Syllabus - US and the Modern World (Irwin)

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HIS 6939/7939-920: The U.S. and the Modern World

(Spring 2014)

Class Meets Wednesdays, 2:00-5:45 p.m., SOC 254

Dr. Julia F. Irwin

Course Description and Objectives

This readings course examines the history of the United States and its relations with the world from the turn of the 20th century to the present. We will analyze the ways that the U.S. government and U.S. citizens have influenced the wider world, politically, economically, and culturally. At the same time, we will consider how people and events outside the United States have influenced U.S. domestic history. Topics include internationalism and isolationism; military interventions, economic expansion, and the spread of American cultural, religious, and social ideas; the role of state vs. non-state actors; and the ideology, rhetoric, and reality of “American exceptionalism.” The written assignment for the course will be fairly flexible, and will be tailored to each student’s specific research needs and interests.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory and counts as a substantial part of your participation grade. However, I am human and know that you are as well — whether it’s due to illness, religious observances, family situations, car trouble, or some other unforeseen circumstance, you might have an excused absence. So, what’s my policy?

· If you know in advance that you will be absent, please tell me by email as soon as possible.

· If you wake up sick as a dog one day, please do us all a favor and stay home. If you have family or personal emergencies, you should of course attend to those as well. Should one of these events occur, please send me an email by the end of the day to let me know why you didn’t attend class.

· Makeup Policy:

  o One excused absence can be made up by both posting your reader’s report (see next section) and writing a 1,000-word response to the class readings for the day that you missed. If you have an absence excused in advance, the questions must be posted to Blackboard by 4:00 p.m. on the day of class and the paper must be emailed to me. If you have an unexpected absence, we will discuss the appropriate amount of makeup time and
settle on a due date.

- **A second excused absence** may be made up by posting your three discussion questions and writing a 2,000-word response to the class readings for the day.

- If you miss more than three classes, we will need to talk.

**Grading and Evaluation Policy**

*Participation and Engagement (40%)*

- You are expected to read all of the required readings before class and to come to class each week ready, willing, and eager to participate in class discussion. Those who do not contribute actively to the seminar table should not expect to do well in this class.

- **For each monograph that you read** (except for those you review—see below) you are required to complete a typed **“reader’s report”** that includes the following information:

  - The full citation information of the book, in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style*
  - The book’s main thesis or argument, in your words (1-3 sentences)
  - A description of the book’s most important contributions or points (3 or 4 ideas, 2-4 sentences total)
  - A short discussion of how this book relates to the “grand narrative” of U.S. foreign relations presented in the week’s chapter of *From Colony to Superpower* (2-4 sentences).
  - Three discussion questions (2-4 sentences each). These questions should be based on your reactions the week’s readings and their relation to past readings and themes. Your questions should include questions about both history and historiography—in other words, try to talk about both the arguments and methodology of the monographs and their relation to the historical events that are traced in *From Colony to Superpower*. We will use them as the basis for our in class conversations about the book.

- **You are expected to bring a hard copy of this reader’s report with you to class.**

  - I will collect them from you at the end of class and will grade them on a check-plus/check/check-minus scale.

    § A check means full credit. As long as you put a little thought into them, it is pretty easy to get a check.

    § A check-plus is the same amount of credit as a check, but means I was impressed with your thoughts. You should feel good about yourself!
§ A check-minus means no credit for the questions. If you get several of these, we should probably talk about how to improve your questions.

- **You will receive a maximum of 3 participation points per day, determined as follows:**

  o **3 points:** Comes to class, has clearly read and engaged with the readings, receives a check or check plus on the reader’s report, and contributes substantially to discussion.

  § **Note: the quality of your comments counts.** You don’t have to be brilliant, but simply saying “Me like book” or “yup” will **not** count. If you are unsure of what to say, try asking one of the three discussion questions you have in front of you.

  o **2 points:** Comes to class and receives a check or check-plus on reader’s report, but only says a few things/does not participate substantially; or, comes to class and contributes a lot to discussion but receives a check-minus on his/her own discussion questions.

  o **1 point:** Comes to class but does not really speak and receives a check-minus on the reader’s report.

  o **0 points:** Does not come to class at all. As mentioned in the attendance policy section, you have the opportunity to make up absences.

**Three Book Reviews: One 500-word, One 750-word, and One 1,000-word (20%)**

- We will read twelve monographs for this course, and you will each be required to review three of them. Your reviews should be in a format similar to what that you would find in *The American Historical Review, Diplomatic History, the Journal of American History*, and other scholarly journals (we will discuss this format further in class).

- We will determine book assignments on the first day of class so that a few people review each book.

- Your book reviews will be due in class on the day that we are discussing your assigned book.

  o For the days you are writing a book review, you do not have to turn in a reader’s report.

  o However, you **will be expected** to give a **brief (5 minute) presentation** on the book at the beginning of the class, highlighting both its merits and its faults, as a way to start off the day’s discussion. This presentation will be factored into your grade for the review.
A Written Assignment of at least 3,000-3,500 Words (Roughly 10-12 pages) (40%)

· This assignment is due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 30.

· You should plan to consult with me about this assignment sometime in the early part of the semester. Feel free to stop in during office hours or schedule an appointment.

· You are required to submit a bibliography and a written statement of your final assignment plans (approximately 250 words) in class on Wednesday, February 12 (please make sure you have met with me prior to this date).

