This course will examine the development and practice of American foreign policy from the 18th to the 21st century. The class will pay particular attention to the ethical and ideological considerations propelling both architects of U.S. foreign policy and critics of those policies. We will examine the evolution of the United States into the leading world power, the use and abuse of state power, the motivation behind wars, and the role of culture in shaping U.S. foreign policy decisions. A major goal of this class is to introduce students to some key historiographical debates in the field of American foreign policy. You will thus be asked to read competing historical interpretations of certain events, and to thoughtfully and critically analyze and compare these interpretations. Students will also be asked to develop their own historical interpretations from primary sources.

A blackboard site has been created for this course. On the site, you will find the syllabus, the course readings, assignments as they are handed out, and copies of any PowerPoint presentations from the class, among other things.

**Required Texts**
The following books are available at the college bookstore and are on reserve at Mudd Library:

- Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954*
- Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*
- Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*
- Frank Lambert, *The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World*
- Melvin Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*
- Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East*

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) on the syllabus are available on the course blackboard site under the “Course Readings” heading. I highly recommend that you print out the online readings and bring them with you to class.
Course Requirements
Requirements for History 251 include two 5-page papers, two short response papers, an in-class midterm and a take-home exam.

1) Attendance and Participation
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. Excessive unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your final grade or failure of the class. As this is a discussion-oriented class, I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss the reading. 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. As a supplement to class participation, a discussion board (Foreign Policy Coffeehouse) has been established on the blackboard site. Please feel free to post comments, content, or links about anything we’re talking about in class or about contemporary foreign policy issues. Students should browse through comments on the discussion forum whenever they are on the blackboard site. Postings to the forum will count as in-class participation.

2) Historiography Paper (due in class on September 22nd)
Each student will write a 5-page paper comparing the different historical interpretations of U.S. imperialism in the 1890s. More details will be forthcoming.

3) In-Class Midterm (on October 15th)
The midterm will include short questions and an essay on lectures and readings up through October 13.

4) Paper on Thirteen Days (due in class on November 10th)
Students will be asked to analyze Kennedy’s account of the Cuban Missile crisis in a 5-6 page paper.

5) Two short response papers (for discussion sessions of Sept. 8, Oct. 13 or Dec. 1)
During the semester there will be 3 class sessions dedicated to group discussion: Sept. 8th, “Foreign Policy in New Nation”; October 13th, “Placing Blame for the Cold War”; and December 1st, “Culture and US Middle East Policy.” For these discussion sessions, the class will be split into two groups and each group will attend one 40-minute discussion session (either from 9:30-10:10 or from 10:10-10:50). Each student must choose two of these sessions to write short response papers. Papers should be no more than 500 words, and should be typed and double-spaced. The response paper should not simply summarize the reading or readings. Rather, you should explore the frameworks, themes, and approaches of the reading(s) and/or analyze the author(s) arguments. Response papers are due at the beginning of the class when the reading is being discussed. Response papers will not be accepted late; you cannot turn in a paper after the discussion has taken place.

6) Final Exam (handed out in class on Dec. 10th, due by noon on Dec. 16)
In the take-home final exam, students will be asked to bring together course readings and lectures to respond to a single question in a 6-8 page essay.
All work will be graded on a 100-point scale. Assignments (besides the response paper, which will not be accepted late) will be marked down 5 points for every day they are overdue, unless I have given my approval for the assignment to be handed in late before the due date. As a general rule, I will gladly approve extensions in the case of illness or emergencies, but not because you have other work due at the same time, so please plan accordingly. Assignments will not be accepted more than 5 days past the original due date. Students must complete all of the assignments in order to pass the class.

All papers should be typed and double-spaced. Citations should be in the form of footnotes or endnotes based on the Chicago citation style (citation guidelines are available on blackboard).

Your grade will be based on the following:

1) Historiography Paper: 20% of final grade
2) Thirteen Days Paper: 20% of final grade
3) In-Class Midterm: 15% of final grade
4) Take Home Final Exam: 25% of final grade
5) Participation and Response Papers: 20% of final grade

Course Policies
Oberlin Honor Code: All work for this course must be done in compliance with the Oberlin Honor Code. Any cases of plagiarism will be dealt with immediately according to the letter of college policy. Plagiarism is passing the work of others off as your own work. You must acknowledge when you use the ideas of other people (whether that be other students or published materials from websites, to books, to the media).

General Courtesy: Please come to class on time, and once you’re here, plan on staying for the full class session. If you must arrive late or leave early, please let me know ahead of time. Be sure to TURN OFF your cell phone before class starts.

Computers in the Classroom: Students are welcome to take notes on a laptop during class, but students who wish to use a computer must sit in the front of the classroom.

