University of Western Ontario
Department of History
Fall 2012

The Crucible of the Modern World:
The United States and the International Community
2303F

Dr. Jeffery Vacante
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Office hours: Tues. 1:30-3:30pm
in Lawson Hall 2245

Wed. 9:30-11:30am
in University College 286

This course examines the emergence in the middle decades of the twentieth century of the United States as an industrial, cultural, and military power on the world stage. Americans had traditionally regarded themselves to be separate from the rest of the world, focused on building a continent and creating what some described as a city upon a hill. Beginning in the late nineteenth century and especially under the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, Americans began to come to terms with their emerging status as a world power and would champion America's newfound influence with what critics would describe as a missionary zeal. To suggest that Americans became expansionist or imperialistic only by the late nineteenth century, of course, would be to treat centuries of continental expansionism as something other than imperialism. And to claim that the United States was a reluctant imperial power is not to suggest that Americans were hesitant to use their power or modest in their claims about America's mission in the world. It is merely to suggest that when Americans found themselves drawn to overseas matters toward the end of the nineteenth century they approached the idea of a global role for the United States somewhat ambivalently.

This course focuses on the manner in which the United States has dealt with its new influence, and examines how Americans came to alter their understanding of their country's role in the world. While the course will consider aspects of America's diplomatic and foreign policy, the bulk of our time will be devoted to exploring the cultural assumptions and pressures that have guided America's relations with the rest of world, as well as the manner in which America's emergence as an imperial force served domestic cultural preoccupations much more than they reflected external pressures. In the end, this course is a cultural history of America's emergence as an imperial power in the later nineteenth century and its declining influence in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

If the late-nineteenth-century debates about American imperialism were fierce it was because they were about the meaning of the Republic itself. The historical writing on this subject has been equally fierce. This semester we will read four book-length studies that will provide some sense of how scholars have understood America's relations with the rest of the world. We begin with the spirited revisionist polemic by William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, an older work that owes much to the ideas of the progressive historian Charles Beard. As a pillar of the new-left revisionist school of American foreign policy it is of considerable historiographical value. And one need not embrace Williams' crude economic determinism to find value in this work. One might wonder, in fact, if the push for a more liberalized marketplace in the years following the end of the Cold War has made Williams' argument more applicable today than when Arthur Schlesinger dismissed it some decades ago. We will next look at George Kennan, who is the intellectual founder of the realist school of thought. In *American Diplomacy*, Kennan takes issue with the idealism and moralism that he claims had guided American foreign policy during the first half of the twentieth century. Rejecting this idealism, as well as the isolationism that it had supplanted, Kennan calls for greater realism in American foreign relations that would see the United States dealing with the rest of the world in a manner consistent with its national interest. Like Kennan and Williams, K.A. Cuordileone points to domestic cultural anxieties as drivers of American policy during the Cold War as she guides us through the process leading to America's descent

into the Vietnam War. And James Mann provides an overview of George W. Bush's foreign policy advisers in his book, *The Rise of the Vulcans*, which examines the return of idealism in American foreign policy following the end of the Cold War. These books will be supplemented by other texts by influential thinkers like Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., David Halberstam, Francis Fukuyama, and Naomi Klein.

By the end of the course, then, students will have grappled with the concept of the American Empire in the twentieth century, considered how Americans had come to understand the outside world and come to define their place in that world, and have become more familiar with some of the major historiographical debates about America's rise as a world power. In the process they will have acquired a greater historical consciousness that will permit them to more fully understand the complexity of America's involvement in such places as Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq. And by reading the books and articles assigned and conducting the primary and secondary research required for the essay, students will also improve the analytical and research skills that are expected of historians at this level.

Texts:
William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*
George Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950*
K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War*
James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*

These four books, which are available at the university bookstore and on reserve at the Weldon library, will be supplemented by articles and other readings to be made available on the course website.

Assignments and Grading: Each student will write a **research essay** on a particular issue related to America's relationship with the world in the twentieth century. Students will select the topic in consultation with the instructor. The essay will be 10-12 pages in length and draw on both primary and secondary sources. The essay is to have an argument, be well-written, provide sound analysis, follow proper scholarly conventions (including citation style: Chicago footnotes or endnotes, bibliography), and draw upon at least eight sources. *Superior essays will draw upon considerably more than eight sources*. Good essays will also rely on a *wide variety of sources*. It is **due November 14, 2012**. An identical copy of the essay must be submitted to **turnitin** through the course web page. Essays submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty of five percent the first day and one percent for every day thereafter (including weekends).

> *All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).*

There will also be a **midterm exam** (October 17) and a **final exam** during the formal exam period in December.

***Grade breakdown*:**

Research Essay	40%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%

***Lecture Schedule*:**
Sept. 12: Introduction

Sept. 19: Toward an American Empire
• Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 1-27.
• Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 3-57.

Sept. 26: A Consumers' Empire
• Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* 27-57.
• Schlesinger, "America and Empire," 118-62.

Oct. 3: American Idealism
• Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 58-161.
• Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 59-78.

Oct. 10: The Cold War
• Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 162-275.
• Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 79-192.

Oct. 17: Midterm Exam

Oct. 24: The American Century I
• Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 276-93.
• Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 1-166.

Oct. 31: The American Century II
• Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 167-246.
• David Halberstam, "The Very Expensive Education of McGeorge Bundy," *Harper's* (July 1969): 21-41.

Nov. 7: The Vietnam War
• Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 294-326.
• James C. Thomson, Jr., "How Could Vietnam Happen?—An Autopsy," *Atlantic Monthly* (April 1968).
• David Halberstam, "The Programming of Robert McNamara," *Harper's* (February 1971): 37-71.

Nov. 14: The Collapse of the Postwar Order
• Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 1-111.

Nov. 21: The End of the Cold War
• Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 112-372.
• Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* (Summer 1989)
• Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49

Nov. 28: A New World Order
• Naomi Klein, "Disaster Capitalism: The New Economy of Catastrophe" *Harper's* (Oct. 2007): 47-58

Dec. 5: Conclusion

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for more information on these resources and on mental health.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

PLAGIARISM

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

> You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'At above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. Please go to http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf to download the necessary form. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation is warranted. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once a decision has been made about accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for term tests, assignments, and exams.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or rdashfo@uwo.ca