

**History 251**  
**United States Foreign Relations**  
**Tu, Th 11:00-12:20**  
**Spring 2020**

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Office Hours:  
Mondays, 10:00-12:00  
Thursdays, 1:30-3:30  
(and by appointment)

In a space of just a few hundred years, the United States has grown from a weak and relatively minor global player into the most important superpower in the world. This course examines the development and practice of American foreign policy from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and especially America's rise to become a leading world power. It explores the actors—from private citizens to business elites to federal officials—who have shaped foreign policy pursuits at different moments; how the state has deployed its power (economic, diplomatic, cultural, and military) to achieve its goals; how gender and race influence and operate in US foreign policy; and the role of culture and ideology in shaping Americans' understanding of their role in the world. We will pay particular attention to the ethical and ideological considerations propelling both architects and critics of U.S. foreign policy.

As foreign policy is not something that only takes place behind the closed doors of elite government actors, we will use a wide range of secondary sources and primary documents—including speeches, policy directives, films, and cartoons—to explore the historical, cultural, and ideological underpinnings of American foreign policy. History 251 also counts towards the CAS and GSFS majors.

### Course Objectives

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the history of US foreign policy from the nation's founding to today, of how policy and practices have changed over time and how they have been influenced by gender, race, economics, politics, and culture.
- Develop a clear understanding of historical methodology and how historians develop interpretations.
- Hone the skill of reading secondary historical sources quickly and carefully for key arguments, frameworks, and their use of evidence.
- Gain facility with analyzing primary sources—both textual and visual—in their historical context.
- Make clear arguments based on evidence and communicate those arguments effectively in both oral and written form.
- Contribute to the community of the classroom through participation in discussion and class activities.



## Required Texts

Books are on reserve at Mudd and are available for purchase at the bookstore. All other readings are available on the blackboard site under the “Course Readings” heading.

- Peter Andreas, Border Games: Policing the US-Mexico Divide (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2009)  
Andrew Bacevich, The New American Militarism (2013)  
Michael Hunt, Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy (2009 edition)  
Matthew Jacobson, Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917 (2001)  
Frank Lambert, The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World (2007)  
Michael Latham, The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and US Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present (2011)

There are also four required films for the class, which we will explore as cultural and political documents that illustrate opinions, ideologies, and political debates about US foreign policy in different historical eras. The four film we will screen are:

- Martyrs of the Alamo* (dir. D.W. Griffiths, 1915)  
*Casablanca* (dir. Michael Curtiz, 1942)  
*The Manchurian Candidate* (dir. John Frankenheimer, 1962)  
*Top Gun* (dir. Tony Scott, 1986)

*Martyrs of the Alamo* is available in its entirety on YouTube. I will hold a class screening for the three other films on a Monday or Tuesday evening in advance of when the film will be discussed in class. All the films are available to rent from Amazon or Netflix, and they will also be on reserve at the library.

## Course Organization and Requirements

This class is organized into six chronological units, most of which have an accompanying book and film. The last class of each unit is typically a discussion session where we will focus on the book, the film, and other readings covered in that unit. Grades for History 251 will be based on three papers, a take-home final exam, a foreign policy current events “scrapbook,” attendance and participation. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Attendance and Participation:	15% of final grade
3-pg. Primary Source Paper:	10% of final grade
5-pg. Reading Paper:	20% of final grade
5-pg. Film Paper:	20% of final grade
Current Events Scrapbook:	10% of final grade
Take Home Final Exam:	25% of final grade

### 1) Attendance and Participation (15%)

Your active involvement with the class is extremely important. Attendance and participation are critical to your learning and your success in History 251. Regular class attendance is expected; students should initial the attendance sheet for each class so that I have a record of your attendance. After two unexcused absences, any additional absences will result in a grade penalty (a .5 deduction from your final grade in the class).

Please come to every class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day on the syllabus. We will talk about the readings during every class session, often in small groups. I also expect everyone to participate during the classes set aside specifically for discussion. In order to facilitate more focused discussions, the class may be split into two groups on discussion-session days, with each group

attending one 40-minute discussion (either from 11:00-11:40 or 11:40-12:20). Regular evidence that you are not prepared for discussion or have not read the material will affect your final grade in the class. If you have trouble speaking in class, please come see me during my office hours so we can develop strategies to help you become a more active participant in class discussion.

