

History 607: America's Impact on the World: Race and Gender in Foreign Affairs

Plummer
Spring 2006

Syllabus

Coverage: The course focuses on the twentieth century, although one of our texts, H. W. Brands, *What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy*, will provide us with a critical overview of U.S. foreign policy as a whole. Our topics include nationalism and internationalism; and struggles against racism and colonialism. We will examine the two world wars as they reflect the postwar resurgence of the global state system and the challenge mounted by those seeking colonial liberation and human rights for minority subjects. The Cold War, the restructuring of race relations, and the multilateralism that accompanied the demise of empires, will be studied. We will explore how foreign relations have intersected with human rights, race relations, and cultural issues in the twentieth century. In so doing, we will study newer work that reinterprets some of the assumptions associated with conventional diplomatic history. The course will give centrality to several subjects once treated as marginal in this sub-field. A broad narrative structure will support our inquiry into the topics. Readings and lectures will supply much of the narrative.

Required texts: Book orders were placed at Rainbow Books, 426 West Gilman. They are also on 3-hour reserve at College Library. All of these are paperback editions.

H. W. Brands, *What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy*.

Penny von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anti-Colonialism, 1937-1957*.

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000*.

John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War*.

Michael Feher, *Powerless by Design: The Age of the International Community*.

Evaluation: Grades will be based on a research paper, an oral presentation, and two exams, as follows:

Midterm. This will consist of an in-class essay exam and the completion, by the same date, of an outline and an annotated bibliography of sources being used to do the research project. 25 percent of the grade. A study day will be provided to assist students in having this material prepared on time.

Research paper: Student research forms the central project of the course: each student will do either 1) a case study that illuminates an aspect of the history of U. S. foreign relations linked to human rights, race relations, or cultural diplomacy; or 2) a critical study of the treatment of these themes in diplomatic-historical literature. I will subsequently distribute handouts that give more detailed information about how the research paper should be written. The paper represents the culmination of the student's work in the course. Specific details about its length, format, etc. will be provided on the handout. Any graduate students taking the course should see me individually about any specific arrangements regarding the research project. 30 percent of the grade.

Oral presentation. All students will give 10-15 minute, in-class oral reports on their research during the final third of the semester. These are required but not graded. They are designed to help students organize their thoughts and give them feedback from the class on their projects, which can enhance the quality of the final paper. 20 percent of the grade.

Final examination. A take-home essay exam that will be similar in form to the midterm but more detailed. 25 percent of the grade. (Due May 9th.)

Attendance. Attendance is required. Attendance will be kept for each class session, starting Week 3. The reason is to protect the interests of students who diligently come to class and help create a community by their

presence. It is based on the idea of a classroom as a social entity and education as a commitment. Anyone can have up to 8 unexcused absences (i.e., one month of classes) without penalty. Students who are members of teams, or involved with University-sponsored activities that may occasionally take them away from class, should provide a schedule of their absences to their professors. Students with persistent schedule conflicts, or those who have difficulty getting up for morning classes, should make a decision about whether to take the course. Those otherwise missing more than 8 class sessions cannot earn more than a C in the course.

What the grades mean:

A (93-100) - Exams demonstrate superior knowledge, ability to reason on the fly, and writing ability on essay questions. Oral presentations are well organized, demonstrate original thought, are clearly presented, and reflect mastery of the sources used. Research papers have a well-defined, logically developed argument that takes into account possible counter-arguments, and that shows strong evidence of original thinking. "A" papers are soundly structured, skillfully written, lack grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors, and are careful about citations.

AB (85-92) – ABs are exams that are characterized by sound knowledge, capacity to sustain an argument, and write clearly and well spontaneously. Oral presentations are carefully thought out and organized, knowledgeable, but not superlative. Papers are well researched but not exhaustively so. They indicate solid understanding of the sources used. Such papers are well argued and do not simply mirror the conclusions of other authors. They are clearly written and identify all sources used and cited, but are not outstanding as far as writing style or insights are concerned. ABs have a minimum of grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.

B (80-84) – "B" exams have covered some but not most of the bases in drawing factual information out of sources and in reaching conclusions. Essays show an adequate grasp of the subject but arguments are not strongly supported, and writing is okay but not impressive. Oral presentations may lack organizational focus. Research papers make a good argument but do not provide evidence to support all of it, or may not be logical or well put together throughout. Sometimes there is slippage with regard to citations and grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.

