

History 380: American Foreign Relations Since 1917

Professor Michael Flamm
Elliott Hall: (740) 368-3634
Office Hours: T/TH 3-4 pm (or by appointment)

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Texts:

- Thomas Paterson and Dennis Merrill, Major Problems in American Foreign Relations (Volume II; Fifth Edition)*
- David Reynolds, From Munich to Pearl Harbor*
- Melvyn Leffler, The Specter of Communism*
- Stephen Kinzer, All the Shah's Men*
- Jeremy Suri, Power and Protest*
- Samantha Power, "A Problem From Hell": America in the Age of Genocide*

*All texts are available at the bookstore. The * indicates the text is also on reserve in the library, as is a copy of The American Age (Vol. II) by Walter LaFeber for those who might need or want more historical background.*

Requirements:

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| • Class participation | 10 percent |
| • Reading essay (750 words) | 15 percent |
| • Research paper (1500 words) | 30 percent |
| • Mid-term exam | 15 percent |
| • Final exam | 30 percent |

Class participation will include regular attendance and reading quizzes. Significant progress will receive appropriate recognition.

Deadlines:

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| • September 22: | Reading essay (required) |
| • October 25: | Mid-term exam |
| • November 8: | Research paper (required) |
| • November 15: | Reading essay (optional) |
| • December 6: | Research rewrite (optional) |
| • December ??: | Final exam |

Late work will result in substantial penalties (one full letter grade per day). Academic misconduct will lead to severe sanctions in full accordance with university policy.

Topics and Readings (due that day):

1. August 30: **Course Introduction**
2. September 1: **America Emergent**
Due: Paterson, Major Problems, chapter 1
Discussion: 1) What was the main reason for the emergence of the U.S. as a world power by 1917?
2) Was it a positive or negative development? Why?
3. September 6: **Wilson and the Coming of World War I**
Due: Paterson, chapter 2 (documents #1-5)
Discussion: 1) Was U.S. intervention inevitable? 2) Was U.S. intervention justified?
4. September 8: **The “Lost Peace”: Wilson and the League of Nations**
Due: Paterson, chapter 2 (documents #6-8 and essays #1-3)
Discussion: 1) Was Wilson primarily responsible for the Senate’s rejection of the League of Nations?
2) Was Wilson an idealist or a realist?
5. September 13: **The Search for Peace and Profits**
Due: Reynolds, From Munich to Pearl Harbor, chapters 1-2; Paterson, chapter 3
Discussion: 1) What term best describes U.S. policy in the 1920s? 2) Why was the U.S. unable to build a stable world order? 3) To what extent was U.S. policy in the 1920s responsible for the world crisis of the 1930s?
6. September 15: **The Road to World War II in Europe**
Due: Reynolds, chapters 3-5
Discussion: 1) Was U.S. policy in the 1930s isolationist or interventionist? 2) Was the U.S. guilty of appeasement in the 1930s?
7. September 20: **The Road to World War II in Asia**
Due: Paterson, chapter 4; Reynolds, chapters 6-7
Discussion: 1) What was the main source of tensions between the U.S. and Japan? 2) Was Japanese-American conflict unavoidable? 3) Was Roosevelt’s leadership (or lack thereof) a decisive factor in the coming of the war?
8. September 22: **“Why We Fight”: Policy and Propaganda**
Due: **Reading essay** (required)
Discussion: 1) Is propaganda an essential and inevitable part of war? 2) Does effective propaganda have to contain racist messages or images (“other”)? 3) To what extent should public opinion influence foreign policy?
9. September 27: **The Holocaust and Hiroshima: Policy and Morality**
Due: Power, “A Problem From Hell”, chapters 1-5; Paterson, chapter 6 (essay #1)

Discussion: 1) To what extent was the U.S. complicit in the Holocaust? 2) Was the U.S. justified in using atomic weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

10. September 29: **The Grand Alliance**

Due: Leffler, The Specter of Communism, chapters 1-2; Paterson, chapter 5

Discussion: 1) How successful was Roosevelt's wartime leadership? 2) Would the Cold War have begun if he had lived?

11. October 4: **The Cold War: Causes and Controversies**

Due: Paterson, chapter 6 (documents #1-3 and essays #2-3)

Discussion: 1) Was the Cold War inevitable? 2) What were the main influences on U.S. and Soviet behavior? 3) Was Stalin or Truman primarily responsible for the Cold War?

12. October 6: **The Cold War: Containment and Confrontation**

Due: Leffler, chapters 3-4; Paterson, chapter 6 (documents #4-10) and chapter 7 (essays #1-2)

Discussion: 1) Was containment a successful policy for the U.S.? 2) How and why was containment in practice (Truman) different from containment in theory (Kennan)?

