

History 415-01: American Diplomatic History – 20th Century (Fall 2021)
Time and Place: MW 2:00–3:15 PM, MHRA 1214

Professor David M. Wight (dmwight@uncg.edu)
Office Hours: by appointment via Zoom

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 COURSE MATERIALS

There are six books assigned to everyone for the course. Books with a “****” after them are available for free as ebooks through the UNCG library. One book is also available in hardcopy as a two-hour loan from the UNCG library. The books can also 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) ****

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

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) [hardcopy available for two-hour loan at UNCG library]

Emily Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) ****

Nick Turse, *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2013)

GRADING

Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

Discussion	30%
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Paper 3	30%

Grading will be on the following scale: A = 93 and up; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87 to 89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69; D = 63-66; D- = 60-62; F = <60

DISCUSSION

Starting week two, a substantial portion of one class day (usually Wednesday) will be dedicated time where you will be required to discuss the assigned readings for that week. If you arrive late, leave early, or are absent, your discussion grade for that day may be half or zero credit. You will be given one excused absence for any reason (i.e. your lowest discussion score will be dropped), but no more, so plan accordingly.

You are required to complete the readings listed for a discussion day **before** the start of that class. Most of that 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 receive partial credit for attendance, but you will not receive full discussion 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. You will earn points based on the quality, rather than the quantity, of your remarks. Comments with specific examples that demonstrate you have thoughtfully read assigned materials will earn points; off-topic or vague comments will not. Constructive responses to your classmates, which show you are listening and considering their opinions whether you agree or disagree with them, are especially encouraged.

Common sense respect 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.

PAPERS

You will have three paper assignments in this class. Each paper will be six pages, double spaced, begin with a clear thesis which responds to the prompt, and have thoughtful examples and analysis that demonstrates your thesis. Late submissions of papers will result in a loss of one

percent of the paper's total value per day late. If you experience an extenuating circumstance, let me know as early as possible, and at my discretion some or all point deductions might be waved.

Details on prompts, instructions, and grading criteria for each paper will be provided.

TECHNOLOGY

This course requires the capability of the student to use and regularly access a computer, a word processor, and the internet. The UNCG library is a resource for technology access.

On protecting your personal data and privacy, see https://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/acceptable_use/.

If you encounter a technology problem, contact UNCG Information Technology Services as soon as possible. They have online, phone and walk-in options for technical support, all listed here: <https://its.uncg.edu/Help/>. If a technology problem poses the possibility of preventing you from completing coursework, communicate this to myself as soon as possible, too, so we can see if we can mitigate any negative impacts on your learning and grade.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

UNCG provides a variety of useful services for you, the student. Check them out!

The UNCG Library (<https://library.uncg.edu/>) has a wealth of books, articles, archival materials, and other media resources, computers, inter-library loan services, and knowledgeable staff.

The UNCG Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/>) provides assistance with writing assignments; contact staff members to set an appointment either in person or via instant-messaging.

The UNCG Speaking Center (<https://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/>) provides assistance in improving your skill and confidence in public, group, and individual speaking.

If you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) (<https://ods.uncg.edu/>). I prioritize making this course accessible to all of the students in it, and I will work with OARS to accommodate students' requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to me to receive accommodations.

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

All writing assignments (reflections, papers, etc.) are subject to a plagiarism check through the website <https://www.turnitin.com/>. This website compares the text of your paper to text up on webpages, in scholarly works, and within its massive database of student papers submitted to schools around the world. If you purchase a paper to pass off as your own, it is possible the paper may contain portions reused and sold to other students as well. So do not plagiarize or purchase papers, whether only a portion of your paper or its entirety.

COMMUNICATION

I will make periodic announcements regarding important information about the course, accessible in the “Announcements” tab. Likewise, I will provide feedback on assignments under comments. I might also send you a message via Canvas or an email to your UNCG email address if needed. It is your responsibility to monitor and read all of these communications in a timely manner.

I am happy to answer your questions by email or message in Canvas. Please allow me a full day to respond (or two on weekends and holidays), but I’ll usually reply sooner. You can also email me to schedule a Zoom meeting to talk directly.

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 about any alterations.

COVID-19 AND GENERAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The

Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling [336-334-5874](tel:336-334-5874), visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu

As we return for fall 2021, the campus community must recognize and address continuing concerns about physical and emotional safety, especially as we will have many more students, faculty, and staff on campus than in the last academic year. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Following face-covering guidelines](#)
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

To make it easier for students to hear their instructor and/or read lips and if conditions permit, instructors who are fully vaccinated and who can maintain at least six feet of distance from students may remove their masks while actively teaching if they choose, but will wear a mask at all other times while in the classroom, including during the periods before and after class

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact OARS (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.

CLASS TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1

W 8/18 Lecture: Introduction to Course

WEEK 2

M 8/23 Lecture: The Rise of US Empire(s), 1898-1913

W 8/25 Discussion: Kramer: Introduction, Chapter 1

WEEK 3

M 8/30 Lecture: The United States in a Globalized World, 1898-1913

W 9/1 Discussion: Kramer: Chapter 2

Rosenberg: Introduction, Chapter 1 & 2

WEEK 4

M 9/6 Holiday

W 9/8 Discussion: Kramer: Chapter 3, Chapter 4

WEEK 5

M 9/13 Lecture: World War I, International Communism, and the League of Nations, 1914-1920

W 9/15 Discussion: Kramer: Chapter 5

Rosenberg: Chapters 3

WEEK 6

M 9/20 Lecture: Isolationism or Internationalism?, 1921-1928

W 9/22 Discussion: Rosenberg Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7

WEEK 7

M 9/27 Lecture: Global Depression and the Rise of Fascism, 1929-1938

W 9/29 Discussion: Rosenberg: Chapter 8
Kramer: Chapter 6, Conclusion

WEEK 8

M 10/4 Lecture: World War II, 1939-1945

Paper 1 Due at 2:00 PM

W 10/6 Discussion: Dower: Preface, Chapters 1 – 3

WEEK 9

M 10/11 Holiday

W 10/13 Discussion: Dower: Chapters 4 – 10

WEEK 10

M 10/18 Lecture: Dawn of the Cold War and the Korean War, 1946-1952

W 10/20 Discussion: Dower: Chapter 11

Leffler: Introduction, Chapter 1

Borstelmann: Prologue, Preface, Chapter 2

WEEK 11

M 10/25 Lecture: To the Brink of Armageddon, 1953-1962

W 10/27 Discussion: Leffler: Chapter 2

Borstelmann: Chapters 3 & 4

WEEK 12

M 11/1 Lecture: The Vietnam War, 1963-1975

Paper 2 Due at 2:00 PM

W 11/3 Discussion: Borstelmann: Chapter 5

Turse: Introduction, Chapter 1

WEEK 13

M 11/8 Lecture: Global Shocks, 1971-1979

W 11/10 Discussion: Turse: Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

WEEK 14

M 11/15 Lecture: The End of the Cold War, 1978-1991

W 11/17 Discussion: Turse: Chapter 7, Epilogue, Afterword

Leffler: Chapter 4

WEEK 15

M 11/22 Discussion: Leffler: Chapter 5, Conclusion

Borstelmann: Chapter 6, Epilogue

W 11/24 Holiday

WEEK 16

M 11/29 Lecture: The Sole Superpower and Its Challenges, 1992-2021

W 12/1 Discussion: No Readings; Discussion of Course as a Whole

WEEK 17

M 12/6

Paper 2 Due by 11:59 PM