

History 515: American Diplomatic History – 20th Century (Fall 2017)
Time and Place: T 6:30-9:20pm, MHRA 1206

Professor David M. Wight (dmwight@uncg.edu)

Office Hours and Location: W 3:30-5:30pm & by appointment, MHRA 2116

STRUCTURE & SCOPE

Welcome! This course examines modern US diplomatic history, including state, transnational, and cultural actors. Since 1898, the United States has played an outsized role in international relations, playing a pivotal role in two world wars, the Cold War, the development of modern global systems, and the affairs of virtually every other country on Earth. Indeed, over the course of the twentieth century, the United States progressed from being a great power to the world's sole superpower. Yet the United States has likewise been profoundly shaped by its interactions with the larger world, and Americans have periodically discovered that their power, while great, is not unlimited. This course explores the trajectory of US foreign relations since 1898 with a focus on three main themes: globalization, empire, and the constructs of race and gender.

REQUIRED READINGS

There are seven books assigned for the course, listed below. The books can be purchased at the University Bookstore.

Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001)

Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in The Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006)

Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005)

John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986)

Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 2006)

Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006)

Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007)

GRADING

Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

Participation	20%
Presentation	20%
Take Home Midterm	20%
Take Home Final	40%

Grading will be on the following scale: A = 94 and up; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87 to 89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; F = <60.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Daily class attendance and participation is mandatory. If you arrive late, leave early, or are absent, your participation grade for that day may be half or zero credit. You will be given one excused absence for any reason (i.e. your lowest participation score will be dropped), but no more, so plan accordingly.

You are required to complete the readings listed below each week **before** arriving to class on Tuesday. Part of each class will be devoted to you and your fellow colleagues discussing the readings for that day and how they relate to course themes, so if you do not read beforehand, you will not be able to engage in discussion with your colleagues or me in a meaningful way. Furthermore, you will not receive full participation credit without regularly and thoughtfully participating in discussions about the readings in class. The aim is to have a discussion of ideas occur between your classmates, with limited guidance from me. The daily readings are listed at the end of this syllabus under the heading “Class Topics & Assignments.”

Common sense respect (not texting or surfing the web or listening to headphones during class, etc.) is required. Likewise, when discussing ideas, you are required to be respectful of other people’s arguments. Critiques and disagreements over the ideas we discuss are expected and even encouraged, but this does not permit anyone to be offensive or abusive toward others. I reserve the right to remove anyone from class for disrespectful behavior.

PRESENTATION

Each student will conduct an independent research project on US diplomacy during the twentieth century utilizing primary source records from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. They will then report their findings in an oral presentation to the class, followed by a question and answer session with queries from fellow classmates. Students will select a topic of their choice with direction from me. Presentations will be held throughout the semester, with the aim of holding presentations on topics roughly congruent to where we are chronologically in the course. Presentations will be graded on the thoroughness of the research and the skillfulness of the transmission of information.

TAKE HOME MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS

History is primarily a written craft, and writing is a distinct process of obtaining and relating knowledge. One of my goals is to improve your ability to write a clear argument with the use of evidence, a skill that will benefit you in almost any field or occupation.

You will have two take home exams, a midterm and a final. Both will have you provide short essay answers to multiple questions. Each exam will require a total of 7-8 typed pages. Each response should begin with a clear thesis that responds to the prompt and have thoughtful examples and analysis which demonstrate your thesis and synthesize the readings of the course. And do not forget that the key to writing a good essay is reading over it and REVISING it several times!

Essays will be graded by the following criteria:¹

- **ACCURACY:** Does my paper show that I have thoroughly and accurately examined the assigned materials?
- **CLEAR THESIS:** Does my paper begin with a clear and interesting thesis statement indicating what I am arguing?
- **ARGUMENT:** Have I substantiated my thesis with a clear argument?
- **SYNTAX AND WORDING:** Have I used proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling? Is my writing clear and straightforward, with mostly active voice and active verbs?
- **DIRECTIONS:** Do I follow all of the directions of the assignment?