13. October 11: **Korea and the Globalization of Containment**

Due: Paterson, chapter 8; begin Kinzer, All the Shah's Men

Discussion: 1) Was North Korea given a "green light" by the Soviet Union? 2) Why did the U.S. choose to intervene – and then change military objectives? 3) What was the most significant legacy of the war?

14. October 13: **The U.S. and the Middle East (I)**

Due: Paterson, chapter 13 (documents #1-3 and essay #1); continue Kinzer

Discussion: 1) What was the main motivation behind U.S. intervention in the Middle East? 2) Was U.S. intervention successful? 3) What were the most important influences on U.S. policy? Why?

15. October 18: **Eisenhower and the "New Look"**

Due: Paterson, chapter 9; finish Kinzer

Discussion: 1) What were the fundamental premises of the "New Look"? 2) Were Eisenhower's policies reckless and belligerent or calm and considered?

16. October 20: **Kennedy and "Flexible Response"**

Due: Prepare for mid-term exam

Discussion: 1) What were the fundamental premises of "Flexible Response"? 2) Was it a wise or misguided policy?

17. October 25: **Mid-Term Exam**

18. October 27: **Missiles and Myths: The Cuba Crisis in Historical Perspective**

Due: Paterson, chapter 10

Discussion: 1) How well did the decision-making processes in Washington and Moscow work? 2) What was the relative importance of the pressures faced by each of the leaders? 3) Was Kennedy prudent or reckless during the Cuban Missile Crisis?

19. November 1: **The Origins of Vietnam: From Roosevelt to Kennedy**

Due: Paterson, chapter 11; begin Suri, Power and Protest

Discussion: 1) Why did the U.S. become involved in Vietnam? 2) What was the relative responsibility of Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy? 3) If Kennedy had lived, would he have extricated the U.S.?

20. November 3: **Johnson and the Making of a Quagmire**

Due: Continue Suri

Discussion: 1) What was the main reason LBJ chose to go to war? 2) Did the presidential advisory system work?

21. November 8: **The War at Home: Policy and Protest**

Due: **Research paper** (required)

Discussion: 1) What was the main impact of the anti-war movement? 2) To what extent should it receive credit or blame for the outcome in Vietnam?

22. November 10: **Nixon and the Search for “Peace with Honor”**

Due: Power, chapter 6; Paterson, chapter 12 (documents #1-2); finish Suri

Discussion: 1) Were Nixon and Kissinger able to achieve “Peace with Honor”? 2) What were the most important legacies of Vietnam?

23. November 15: **From Deterrence to Détente**

Due: **Reading essay** (optional); Paterson, chapter 12 (documents #3-6 and essays #1-3)

Discussion: 1) Was détente a significant departure from containment? 2) Was détente a success or a failure? 3) Were the means of détente justified by the ends?

24. November 17: **The U.S. and the Middle East (II)**

Due: Paterson, chapter 13 (documents #4-7 and essay #2)

Discussion: 1) What factors have most aided or impeded the peace process? 2) What approach holds the most promise for lasting peace, a comprehensive or incremental settlement? 3) Have recent events made peace impossible?

25. November 21-25: **University Holiday**

26. November 29: **America Adrift: Ford, Carter, and the “Age of Limits”**

Due: Paterson, chapter 13 (document #8)

Discussion: 1) Does the “Age of Limits” accurately describe the 1970s? 2) Did the “Age of Limits” represent healthy self-reflection or unhealthy self-loathing?

27. December 1: **The Reagan Doctrine and the Soviet Union**
Due: Paterson, chapter 14 (documents #2-7 and essays #1-3)
Discussion: 1) Why did the Cold War end? 2) Who should receive most of the credit, Reagan or Gorbachev? 3) Was containment or engagement more effective?
28. December 6: **The Reagan Doctrine and the Developing World**
Due: **Research rewrite** (optional); Power, chapter 7
Discussion: 1) Was the Reagan Doctrine successful? 2) What was the significance of the Iran-Contra Affair?
29. December 8: **Bush and the “New World Order”**
Due: Power, chapter 8; Paterson, chapter 14 (document #8)
Discussion: 1) Was the Gulf War necessary and/or successful? 2) Was a “New World Order” implemented? Why or why not?
30. December 13: **History and Film**
Due: Begin Power, chapters 9-14
Discussion: 1) Is it possible for films to present history accurately? 2) Does it matter?
31. December 15: **Clinton and the “New World Disorder”**
Due: Power, chapters 9-14; Paterson, chapter 14 (document #9 and essay #3)
Discussion: 1) Was the end of the Cold War a positive or negative development? 2) Is the world safer now? Why or why not? 3) Under what conditions should the U.S. intervene to stop or limit genocide?

For changes and updates, please consult the ERes course page. The discussion questions serve as a general guide to reading assignments and class participation.