

# Viewing: **HIST 274 : US Foreign Relations Since 1917**

Last approved: 11/30/21 4:10 am

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Programs referencing  
this course

[10KV0150BALA: History of Art, BALAS](#)

[10KV5215BALA: Global Studies, BALAS](#)

[5206: Global Studies Minor, UG](#)

## History

1. Jan 25, 2019 by Stefan Djordjevic (djordje1)
2. Nov 30, 2021 by Teresa Spence (tcspace)

## General Information

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Effective Term:

College: Liberal Arts & Sciences

Department/Unit History (1451)

Name (ORG  
Code):

Course Subject: History (HIST)

Course Number: 274

Course Title: US Foreign Relations Since 1917

Abbreviated Title: US Foreign Relations, 1917-

Course

Description:

Over the course of the twentieth century the United States rose to superpower status, in the process profoundly shaping world affairs. Students will study the connections between U.S. and global history in this pivotal period. Explores the impact of the United States on world affairs from roughly 1917 through the end of the Cold War. Attention given to the perspectives of people affected by U.S. policies and the limits of U.S. power in the face of developments such as anticolonial nationalism and great power rivalries.

## Justification

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Justification for change:

Please Note: a syllabus is required for General Education review:

## Course Information

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### Course Credit

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Course credit:

Undergraduate: 3

Graduate:

Professional:

### Registrar Use

#### Only:

Banner Credit: 0 OR 3

Billable Hours: 0 OR 3

### Grading Type

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Grading type: Letter Grade

Alternate Grading Type (optional):

Available for DFR: No

### Repeatability

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May this course be repeated? No

### Credit Restrictions

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Credit Restrictions:

### Advisory Statements

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Prerequisites:

Concurrent

Enrollment  
Statement:

Restricted  
Audience  
Statement:

### Cross-listing

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Cross Listed  
Courses:

### Class Schedule Information

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Class Schedule  
Information:

### Fees

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Is a fee requested    No  
for this course?

## Course Description in the Catalog Entry

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This is how the above information will be represented in the Catalog:

Over the course of the twentieth century the United States rose to superpower status, in the process profoundly shaping world affairs. Students will study the connections between U.S. and global history in this pivotal period. Explores the impact of the United States on world affairs from roughly 1917 through the end of the Cold War. Attention given to the perspectives of people affected by U.S. policies and the limits of U.S. power in the face of developments such as anticolonial nationalism and great power rivalries.

### Additional Course Notes

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Enter any other  
course  
information  
details to be  
included in the  
catalog:

## Course Detail

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Frequency of

course:

Other

Describe other  
frequency:  
Every other year

Duration of the course Full

Anticipated Enrollment: 75

Expected distribution of student registration:	Freshman: 25 %	Sophomore: 50 %	Junior: 15 %	Senior: 10 %
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## General Education

General Education Category Historical and Philosophical Perspectives  
Western/Comparative Culture(s)

### General Information

Is the course required for a major concentration? No

Is the course part of a sequence? No

What is the frequency with which the course will be offered?:  
(For Example: every semester, once a year)

Every other year, typically in the spring semester.

Briefly describe how the course fulfills the General Education objectives:

This course introduces students to historical approaches to international relations history and some key 20th century developments pertaining to this topic. In addition to addressing high politics (state to state official relations), it touches on topics such as military history, human migration, the connections between domestic and foreign affairs (such as those between the U.S. Civil Rights movement and decolonization), and globalization. Among the analytical lenses brought to bear on the topic are world systems theory, cultural analysis, gender and racial analysis, economic interpretations, and attention to bureaucratic politics. Sections emphasis the interpretation of primary sources, including film, visual materials, and written texts.

