

# The United States as a World Power

PLSC 486B, Spring 2010

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This course will examine the rise of the United States as a world power in theoretical and historical perspective. This change is sometimes seen as a natural product of growing American economic potential but the process was it represented a break with previous national policy and was extremely controversial. The course will examine comparative historical and theoretical explanations suggested by historians and political scientists. A secondary goal of the course is to provide students with an opportunity to use and develop their writing and critical thinking skills, as well as to expose them to the theories, methods, and data social scientists use to address topics like those covered in the class.

## Course Materials

We will read all (or nearly all) of eight books during as part of this course. They have all been ordered by the Binghamton University Book Store, but you can obtain them from any source you like.

Ikenberry, G. John. 2001. *After Victory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Iriye, Akira. 1993. *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, vol. 3, The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kennan, George F. 1984 [1951]. *American Diplomacy*, expanded edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

LaFeber, Walter. 1993. *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, vol. 2, America's Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mann, Michael. 2003. *Incoherent Empire*. New York: Verso.

Narizny, Kevin. 2007. *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Williams, William A. 2008 [1958]. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 50th Anniversary Edition. New York: W. W. Norton.

Zakaria, Fared. 1998. *From Wealth to Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

In addition to the books, I have assigned a number of articles and book excerpts, each of which is listed in the course outline below. You can obtain all of the readings either through the J-STOR database, which can be reached through the library's website, or on the Blackboard page for this course, as indicated below.

## Course Requirements and Grading

**Grading Scale.** Your semester grade will be computed on a 100-point scale as follows: 94-100 = A; 91-93 = A-; 88-90 = B+; 84-87 = B; 81-83 = B-; 78-80 = C+; 74-77 = C; 71-73 = C-; 65-70 =

D; 0-64 = F. You will receive a letter grade on your term paper and for class participation. These correspond to numeric grades as follows: A = 100; A- = 93; B+ = 89; B = 85; B- = 82; C+=79; C = 75; C- = 72; D = 67; F = 50. You will receive a numeric grade on the quizzes.

**Attendance and Participation.** Because this class is a seminar, we will spend nearly all our time discussing the assigned readings. There will be no lectures. Your participation is essential to the success of the class. Completing the assigned reading is vital, but you also need to be prepared to discuss them. Make sure you know the key features of each author's argument. Read and consider the discussion questions. Be prepared to explain your position in class. The quality of your participation in class discussion will count for 30 percent of your semester grade.

This class meets only once each week, so we have relatively few sessions. For this reason, attendance is especially important. If you miss more than one class for any reason, your final grade will be lowered by one full letter grade for each additional session you do not attend. No excuses will be accepted.

**Quizzes.** During the semester, there will be seven unannounced quizzes. Each will consist of 3-5 multiple choice questions about the reading for that week. These questions will be designed to test your basic knowledge of the substance of the reading. Your six highest quiz grades will account for 20 percent of your final grade.

**Term Paper.** Each student will write a term paper on a topic related to the course. This paper should be roughly 15-25 pages in length, although the precise number of pages will not be an important determinant of your grade. A prospectus for your term paper is due no later than the March 24th class meeting. The prospectus is important. It will count for 10 percent of your final grade. The prospectus should do the following:

1. State a research question, explaining why it is important. This question could be historically specific (e.g., "Why didn't the United States annex Hawaii in 1893?") or it may be more general (e.g., "Why did the United States intervene in response to some internal conflicts in Caribbean states during the 1898-1933 period, but not others?").
2. Briefly discuss at least one theoretical or historical argument that might help answer your research question. If they are relevant, you should refer to the works we will read during the semester.
3. Explain how you will answer your research question. You may do so using a careful study of historical sources on a single case, or by gathering data on a larger number of cases.
4. Provide a list of the sources you will use. In addition to giving a citation for each source, you should write one or two sentences explaining what information it will provide and how it will relate to your overall argument. For example, you might locate statistics on U.S. trade and investment in various Caribbean basin states during the 1898-1933 period, cite this source, and note that you plan to use it to show the relevance (or irrelevance) of these economic considerations in shaping the places where the United States intervened.

The term paper is due no later than 4:00 p.m. on May 10th. You should submit both a hard copy and an electronic version to turnitin.com through the Blackboard page for this class. Your term paper will be worth 40% of your final grade for the semester.

**Plagiarism.** Originality is extremely important in relatively long writing assignments like the one in this class. Make sure you indicate all excerpts that are quoted or closely paraphrased from another work with quotation marks. The origins of your ideas should be properly cited. If you are unsure about your citation practices, please consult me. Submitting as your own the work of another author is plagiarism, and is completely unacceptable. Anyone submitting plagiarized work will receive an "F" in the course. I will also request further disciplinary action from the University.