I encourage you to discuss your ideas and theses, as well as returned exams, during my office hours or by appointment. I am also happy to read an introductory thesis or a single paragraph before the exam is due. Out of fairness, however, I will not read an entire exam draft.

I require that you submit both a hard copy of your exam in class and an electronic version to turnitin.com by the start of lecture on the day the assignment is due. Late papers (either hard copy, electronic, or both) will be marked down 10% per day late, starting with the day the assignment was due (so if you submit the paper after class on the first day, it will be marked down 10%; the following day marked down 20%, etc.)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro prohibits any and all forms of academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsible to know what constitutes academic integrity and academic dishonesty, and to be familiar with UNCG policies on academic integrity laid out here: <https://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>. Students who engage in an academically dishonest act (such as plagiarizing part of a paper or cheating during an exam) will receive a grade of "F" in the course and be reported to the Academic Dean for possible

¹ Paper grading rubric adapted from rubric used by Emily S. Rosenberg

additional disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from the university. Do not attempt it.

CONTACTING ME

I encourage you to meet with me at my office hours or at another arranged time. You can also ask me questions by email. Please allow me a full day to respond (or two on the weekends), but I'll usually reply sooner.

USEFUL WEBSITES

History Department Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/>

History Department Website: <https://his.uncg.edu/>

SYLLABUS MODIFICATIONS

I reserve the right to modify or alter any part of the syllabus as the course progresses. It is your responsibility to keep up with class announcements regarding any alterations.

CLASS TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1 – 8/15 – Introduction to Course and Major Issues in US Foreign Relations

No Readings or Assignments Due

WEEK 2 – 8/22 – The Rise of the US Empire(s), 1898-1913

Kramer: Introduction, Chapter 2

WEEK 3 – 8/29 – The United States in a Globalized World, 1898-1913

Kramer: Chapters 3 & 5

WEEK 4 – 9/5 – World War I, International Communism, and the League of Nations, 1914-1920

Kramer: Chapter 6

De Grazia: Introduction, Chapter 1

WEEK 5 – 9/12 – Isolationism or Internationalism?, 1921-1928

De Grazia: Chapters 2, 3, 5

WEEK 6 – 9/19 – Global Depression and the Rise of Fascism, 1929-1938

De Grazia: Chapter 6

Dower: Preface, Chapters 1, 2, 3

WEEK 7 – 9/26 – World War II, 1939-1945

Dower: Chapters 4 – 10

WEEK 8 – 10/3 – Dawn of the Cold War and the Korean War, 1946-1952

Dower: Chapter 11

Leffler: Introduction, Chapter 1

Borstelmann: Prologue, Preface, Chapter 2

WEEK 9 – 10/10 – Break Week

No class or assignments

WEEK 10 – 10/17 – To the Brink of Armageddon, 1953-1962

T 10/17 – Take Home Midterm Due by 5:59 PM

De Grazia: Chapter 7

Leffler: Chapter 2

Borstelmann: Chapter 3

WEEK 11 – 10/24 – The Vietnam War, 1963-1975

Leffler: Chapter 3

Borstelmann: Chapters 4 & 5

WEEK 12 – 10/31 – Global Shocks, 1971-1979

Borstelmann: Chapter 6 & Epilogue

Grandin: Introduction, Chapters 2, 3, 4

WEEK 13 – 11/7 – The Return of the Cold War, 1979-1987

Leffler: Chapter 4

Grandin: Chapter 5

WEEK 14 – 11/14 – New World Order, 1985-2000

Leffler: Chapter 5, Conclusion

Grandin: Chapter 6, Conclusion, Afterword

De Grazia: Conclusion

WEEK 15 – 11/21 – Global War on Terror, 2001-2007

Chandrasekaran: Prologue, Chapters 1 – 8

WEEK 16 – 11/28 – Globalism or Nationalism?, 2008-2017

Chandrasekaran: Chapters 9 – 16, Epilogue

WEEK 17 – Finals Week

T 12/5 – Take Home Final Due by 11:59 PM