course policies pose a particular hardship for you, please come and speak to me directly.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Tue, 29 Aug Introduction

Thu, 31 Aug When did America Become a World Power?

Week 2

Tue, 5 Sep American Imperialism

William McKinley, "Decision to Occupy the Philippines" (1898)

"Aguinaldo's Case Against the United States," *North American Review* (1899)

Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life" (1899)

William James, "The Philippines Tangle" (1899)

Thu, 7 Sep Empire and Race

Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (1899)

H.T. Johnson, "The Black Man's Burden" (1899)

Letters from African-American soldiers in the Philippines

Benjamin Tillman, "Address to the U.S. Senate" (1899)

Week 3

Tue, 12 Sep Hemispheric Power

The Platt Amendment (1901)

Theodore Roosevelt, "Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine" (1904)

William Howard Taft, "Dollar Diplomacy" (1912)

John Reed "What About Mexico?" (1914)

Robert Lansing and Woodrow Wilson, Letters on Mexican Revolution (1916)

Thu, 14 Sep World War 1

Woodrow Wilson, "Declaration of Neutrality" (1914)

Helen Keller, "Strike Against War" (1916)

Woodrow Wilson, "Declaration of War" (1917)

Randolph Bourne, "War is the Health of the State" (1918)

Week 4

Tue, 19 Sep CLASS CANCELLED (I'm giving talks in Oklahoma & Nashville)

Thu, 21 Sep Post-War Visions

Woodrow Wilson, "The Fourteen Points" (1918)

Selections from debate about the League of Nations

Week 5

Tue, 26 Sep Isolationism?

Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Restriction of Immigration" (1891)

James Weldon Johnson, "Self-Determining Haiti" (1920)

"Trade Follows the Film," *Saturday Evening Post* (1925)

Manuel Ugarte, *The Destiny of a Continent* (1925)

Thu, 28 Sep The Global Great Depression

Assignment: Mini-exam 1

Assignment: Paper 1 Prompt Distributed

Week 6

Tue, 3 Oct Anti-Fascism & The Origins of World War II

Archibald MacLeish, "Post-War Writers, Pre-War Readers" (1939)

Charles Coughlin, "On Internationalism" (1931)

Charles Lindbergh, "Speech in Des Moines" (1941)

"The Atlantic Charter" (1941)

Thu, 5 Oct Victory and the Atomic Bomb

Truman's Diary Entries at Potsdam (1945)

John Hersey, selections from 'Hiroshima,' *The New Yorker* (1946)

Henry Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb" *Harper's Magazine* (1947)

Week 7

Tue, 10 Oct NO CLASS (Columbus Day; Monday Classes Meet on Tuesday)

Thu, 12 Oct An American Century? Postwar Visions

Henry Luce, "The American Century" (1941)

Henry Wallace, "Century of the Common Man" (1942)

Henry Wallace, "The Way to Peace" (1946)

Harry Truman, "The Truman Doctrine" (1947)

Week 8

Tue, 17 Oct The Rise of the Cold War

Assignment: Paper 1 Due in Class

Thu, 19 Oct The Cold War in Asia

Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1945)

Dean Rusk, “The Loss of China” (1950)

NSC-68 (1950)

Eisenhower, “Domino Theory in Indochina” (1954)

Week 9

Tue, 24 Oct America’s Response to Decolonization

Graham Greene, *The Quiet American* (1955)

Thu, 26 Oct American Power at High-Tide

Dwight Eisenhower, “A Chance for Peace” (1953)

John Foster Dulles, “Speech to Council on Foreign Relations” (1954)

Dwight Eisenhower, “Farewell Address” (1961)

CIA Clandestine History, “Summary: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq” (1954)

Week 10

Tue, 31 Oct Modernization

W.W. Rostow, “The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto” (1960)

Louis A Perez Jr, “Dependency” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (2004), 162-175.

Thu, 2 Nov Rising Tensions in the 1960s

John Kennedy, “First Inaugural” 1961

John Kennedy, “Speech to Newspaper Editors,” 1961

Thomas Borstelmann, *Cold War and the Color Line*, 128-157.

Week 11

Tue, 7 Nov Cuban Missile Crisis

Assignment: Mini-Exam 2

Assignment: Paper 2 Prompt Distributed

Thu, 9 Nov **CLASS CANCELLED (I'm giving a talk in Philadelphia)**

Week 12

Tue, 14 Nov **Vietnam**

Mark Philip Bradley, "The Coming of the American War," in *Vietnam at War* (2009), selections.

LBJ, "Message to Congress" (1964)

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964)

"Pentagon Papers," Selections.

Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides* (2004), selections.

Thu, 16 Nov **Cracks in American Power**

J. William Fulbright, "Arrogance of Power" (1966)

Martin Luther King, "Beyond Vietnam" (1967)

Week 13

Tue, 21 Nov **New Visions of Economic Freedom**

Daniel Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* Ch.2 (2012)

Orlando Letelier, "The Chicago Boys in Chile" (1976)

Thu, 23 Nov **NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)**

Week 14

Tue, 28 Nov **Détente and human rights**

Jimmy Carter, "Notre Dame Address" (1977)

Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, excerpts (2009)

Thu, 30 Nov **Pax Americana: The Return and Demise of the Cold War**

Assignment: Second Paper Due in Class.

Documents from Havel, Gorbachev, and Solidarity

Week 15

Tue, 5 Dec The War on Terror

Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* (1993)

George W. Bush, "Address to Congress" (2001)

Ussama Makdisi, "Anti-Americanism in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History," *Journal of American History* (2002)

Thu, 7 Dec Globalization and American Economic Power

Assignment: Mini-exam 3

EXAM PERIOD

Dec 14 TAKE HOME DUE: Emailed to slebovic@gmu.edu by 5pm.