· For this assignment, I will expect you to draw on the concepts and methods from class readings. However, the range of possible topics and approaches that you can take is quite broad. I will help you to come up with a topic based on your interests, your intended fields of study, and your professional goals.

· This essay should be written formally, with attention to good grammar, style, and proper citations.

· You may choose the format of this assignment from the following options, depending on your stage of study and your aims for the semester and for graduate school:

  o **Historiographical Review Essay.** For this option, you should select and read 7-10 monographs, 15-20 articles, or a combination of the two, clustered around a coherent theme that is somehow related to this class. The possibilities are quite numerous. You might examine the historiography of development in U.S. foreign relations, explore debates over American imperialism in the scholarly literature, or look at gender, sex, and reproduction and their relation to U.S. foreign policy. Really, there are plenty of options. One—but only one—of the books may come from the required course readings. For ideas and models, you may wish to consult Robert Schulzinger’s *A Companion to American Foreign Relations.*

  o **A close, analytical paper based on primary sources and relevant historiography.** This is not a formal research paper, but an attempt to consider primary sources in a historiographical context. It can take the form of a conference paper, a research proposal, the beginnings of an article, or a part of a M.A. thesis of doctoral dissertation. If you select this option, you will need to select and read both some relevant secondary sources (4-5 monographs, 7-8 articles, or a combination of the two) and a small collection of relevant primary sources (political speeches, NSA documents, *FRUS* documents, novels, magazine articles, etc.). Your final essay will include both a brief historiographical section and a section in which you engage with these primary sources.

  o **Development of a paper you have already started in another course.** If you have already started work on a research topic that is relevant to this course, you are welcome—and encouraged—to develop it further. For example, if you wrote a historiographical essay in another course related to the Cold War, you might want to build on that essay by extending your research into primary sources. If you’ve already
written a short research paper on imperialism for another class, you might want to work on expanding that into a journal length publication. We can discuss the option that is right for you.

**Books Available for Purchase**

Believe me, I know that books are expensive. I encourage you to buy these used (just make sure you get the correct edition) or to share books with one or two of your fellow students.

- George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*
- Theresa Rundstedtler, *Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner: Boxing in the Shadow of the Global Color Line*
- Julie Greene, *The Canal Builders: Making America’s Empire at the Panama Canal*
- Brooke Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture Between the World Wars*
- Jenifer Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air: Aviation and the American Ascendancy*
- Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America’s Vision for Human Rights*
- David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order*
- Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*
- Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India*
- Frederik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America’s Vietnam*
- Paul Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order*
- Sarah Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network*

**Purely Optional:** Julia F. Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation’s Humanitarian Awakening*. I have assigned my book for this course, but I do not expect you to buy it. I will have enough loaner copies for everyone, so no need to buy it (unless you want to).

**Schedule of Class Meetings**
Jan 8: Meet and Greet. Before this class, please read the following:

- Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, Introduction (pp. 1-10).


Jan 15: Rundstedtler, *Jack Johnson: Rebel Sojourner* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 8

Jan 22: Greene, *The Canal Builders* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 9

Jan 29: Irwin, *Making the World Safe* (you are not expected to purchase this; I have loaner copies) and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 10

Feb 5: Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 11

Feb 12: Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 12

**Your tentative bibliography and final paper proposal are due in class today.**

Feb 19: Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 13

Feb 26: Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 14

Mar 5: Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 15

[March 12: No Class—Spring Break]

Mar 19: Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 16

Mar 26: Logevall, *Embers of War* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 17

Apr 2: Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 18

Apr 9: Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War* and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, ch. 19

Apr 16: No Class—Work on Final Papers and Individual Meetings with Professor

Apr 23: No Class—Work on Final Papers and Individual Meetings with Professor

**Final Papers due Wednesday, April 30, by 11:59 p.m.**
Other Policies

- **Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.** I take plagiarism very seriously. Any student caught plagiarizing will receive an FF for the course. You should make yourself aware of what counts as plagiarism. Ignorance - saying “I didn’t know this counted as plagiarizing!” - is no excuse. **You must upload your final essay to SafeAssign.** The discussion questions, topic proposal, and annotated bibliography are due in hard copy.

  o For more information about plagiarism, go to [http://www.c21te.usf.edu/plagiarism/index.html](http://www.c21te.usf.edu/plagiarism/index.html). There, you can access a useful tutorial about what counts as plagiarism and how to avoid it.

  o For information about plagiarism in USF’s Undergraduate Catalog, go to [http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0506/adadap.htm](http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0506/adadap.htm).

  o **USF’s Statement regarding SafeAssign:** USF has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service called SafeAssign. This allows instructors and students to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. Assignments are compared automatically with a database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how a student’s paper was plagiarized. I reserve and will exercise the right to 1) request that assignments be submitted as electronic files in addition to hard copies, and 2) to electronically submit assignments to SafeAssignment or any other plagiarism detection software, or 3) to ask students to submit their assignments to SafeAssignment through myUSF.

- **Late Penalties.** All papers and other assignments by the date and time stated on the syllabus. If you wish to makeup your absences, see information above.

  o I am willing to consider extensions on the papers but **only** if you talk with me at least a week in advance.

  o All late papers will be subject to a penalty of 1/3 of a letter grade per day.

- **Students with disabilities.** USF is committed to providing reasonable support for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Students with Disabilities Services in order to received academic accommodations. SDS encourages students to notify instructors of accommodation needs at least 5 business days prior to needing the accommodation. A letter from SDS must accompany this request.

Grade Scale:

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