## **2) Primary Source Paper (10%)—Due in class on March 12**

For this paper, choose one of the textual primary sources assigned for the class on the origins of the Cold War on March 12th and write a 3-page analysis of it based on a close reading. You can use the other readings assigned for that class to help you contextualize and understand your source, but your analysis should closely on one of the documents. More specific guidelines for this paper are available at the Assignment section of the blackboard site. The primary source analysis is due at the beginning of the class on March 12.

## **3) Reading and Film Papers (One of each type, each 20%)**

Each student is required to write a paper about one of the five books that we are reading for a discussion session and a paper about one of the four feature films that are required viewing for the class. Each of these papers should be approximately five pages long and should seek to imaginatively analyze and explore the chosen book or film in the context of the other material assigned for that particular unit. More specific guidelines about each type of paper are available on the course blackboard site. Reading and film papers are due by noon on the day after the session at which the book or film is being discussed. For example, if you choose to write a paper about *Barbary Wars*, which we are discussing on February 13, the paper would be due by noon on February 14. Since there is no separate discussion session for the unit on the 1920s through the 1940s, the paper for *Casablanca* will be due at noon on March 6. You have a great deal of discretion in deciding when you want to write the reading and film papers for this class except that you must write one of the two papers before spring break and one after spring break. You cannot do both the film and reading papers before break or both after break.

Here are the dates for discussions and deadlines for papers:

### **Write about either a book or film before spring break:**

Barbary Wars: discussion on February 13; paper due February 14

Barbarian Virtues or Martyrs of the Alamo: discussion on February 25; paper due February 26

Casablanca: discussion in class on March 5; paper due March 6

### **If you wrote about a book before spring break, write about a film after break; if you wrote about a film before break, write about a book after break**

Right Kind of Revolution or Manchurian Candidate: discussion on April 7; paper due April 8

The New American Militarism or Top Gun: discussion on April 16; paper due April 17

Border Games: discussion on April 28; paper due April 29

## **4) History and Current Events Scrapbook (10%)—Sample due 3/19; Final due May 7<sup>th</sup>**

Each student will locate six significant articles from current newspapers or magazines (from January 2019 forward) which relate to the topic of US foreign relations today or historically and will make a scrapbook that includes the following for each article: 1) full bibliographic information for each article; 2) a one-paragraph summary of the article; 2) a one to two paragraph explanation of how the article relates to course themes or to the readings from our class on February 6; and 5) a one to two paragraph analysis/critical commentary of the article's content. The response to each article should be approximately one page. In your "scrapbook" include a printed copy of each article along with your typed commentary.

You may in your commentary compare the approach in an article to documents, readings, or discussions of US foreign relations from class. Articles must come from reputable media sources (major newspapers or magazines; professional online media outlets like Slate). The best scrapbooks will either focus on a particular issue from many different points of view or will explore a wide range of relevant issues. You should be collecting articles and writing responses over the course of the semester. Everyone must turn in **one article with accompany commentary** on March 19. The entire scrapbook is due at our last class session on May 7<sup>th</sup>. No electronic submissions will be accepted for this assignment.

### **5) Take-Home Final Exam (25%)—Due by 4:00pm on Wed, May 13<sup>th</sup>**

There will be a take-home final exam that will be handed out on the last day of class. The exam is due back by 4:00 p.m. on Wed., May 13. The exam will ask you to bring together course readings and lectures to respond to a single question in an approximately 8-page essay.

### **Course Policies**

Late Policy: Assignments must be submitted on time to receive full credit. If an assignment is due at the beginning of class, it must be turned in at the start of class to count as on time. An assignment that is handed in late will be marked down 3 points for every 24 hours it is late. Requests for extensions must take place before the assignment is due. I will grant extensions in cases of documented illness or family emergencies, but not because you have another paper due on the same day or conflicts with extracurricular activities, so please plan accordingly.

Classroom Conduct: Please come to class on time, silence your cell phone, and once you're here, plan on staying for the full class session. I consider it disrespectful to me and rude to the rest of the class when a student walks out once class has started and walks back in a few minutes later, so please take your bathroom and water breaks **before class begins**. I will contact students who walk out in the middle of class privately to remind them of this rule the first time it happens; if it happens again, each in-out and will lead to a one-point deduction on your participation grade in the class.

Computers in the Classroom: Students are welcome to take notes on a laptop during class, but please do not distract other students by doing email, Facebook, etc. If I discover you using your computer for something unrelated to the class, I will ask you not to bring it to class again.

Oberlin Honor Code: All work for this course must be done in compliance with the Oberlin Honor Code, which means that it must be your own. Any cases of plagiarism will be dealt with immediately according to the letter of college policy. You must acknowledge when you use the ideas of other people (whether that be other students or published materials from websites, books, the media, etc.). If you have questions about citations, academic honesty, or the acceptability of collaborations, please see me. You should include the honor code on all the written work you hand in for this class. The Honor Code reads: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code on this assignment."