COURSE AND READING SCHEDULE

September 1: Introduction

September 3: Crafting Foreign Policy in a New Nation

Michael Hunt, Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1-18
Foreign Policy Powers in the Constitution, 1789*

September 8: Discussion—The Struggle for Commercial Independence

Lambert, The Barbary Wars (entire)
September 10: Conquest, Expansion and Manifest Destiny

Andrew Jackson’s Case for Removal of the Indians*
John O’Sullivan on Manifest Destiny*

September 15: The United States in an Age of Empire


September 17: Foreign Policy in the Progressive Era

Teddy Roosevelt, “Raising the Regiment” from *Rough Riders* (1899)*
Eric Love, *Race Over Empire*, 73-195

September 22: Discussion—Rise to Empire: Causes and Questions (Historiography Paper Due in Class)

Richard Hofstadter, “Cuba, The Philippines and Manifest Destiny,” 145-187*
William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 18-57*
Kirsten Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, pp. 1-14, 43-67*
Eric Love, *Race Over Empire*, 1-26

September 24: World War I

Woodrow Wilson’s War Message to Congress, Feb. 3, 1917*
U.S. Sedition Act, 1918*
“Four Minute Men: Volunteer Speeches During World War I”*
Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 81-95*

September 29: The Post-World War I World Order

The Fourteen Points (1918)*
Frank Costigliola, “U.S. Cultural Expansion in an Era of Systematic Upheaval”*

October 1: The 1930s: The Depression, Neutrality, and the Road to World War II

Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, pp. 139-150
Franklin Roosevelt, “The Arsenal of Democracy” (1940)*
October 6: “Total War” in Asia and Europe: The U.S. in WWII

Michael Adams, *The Best War Ever*, 1-19*
Stephen Ambrose, “Just Dumb Luck: U.S. Entry into World War II”*
John Dower, “Race, Language and War in Two Cultures: World War II in Asia”*

October 8: Postwar Europe and the Origins of the Cold War

George Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” (1947)*
The Truman Doctrine (1947)*
Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*, 3-84

October 13: *Discussion--Placing Blame for the Cold War: The Historical Debate*

John Lewis Gaddis, “Two Cold War Empires: Imposition vs. Multilateralism”*
Arnold Offner, “ Provincialism and Confrontation: Truman’s Responsibility”*
William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 204-275*

October 15: *Midterm Examination (In Class)*

October 20 and October 22: NO CLASS—Fall Break

October 27: Colonialism and Anticolonialism: US Policy from the 40s to the 60s

Cary Fraser, “An American Dilemma: Race and Realpolitik in the American Response to
the Bandung Conference, 1955”*
Thomas Borstelmann, “‘Hedging Our Bets and Buying Time’: John Kennedy and Racial
Revolutions in the American South and Southern Africa”*

October 29: Covert Action and the Cold War

Nick Cullather, *Secret History* (entire)

November 3: The Cold War and the Arms Race in the 1950s and 60s

Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*, Chapter 2, pp. 84-150
Carol Cohn, “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals”*

November 5: *Radio Bikini* (film to be shown in class)
November 10: The Cuban Missile Crisis: Case Study of a Cold War Confrontation (2nd Paper Due)

Robert Kennedy, Thirteen Days
Optional: Leffler, For the Soul of Mankind, 151-201

November 12: The Vietnam War

Leffler, For the Soul of Mankind, 201-233
Leslie Gelb, “Vietnam: The System Worked”*
George Herring, “The Meaning of Vietnam”*

November 17: The United States in the Middle East: A Brief History

Start reading Melani McAlister, Epic Encounters

November 19: Foreign Policy in the 1970s and 80s

Leffler, For The Soul of Mankind, 234-337
Michael Hunt, Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy, pp. 171-189
Greg Grandin, “Iraq is Not Arabic for Nicaragua: Central America and the Rise of the New Right”*

November 24: Reagan, Bush, and The End of the Cold War

Leffler, For the Soul of Mankind, 338-414, 427-450

November 26: NO CLASS — Thanksgiving Break (Continue reading Epic Encounters)

December 1: Discussion Session: Cultural Politics and American Middle East Policy

Melani McAlister, Epic Encounters

December 3: Creating a New “World Order” in the Post-Cold War World

George Bush, “Address to Congress on Persian Gulf Crisis,” Sept. 11, 1990*
J. Martin Rochester, U.S. Foreign Policy in the 21st Century, 9-18*
Arthur Schlesinger Jr., “The Presidency and the Imperial Temptation”*

December 8: Wars on Terror: American Foreign Policy since 9-11

J. Martin Rochester, U.S. Foreign Policy in the 21st Century, 97-129, 139-159*
McAlister, Epic Encounters, Conclusion

December 10: Conclusions