### **Tentative Schedule**

The dates and reading assignments may change during the semester. If so, an announcement will be made in class.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>
<b>January 27</b>	Introduction—no reading assignment
<b>February 3</b>	<p><b>Economic Expansion and International Political Ambition I</b>            LaFeber, Walter. 1993. <i>The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, vol. 2, America's Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913</i>. New York: Cambridge University Press.</p>
<b>February 10</b>	<p><b>Contemporary Thinking on Foreign Policy, 1899-1901</b>  <a href="#">Mahan, Alfred Thayer. 1897 [1890]. "The United States Looking Outward." In Mahan, ed., <i>The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future</i>. New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company. 3-27.</a>  <a href="#">Twain, Mark. 1992 [1901]. "To The Person Sitting in Darkness." In Jim Zwick, ed., <i>Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire</i>. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. 22-39.</a>            Carnegie, Andrew. 1899. "Americanism versus Imperialism." <i>North American Review</i>, <a href="#">January 1899: 1-14</a>, and <a href="#">March 1899: 362-73</a>.  <a href="#">Adams, Brooks. 1900. "The New Struggle for Life Among Nations." In Adams, ed., <i>America's Economic Supremacy</i>. London: MacMillan. 26-53.</a>            Kennan, George F. 1984 [1951]. <i>American Diplomacy</i>, expanded edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 3-54.</p>
<b>February 17</b>	No class meeting
<b>February 24</b>	<p><b>Economic Expansion and International Political Ambition II</b>            Williams, William A. 2008 [1958]. <i>The Tragedy of American Diplomacy</i>, 50th Anniversary Edition. New York: W. W. Norton.</p>
<b>March 3</b>	<p><b>Did Economic Expansion Really Drive Political Ambition?</b>            Lake, David A. 1988. "The State and American Trade Strategy in the Pre-Hegemonic Era." <i>International Organization</i> 42 (1): 32-58. (JSTOR)            Thompson, J. A. 1973. "William Appleman Williams and The American Empire." <i>American Studies</i> 7 (1): 91-104. (Blackboard)            Field, James A. 1978. "American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book." <i>American Historical Review</i> 83 (3): 644-683. Includes responses</p>

by Walter LaFeber and Robert L. Beisner and rejoinder by Field. (JSTOR)  
 Zevin, Robert. 1972. "An Interpretation of American Imperialism." *Journal of Economic History* 32 (1): 316-60 (JSTOR)

Pletcher, David M. 1984. "1861-1898: Economic Growth and Diplomatic Adjustment." In William H. Becker and Samuel F. Wells, Jr., *Economics and World Power*. New York: Columbia University Press. 119-172. (Blackboard)

Becker, William H. 1984. "1899-1920: American Adjusts to World Power." In William H. Becker and Samuel F. Wells, Jr., *Economics and World Power*. New York: Columbia University Press. 173-224. (Blackboard)

**March 10 Realism and the Rise of American Power**

Zakaria, Fareed. 1998. *From Wealth to Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**March 17 Ideology and Expanding International Political Ambition**

Hofstadter, Richard. 1966. "Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny." In Richard Hofstadter, ed., *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 145-87. (Blackboard)

[Rhodes, Edward. 1999. "Constructing Power: Cultural Transformation and Strategic Adjustment in the 1890s." In Peter Trubowitz, Emily O. Goldman, and Edward Rhodes, eds., \*The Politics of Strategic Adjustment\*. New York Columbia University Press. 29-78.](#)

Shulman, Mark. 1999. "Institutionalizing a Political Idea: Navalism and the Emergence of American Sea Power." In Peter Trubowitz, Emily O. Goldman, and Edward Rhodes, eds., *The Politics of Strategic Adjustment*. New York Columbia University Press. 79-104. (Blackboard)

Trubowitz, Peter. 1999. "Geography and Strategy: The Politics of American Naval Expansion." In Peter Trubowitz, Emily O. Goldman, and Edward Rhodes, eds., *The Politics of Strategic Adjustment*. New York Columbia University Press. 105-38. (Blackboard)

Dallek, Robert. 1982. "National Mood and American Foreign Policy: A Suggestive Essay." *American Quarterly* 34 (4): 339-61. (JSTOR)

**March 24 From Expansionism to Internationalism**

Iriye, Akira. 1993. *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, vol. 3, The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**March 31 No class meeting**

**April 7 Contemporary Thinking on American Foreign Policy, 1914-1950**

Dulles, Allen W. 1934. "The Cost of Peace." *Foreign Affairs* 12 (4): 567-78. (Blackboard)

Kennan, George F. 1984 [1951]. *American Diplomacy*, expanded edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 55-103; 157-79.

[Lippmann, Walter. 1915. \*The Stakes of Diplomacy\*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Chapter XVI \(pp. 207-230\).](#)

Lundberg, George A. 1952. "American Foreign Policy in the Light of National Interest at Mid-Century." In Harry Elmer Barnes, ed., *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Inc. (Blackboard)

**April 14      Explaining Policy Change, 1914-1950**

Frieden, Jeffrey. 1988. "Sectoral conflict and United States foreign economic policy." *International Organization* 42 (1): 59-90. (JSTOR)

Frieden, Jeffrey A. 1989. "The Economics of Intervention: American Overseas Investments and Relations with Underdeveloped Areas, 1890-1950." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1): 55-80. (JSTOR)

Lake, David A. 1983. "International Economic Structures and American Foreign Economic Policy, 1887-1934." *World Politics* 35 (4): 517-43. (JSTOR)

Legro, Jeffrey. 2000. "Whence American Internationalism?" *International Organization* 54 (2): 253-89. (JSTOR)

Stein, Arthur A. 1993. "Domestic Constraints, Extended Deterrence, and the Incoherence of Grand Strategy: The United States, 1938-1950." In Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, eds., *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (Blackboard)

**April 21      The United States in Comparative Perspective I**

Narizny, Kevin. 2007. *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

**April 28      The United States in Comparative Perspective II**

Ikenberry, G. John. 2001. *After Victory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**May 5          The United States in Comparative Perspective III**

Mann, Michael. 2003. *Incoherent Empire*. New York: Verso.