BC (77-79) – Exams indicate borderline knowledge of facts and may not fully answer the question, try to answer another question, or have writing problems. Oral presentations are loosely organized and may be based on inadequate research. Papers may be insufficiently researched and have serious structural or organizational problems. They may feature weak arguments or adequate arguments that are weakly supported. Not enough attention has been paid to grammatical, punctuation, and spelling issues.

C (70-76) – So-called "average" exams display limited knowledge of facts. They may skirt the questions asked, lack structure, or show evidence of writing difficulties. Oral presentations may be poorly organized and presented, and inadequately researched. Research papers indicate through inaccuracies or lack of material that not enough research was done. They may have writing problems serious enough to confuse a reader. "C" papers do not present a real argument, or do little to support it. They may contain extensive citation that just fills up space with poor documentation of the citations. These papers pay little or no attention to grammar, punctuation, or spelling.

D (69-65) – Deficient exams indicate poor knowledge of facts and weak arguments. Oral presentations show lack of preparation through faulty organization and research. Research papers do not contain much information and lack a thesis. Extensive difficulties with writing and documentation are apparent. No attention is paid to the paper's appearance, which might contain extensive grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors

F (64) - Failure to carry out the minimum requirements of the papers or exams as detailed above. Often a product of absence.

Classroom policies. The more controversial a subject, the more we need to respect one another's viewpoints. Class discussions can be lively and intense, but they must be diplomatic. Thought-fully criticize an idea; don't attack the person expressing it. Please turn off cell phones, pagers, and other noisemakers while in class and enter and leave the room quietly at the beginning and end of the session.

History 607, Spring 2006

REVISED COURSE CALENDAR
(Readings are due for the following class meeting)

January 17 - Introduction to the course.

Reading: Brands, Preface and ch 1.

January 19: Defining terms; “exemplarists” and “vindicationists” in a world of exceptionalism

Reading: Brands, ch. 2

January 24: Imperialists and anti-imperialists

Reading: Brands, ch. 3

January 26: The peace movement in the early 20th century

Reading: Brands, ch. 4

January 31: Progressives and modernization

Reading: Brands, ch. 5.

February 2: In search of perfection

Reading: Von Eschen, Intro and ch. 1

February 7: The Progressive Era, gender, and foreign policy

Reading: Von Eschen chs. 2-3

February 9: The African American challenge to the “national interest”

Reading: Von Eschen, ch. 4-5

February 14: The Italo-Ethiopian War and the African diaspora

Reading: Von Eschen, ch. 6

February 16: Colonialism and “containment”

Reading: : Von Eschen, ch. 7

February 21: Updating racial ideology

Reading; Brands, ch. 6

February 23: Moral values in the Cold War

Reading: Von Eschen, ch. 8 and Conclusion; Brands, ch. 7.

February 28: The academy weighs in

Reading: Brands, chs. 8-9; Fousek, Intro and ch. 1

March 2: Domesticity in Cold War culture

Reading: Brands, ch. 10-11; Fousek, ch. 2

March 7: Midterm review

Reading: No assignment

March 9 – **MIDTERM (in class)**

March 14 – Spring Break, no classes

March 16 – Spring Break, no classes

March 21: The Ugly American

Reading: Fousek, ch. 3 and ‘Visual Essay,’ pp. 91-102.

March 23: Exporting American values

Reading: Fousek, chs. 4-5.

March 28: Cultural diplomacy

Reading: Fousek ch. 6 and Conclusion

March 30: The Middle East in the American imagination

Reading: McAlister, Intro and ch. 1.

April 4: Islam and dissidence

Reading: McAlister, ch. 2

April 6: Oil and culture

Reading: McAlister, ch. 3. Feher, Preface and ch. 1, “A Puzzling Chiasma”

April 11: Women and war

Reading: McAlister, ch. 4; Feher, ch. 2, “A New Doctrine”

April 13 – **Student presentations**

Reading: McAlister. ch. 5; Feher, ch. 3, “A Radical Critique”

April 18 – **Student presentations**

Reading: McAlister, ch. 6 and Conclusion.

April 20 – **Student presentations**

Reading: Feher, chs. 4-5, “An Ambiguous Evolution” and “An Unsettling Message”

April 25 – **Student presentations**

Reading: No assignment

April 27 – **RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

May 2: The era of the international community

Reading: Feher, ch. 6 “An Emerging Polarization”

May 4 – Last class day - Conclusion

May 9 – **FINAL EXAM (take-home)** due at 4:45 pm