Educational Access: I am committed to creating inclusive learning environments and to designing a course in which all students can learn. If any aspects of the instruction or design of the course result in dis/ability-related barriers to your participation, please let me know. If you receive any specific accommodations, please provide documentation from the Disability Service Office.

Extra Help: My door is open if you ever feel you need extra help or direction in any way, or if you would like to discuss the reading or other topics of interest to you. Besides my regularly scheduled office hours, I am available by appointment. The best way to reach me is email. I am also happy to provide feedback on drafts, whether complete drafts of papers or just a topic sentence. If you would me to review draft writings, please get them to me at least **four days** before the paper is due.

## COURSE AND READING SCHEDULE

### February 4: Introduction

#### **Part I: *At the Beginning (Book: The Barbary Wars)***

### February 6: Tools of the Trade I: Approaches to US Foreign Policy History

*Secondary:* Michael Hunt, Ideology and US Foreign Policy, Chapter 1, pp. 1-18.  
Thomas McCormick, “The World-System, Hegemony, and Decline”  
Emily Rosenberg, “Gender”  
Michael Krenn, “The Adaptable Power of Racism”  
J. Garry Clifford, “Bureaucratic Politics and Policy Outcomes”  
Melvyn Leffler, “National Security, Core Values, and Power”

*Please read the Hunt and two of the other readings carefully (you can skim the others). Students whose last name start A-G should read McCormick and Rosenberg, H-Q should read Krenn and Clifford, and R-Z should read the Leffler and one other of their choice.*

### February 11: Foreign Policy in a New Nation

*Secondary:* Michael Hunt, Ideology and US Foreign Policy, pp. 19-28; 92-102

*Primary:* United States Constitution (1789)  
George Washington, Farewell Address, excerpts (1796)

### February 13: Discussion Session #1 (Reading Paper due by February 14 at noon)

*Book:* Frank Lambert, The Barbary Wars

#### **Part II: *Expansion (Book: Barbarian Virtues; Film: Martyrs of the Alamo)***

### February 18: Westward Expansion, Indian Wars, and the Foreign Policy of Slavery

*Secondary:* Michael Hunt, Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy, 29-36, 46-58  
Michael Karp, This Vast Southern Empire, pp. 1-9, 57-69

*Primary:* Andrew Jackson, “On Indian Removal” (1830)  
John O’Sullivan, excerpt, “The Great Nation of Futurity” (1839)  
Pres. James Polk Lays Claim to Texas and Oregon (1845)  
Speckled Snakes response to removal (1830)

### February 20: Building the American Empire

*Secondary:* Daniel Immerwahr, “Introduction: Looking Beyond the Logo Map” in How to Hide an Empire, pp., 3-19  
Kristin Hoganson, Fighting for American Manhood, excerpt  
Hunt, Ideology and US Foreign Policy, pp. 36-45; 77-91

*Primary:* Albert Beveridge, “March of the Flag” (1898)  
American Anti-Imperialist League Platform (1899)

**February 25: Discussion Session #2 (Reading or Film Paper due by noon on Feb. 26)**

*Book:* Matthew Jacobson, Barbarian Virtues, Chapters 1-3, 6-Conclusion, pp. 1-138, 220-265.  
*Film:* *Martyrs of the Alamo* (1915)

**Part III: *Becoming a World Power (Film: “Casablanca”)***

**February 27: Wilson, WWI, and the Progressive Ideal**

*Secondary:* Gary Gerstle, American Crucible, 81-95

*Primary:* Woodrow Wilson’s War Message to Congress, Feb. 3, 1917  
U.S. Sedition Act (1918)  
“Four Minute Men: Volunteer Speeches During World War I”

**March 3: Reconsidering America’s Place: The Interwar Years**

*Secondary:* Frank Costigliola, “U.S. Cultural Expansion in an Era of Systematic Upheaval”  
Susan Zeiger, “Finding a Cure for War: Women’s Politics and the Peace Movement in the 1920s”

*Primary:* Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points Address to Congress (January 8, 1918)

**March 5: The 1930s and the Road to War**

*Secondary:* Stephen Ambrose, “Just Dumb Luck: U.S. Entry Into World War II”  
Hunt, Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy, pp. 139-150

*Primary:* Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fireside Chat, Dec. 29, 1940  
Charles Lindbergh, America First Speech in Des Moines, Iowa, September 11, 1941  
*Casablanca* (1942)

