

History 245

U. S. in World Affairs

1890s to the Present

Fall 2009

Syllabus

TO CONTACT:

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Welcome--

History 245 surveys this nation's foreign policy from its emergence as a world power in the 1890s up to recent times. While evaluating U. S. foreign policies of the past century, **History 245** will stress major themes and interpretations in history. Why did the United States push forward as a great power in the 1890s? Was intervention in World War I a necessary step or the product of Wilson's peculiar vision of the world? What did the growing war clouds of the 1930s mean for U. S. security? Who or what produced the Cold War? How did the Vietnam war affect U. S. relations with other parts of the world? What does history show about a power trying to "go it alone," versus waiting for cooperation? You will be encouraged to place facts in meaningful frames of reference and then assess them.

Just as with a classroom class, this online course is taught through lectures, class discussion, and varied readings. It may be "virtual," printed words on a screen, but we will combine reading and lecturing with discussion. Superior grades will go to students who show a broad, accurate grasp of the facts and an ability to organize material, who participate in class and whose writing makes relevant arguments, backing them with good material.

History is absolutely do-able if you think strategically. Think about overall trends. File facts away according to what they mean for major trends. The specific details absorbed in the course material will mean little unless you can do that. The specific details absorbed in the course material will mean little unless you do that. Also, try to put together your own logical interpretations of facts and themes. That way, you really get a handle on the topic.

Books--

- Thomas G. Paterson *et al*, [American Foreign Relations](#), Vol. 2 (Houghton-Mifflin, 2005, ISBN: 0-618-37073-0).
- Gary Donaldson, [American Foreign Policy: the Twentieth Century in Documents](#) (Longman, 2003, ISBN: 0-321-10506-0)
- Online readings, available through VISTA in "Lectures and Discussion"

Outcomes--

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

1. Explain the significance of key people, facts, and events of the period under study, and develop standards to judge them from a historical-cultural perspective

2. Demonstrate the importance of traditions of thought and ethical values in the process of historical change

3. Expand their vocabulary

4. Evaluate historical arguments, judging the appropriateness of both logic and content

5. Adapt scholarly processes of analysis, interpretation, and synthesis to articulate their own points of view, demonstrating a command of relevant facts and a framework of logical deduction,
- Drawing inferences from data

Differentiating between facts, value judgments, and generalizations

Differentiating between description and explanation

Recognizing the role of cause and effect in historical analysis

Coursework and Assessment--

Go to the "**Assignments**" page (accessible from the Home Page). Be sure to look at the "**Reading Schedule**" located there. This will guide your reading through the term for lectures and textbook readings.

Be sure to find the "**Lectures & Discussions**" link on the Assignments Page. That takes you to the lectures and to the discussion assignments for each week.

You're going to do some writing. During the term you will post brief essays from **four** Discussion assignments by the given deadline for each. Two of these will come from Weeks #1-5 (or Discussions #1-#5), and two from the rest by the assigned date for each one you choose. The deadlines for these will usually fall on Mondays (except for the first week, and holidays). What you do is this: after reading the discussion assignment, and choosing one question in "**Discussions**," write your essay and post it with the appropriate "Posts" icon. Each essay should be 250-400 words. It should begin with a brief purpose statement, which is a two- or three-sentence introduction explaining which question will be answered, a bit about how, and using what sources.

When you don't choose to post an essay, you will do the week's reading anyway, and usually you will post a response--that is, a critique--to the essay of another student. You will post two responses in Weeks #1-#5 and two in the rest of the term. Each response should be at least 75 words long and should express agreement or disagreement, and reasons for your view. This means that during the term you must post four bulletin essays of your own and four responses to others' essays. **Note: there is no credit for posting a response on a discussion for which you have already submitted an essay.**

Essays are graded on a 25-point scale; responses on a 5-point scale. **NOTE:** even though the grade report says "out of 25" for both essays and responses, for responses it is just 5. This is one of the inflexibilities of the system.

There will be no extra-credit assignments.

The following is this term's schedule of due dates for essays and responses for each Discussion:

Assignment	Due Date	Assignment	Due Date
Essay Discussion #1	Monday September 28	Essay Discussion #6	Monday November 2
Response Discussion #1	Thursday October 1	Response Discussion #6	Thursday November 5
Essay Discussion #2	Monday October 5	Essay Discussion #7	Monday November 9
Response Discussion #2	Thursday October 8	Response Discussion #7	Thursday November 12
Essay Discussion #3	Monday October 12	Essay Discussion #8	Monday November 16
Response Discussion #3	Thursday October 15	Response Discussion #8	Thursday November 19

Essay Discussion #4	Monday October 19	Essay Discussion #9	Monday November 23
Response Discussion #4	Thursday October 22	Response Discussion #9	Monday November 30
Essay Discussion #5	Monday October 26	Essay Discussion #10	Thursday December 3
Response Discussion #5	Thursday October 29	Response Discussion #10	Monday December 7

You will compose a six-page research paper (due **December 2**) on a foreign policy topic covered in the course, following a sheet provided under "**Assignments.**"

There will be a midterm exam (**October 30**) and a final exam (**December 8**), which will include essay and factual questions. Each will last two hours. You will take these online at any time during availability. A preparation sheet will be posted for each with the possible questions. Preparations and the tests themselves will be in **Testing**.

A note on late work--

Normally, late discussion essays are accepted, but with a penalty of **.5/25** per day (up to a total of 3.5/25). If they are more than three days late, they must be sent to me by Vista email. **Late essay responses are not accepted.**

Late research papers are assessed 2.5% per day (up to a total of 10%). This can be avoided if you obtain permission for an extension in advance of the due date.

If you miss the midterm or final exam without an extension or darned good excuse, all is not lost. However, if you don't contact me and take the test, you will lose 10% right away and another 10% after a week

Grading--

Here is how things are weighted:

<i>Discussions</i>	25%
<i>Midterm exam</i>	25%
<i>Research paper</i>	25%
<i>Final exam</i>	25%

All items will be assigned percentage grades, whose average will be translated into a letter grade according to the following:

95-100%	A	76-79%	C+
90-94%	A-	73-75%	C
86-89%	B+	70-72%	C-
83-85%	B	65-69%	D+
80-82%	B-	60-64%	D

I trust that History 245 will help you develop background both in current events and for further study of U. S. foreign policy. Let me know if you have any questions.