

*History 245*  
**U. S. in World Affairs**  
1890s to the Present  
  
Spring 2010  
*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.

COURSEWORK—

Be sure to look at the "Reading Schedule," located on the "Assignments" page (accessible from the Home Page). This will guide your reading through the term for lectures and textbook readings. Also get the "Lectures & Discussions" link on the Assignments page. That takes you to the lectures, online readings, and assignment for each Discussion. Read the lectures as laid out by the Reading Schedule. Access the Discussion assignment, and follow directions for the listed readings and brief essays.

After doing the reading, you choose one essay question to answer from the Discussion Assignment. Post your essay with the Discussion's "Posts" icon. Each essay should be 250-400 words. The deadlines for these usually fall on Mondays and Thursdays (see schedule). **You don't have to write one every week.** During the term you will write and post a total of four brief essays in answer to four Discussion assignments by the deadline given for each. Note: you must do two essays from Discussions #1-#5 and two from the rest (again, by the assigned date for each one you choose).

I like an essay that comes to grips with the student's chosen question--that tries to answer it logically with details and facts. It is especially desirable to use facts and details from the Discussion (especially online) readings and lectures. The Divine text is helpful for these essays, but don't write a mere summary of what the text says. Don't base your essay on an encyclopedia article (especially that unreliable Wikipedia), though feel free to consult a decent encyclopedia for background. Use paraphrases and quotes from the sources to back your points, not to make them, and avoid both long quotes (more than 40 words) and overly brief ones (less than 10 words). Remember what the assignment says about a purpose statement. Avoid typo's and misspellings.

On weeks when you don't post an essay, you will do the reading anyway, and (usually, not always) post a response to the essay of another student. Access other students' essays through each Discussion Assignment's "Posts" icon. Each response should be at least 75 words long and should express agreement, disagreement, and reasons for your view. You will do a total of two responses in Discussions #1-#5 and two in the rest.

This means that during the term you must post four bulletin essays of your own and four responses to others' essays--in eight separate weeks. Essays are graded on a 25-point scale; responses on a 5-point scale. (NOTE: This is true even though the grade for both essays and responses will say "out of 25"--don't be worried if it says you got "4 out of 25" for a response.) There is **no extra credit** with essays or responses. **Note: there is no credit for posting a Discussion response for a week for which you have already submitted an essay.**

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

Assignment	Due Date	Assignment	Due Date
Discussion #1 Essay	Monday April 12	Discussion #6 Essay	Monday May 17
Discussion #1 Response	Thursday April 15	Discussion #6 Response	Thursday May 20
Discussion #2 Essay	Monday April 19	Discussion #7 Essay	Monday May 24

Discussion #2 Response	Thursday April 22	Discussion #7 Response	Thursday May 27
Discussion #3 Essay	Monday April 26	Discussion #8 Essay	Tuesday June 1
Discussion #3 Response	Thursday April 29	Discussion #8 Response	Thursday June 3
Discussion #4 Essay	Monday May 3	Discussion #9 Essay	Monday June 7
Discussion #4 Response	Thursday May 6	Discussion #9 Response	Thursday June 10
Discussion #5 Essay	Monday May 10	Discussion #10 Essay	Monday June 14
Discussion #5 Response	Thursday May 13	Discuss. #10 Response	Thursday June 17

In addition to the brief essays and responses, you will compose a 1,500-word paper (due June 14), following a sheet provided under "Assignments."

There will be two exams, each about two hours, on these dates: May 14 and June 16. You will take them online. (You are responsible for having access to a functioning computer on test days, so plan ahead.) The tests will have multiple-choice and essay questions and will be based on the text and the lectures. There will be preparation sheets for each listing possible questions.

NOTE: Copying material in print or on the Internet is forbidden. A zero grade will be assigned to paper or test in which plagiarized material appears, or if on a Discussion essay, the entire Discussions grade (25% of the total term grade).

***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 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 for some legitimate reason, all is not lost. However, if you don't contact me and take the test right away, 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.