**Film Paper due by noon on March 6**

**March 10: “Total War” in Asia and Europe**

*Secondary:* Richard Overly, “The Successes of American Mobilization”  
John Dower, “Race, Language, and War in Two Cultures: World War II in Asia”

*Primary:* President Harry S. Truman, diary entries, July and August 1945

**Part IV: *Superpower (Book: The Right Kind of Revolution; Film: “The Manchurian Candidate”)***

**March 12: Origins of the Cold War [Primary Source Analysis Due]**

*Secondary:* John Lewis Gaddis, “Dividing the World” in We Know Now, 1-25.  
Arnold Offner, “Provincialism and Confrontation: Truman’s Responsibility”

*Primary:* George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," excerpt (1947)  
The Truman Doctrine (1947)  
National Security Council Paper NSC-68, excerpt (1950)  
Video, "He May Be a Communist," Armed Forces Propaganda Film

**March 17: The Cold War Arms Race**

*Secondary:* H.W. Brands, "The Age of Vulnerability: Eisenhower and the National Insecurity State"  
Elaine Tyler May, "Explosive Issues: Sex, Women, and the Bomb"

*Primary:* "Duck and Cover," United States Office of Civil Defense Video, 1951

**March 19 US Policy in the Middle East (Scrapbook sample due)**

*Secondary:* Melani McAlister, "Benevolent Supremacy" in Epic Encounters, pp. 43-83

*Primary:* "The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine," Feb. 17, 1948

**SPRING BREAK**

**March 31 The Cold War Gets Hot: US Policy in Vietnam**

*Secondary:* Christian Appy, "What Was the Vietnam War About?" *New York Times*, March 26, 2018  
James Thomson, "How Could Vietnam Happen: An Autopsy?," *The Atlantic*, April 1968  
Leslie Gelb, "Vietnam: The System Worked," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1971

*Primary:* Lyndon B. Johnson, "Peace Without Conquest," Address at Johns Hopkins University, April 7, 1965

**April 2 Living Vietnam**

Film Screening in class: *Hearts and Minds* (dir. Peter Davis, 1974)

**April 7: Discussion Session #3 (Reading or Film Paper due by noon on April 8)**

*Book:* Michael Latham, The Right Kind of Revolution (entire)

*Film:* *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)

**Part V: Overcoming the Vietnam Syndrome (Book: The New American Militarism; Film: "Top Gun")**

**April 9: Foreign Policy in the 1970s and 80s**

*Secondary:* Michael Hunt, Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy, pp. 171-189

*Primary:* Zbigniew Brzezinski, "US Foreign Policy: The Search for Focus," *Foreign Affairs*, 1973

**April 14: Reagan's America and The End of the Cold War**

*Secondary:* Greg Grandin, "Iraq is Not Arabic for Nicaragua: Central America and the Rise of the New Right"

*Primary:* Ronald Reagan, Speech at the House of Commons, June 8, 1982  
Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of Great Powers, excerpt (1987)

**April 16: Discussion Session #4 (Reading or Film Paper due by April 17 at 5:00pm)**

*Book:* Andrew Bacevich, The New American Militarism

*Film:* *Top Gun* (1986)

**Part VI: 9-11 and Beyond (Book: Andreas, Border Games)**

**April 21: After the Cold War—The Search for New Directions**

*Secondary:* Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide," *The Atlantic*, September 2001

*Primary:* George Bush, "Address to Congress on Persian Gulf Crisis," Sept. 11, 1990  
Bill Clinton, "Remarks at Freedom House," October 6, 1995

**April 23: Wars on Terror and the Middle East: American Policy since 9-11**

*Secondary:* Catherine Scott, "Rescue in the Age of Empire," Children, Masculinity, and the War on Terror," in (En)Gendering the War on Terror, 97-117

*Primary:* President George W. Bush Address to Congress, Sept. 20, 2001  
"The National Security Strategy of the United States," Sept. 2002

**April 28: Discussion Session #5 (Reading Paper due by 5pm on April 29)**

*Book:* Peter Andreas, Border Games (entire)

**April 30: The Trump Presidency: Dismantling the Postwar Order?**

*Secondary:* Doug Stokes, "Trump, American Hegemony, and the Future of the Liberal International Order," *International Affairs* 94: 1 (2018), 133-150.

**May 5: NO CLASS MEETING**

**May 7: Conclusions/The Future of American Foreign Policy (Scrapbook Due in Class)**

**May 13: Take-Home Final Exam Due by 4:00pm**