Coca-Cola ad set in Leyte, Philippines. From: Collier’s November 3, 1945, 31; reproduced in: John Fousek, To Lead the Free World. American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 94. (“Coca-Cola” and “Coke” are registered trademarks of The Coca-Cola Company)
1. Contact Details

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2. Course Description

Twenty years ago critics described the field of U.S. foreign relations history as arcane, methodologically unsophisticated, void of theoretical reflection, overly obsessed with the state and state power, and deemed its insights largely irrelevant to other fields of historical inquiry.

Over the last two decades historians of America’s interaction with the world have productively engaged those criticisms and facilitated the impressive re-invigoration of their research area. They have produced a vibrant historiography, engaged novel research themes with sophisticated methods of inquiry, and spearheaded theoretical reflection in the writing of international history.

This seminar will introduce you to the field of U.S. international history through thematically oriented case studies. It is not a chronological introduction to America’s role in the world and assumes a basic familiarity with the contours of U.S. history. The course will simultaneously provide you with a broad perspective on some of the most influential and enduring themes in U.S. foreign relations and a thorough understanding of some of the analytical core concepts and approaches in the historiography of America’s interaction with the world.

3. Readings

3.1 Required Seminar Text (available at Western Bookstore)


3.2 Required Weekly Readings (available at Western Bookstore)


### 3.3 For Quick Orientation


### 3.4 For Further Reading

BEISNER, Robert (ed.), *American Foreign Relations since 1600: A Guide to the Literature* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2003), the most comprehensive guide to the historiography of U.S. foreign relations.

### 4. Evaluation

The final grade for this course is based on the accumulated results of four written assignments and your participation.

- Seminar Journal: 20%
- Book Review I: 10%
- Book Review II: 10%
- Research Paper: 40%
- Participation: 20%
4.1 Seminar Journal

It is important to keep a record of what you read and what we talk about in class otherwise you’ll quickly lose track of the substantial amount of information you will be gathering in this seminar.

Keep a seminar journal and critically evaluate all of your class readings every week. What do find convincing, what not, and why? Take notes of our weekly discussions and record the main issues. Keep track of your questions. Record any outside relevant insights you have gained on the topic outside the classroom through conversations, books, articles, trips, movies etc. Finally, discuss how your views on the historical role of the United States in world affairs evolve over the course of the seminar.

I would like to see your journal twice during the semester (January 30, March 20). The final copy is due April 10 at the beginning of class.

4.2 Book Reviews

You are expected to write two book reviews of approx. 1000 words each throughout the semester. For the first review you should choose from the required weekly readings; for the second review you can choose from the weekly recommended readings. Book reviews are due in class: January 23 and March 27.

4.3 Research Paper

You are expected to write a research essay of approx. 25pp for this course on a topic mutually agreed upon. Your paper should apply one of the analytical approaches we have discussed to a historical case study of your choice. A 1500 word research proposal (research questions, thesis, methodology, structure, primary sources, and historiographical context) and a sound and thorough working bibliography of approx. 40 entries are due February 27 in class. We will discuss your proposals in the seminar. The final paper is due April 10 in class.

4.4 Participation

The success of the seminar depends on your completion of the assigned readings, your prepared attendance, and your active participation. Take notes on your readings and bring them to class. This will facilitate your participation and also help you with your weekly seminar journal assignment.
4.5 Assignment Schedule

January 23  First Book Review
January 30  Seminar Journal Check

February 27  Research Proposal

March 20  Seminar Journal Check
March 27  Second Book Review

April 10  Research Paper
          Seminar Journal

5. Seminar Schedule

January 9  The United States in World Affairs – Course Introduction

January 16  The State of the Field: Historiographical Trends

Required


January 23  Race and U.S. Foreign Relations

--First Book Review Due in Class--

Required

Recommended

January 30 Gender and U.S. Foreign Relations
--Seminar Journal Check--

Required


Recommended

February 6 Culture and U.S. Foreign Relations I

Required

FOSTER, Brian M., “Rethinking Culture and the State in International History”, in: 49th Parallel 24 (Spring 2010), online journal.


Recommended


February 13 Culture and U.S. Foreign Relations II

Required


Recommended


February 27 Presentation and Discussion of Research Projects

--Research proposal due in class--
March 6  Ideology and U.S. Foreign Relations

Required


Recommended


March 13  Modernization, Technology, and U.S. Foreign Relations

Required


Recommended


March 20  Orientalism, Borders, and U.S. Foreign Relations

-- Seminar Journal Due--

Required


Recommended


March 27  The United States and Empire

-- Second Book Review Due --

Required


Recommended


April 3  Religion and U.S. Foreign Relations

Required


Recommended


April 10  Discourse, Language, and Metaphor

-Research Paper and Seminar Journal Due-

Required