Although gender has traditionally not been a major concern in foreign relations history,

in recent decades it has garnered more attention, and this class is highly sensitive to this intellectual development. Among the topics discussed through the lens of gender are representations of various nations and peoples (in which race, gender, and class often worked together to shape hierarchical ideas about governing capacity), the gendered experiences of war and occupation (including, for example, fraternization, rape, and the ways that prostitution on and near U.S. military bases have become international relations flashpoints), gender as a contributing factor to some political mobilizations (including women's anti-war and peace activism in the 1920s and 1930s), and the gendered, often highly macho and homophobic culture of the U.S. foreign policy establishment in the 20th century (as seen in topics such as the gendered politics behind the formation of the Peace Corps, President Johnson's concern that de-escalation in Vietnam would signal a lack of virility in U.S. policy formation, and McCarthy era persecution of homosexuals in the U.S. government). Women's history also figures largely in coverage of economic globalization (with women figuring significantly as workers on the global assembly line), recent US military interventions in the Middle East (justified in part in the name of women's rights), and in course coverage of migration, human rights, and development.

Describe the instructional format and provide special justification, if necessary:

The format consists of two lectures per week and one section per week. Lectures are interactive. In addition to helping students make sense of the readings and other assignments, they expose students to various interpretive strategies through hands-on activities such as interpreting text and images that I display in my powerpoints. Sections provide opportunities for students to engage with the assigned materials in an even more participatory and active way. Recent iterations of the class have included a role-playing game on the Cuban missile crisis, which students have commended for teaching them about the issues at stake in the crisis, the decision-making processes of JFK, Castro, and Khrushchev, and the contingency of historical events that could have played out very differently.

Describe the means by which the Communication Skills goal will be achieved:

Writing is an important part of the class. Students are required to write two interpretive papers and to take two essay-based examinations. In the most recent iteration of the course, students wrote a 2-3 page op-ed piece based on one of the sources from *America in the World*. This assignment aims to develop students' ability to write public-facing analytical pieces. They also wrote a 5-7 page paper reviewing *The Ugly American* from the perspective of the author of another assigned text. This paper required them to demonstrate their understanding of both texts and their capacity to compare and contrast the authors' perspectives.

Both exams had essay questions that required students to draw on material from multiple weeks. The final exam also had a document interpretation section and a section asking students to evaluate the arguments presented in some of the assigned

secondary readings. In addition, there were 5 short in-class quick-writes asking students to think critically about primary materials presented in lecture. For example, after an in-class screening of a clip from Know Your Enemy: Japan, students had to write a paragraph on whether the clip supported the argument that the Pacific War was a race war.

Students develop oral communication skills through discussion opportunities in lecture and especially through participation in section, which is discussion based. In section, students often discuss topics in small groups, report back to the larger class, present the viewpoints of document authors, and debate historical decisions and scholarly interpretations.

Describe how evaluation and adherence to General Education guidelines will be monitored:

*Please indicate the timeline for such evaluations*

The History Department's Director of Undergraduate Studies will monitor the class's adherence to general education guidelines, evaluating its adherence most carefully whenever there is a substantial change in the syllabus or form of instruction.

Indicate those who will teach the course and describe procedures for training & supervising teaching assistants:

The instructor is Kristin Hoganson, a professor of History. She meets with her TAs (generally advanced graduate students who have developed their teaching skills in 100 level courses) on a weekly basis to discuss lesson plans and other course-related issues. She also observes sections each semester and has additional TA meetings to establish grading standards whenever a major assignment is due

## Historical and Philosophical Perspectives

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Describe the reading requirements in this course.

In the past I have assigned American Foreign Relations, a tertiary text that draws on recent historical scholarship. In spring 2022, I plan to assign Global America, an Oxford University textbook that is also good at conveying recent scholarship, albeit with more attentiveness to topics such as mass migrations and global warming. Global America is also shorter than American Foreign Relations, which will free up student reading time for the main secondary account I plan to assign (Andrew Bacevich's America's War for the Greater Middle East) and a handful of secondary articles. I always assign scholarship that represents different approaches and perspectives, thus helping students understand history as an interpretive discipline. The interpretive texts I assign help students understand the types of sources and methodologies that historians have used to make their arguments and to understand some of the ways that historians have framed their topics. I underscore these interpretive issues by discussing sources,

methods, and competing interpretations in lecture. Students have a change to grapple with the readings more fully in discussion section.

Although the secondary readings are an important part of the class, I regard the primary documents as the core assignments. These include the documents in *America in the World: A History in Documents* and a number of film screenings (many consisting of short excerpts from old newsreels, etc. shown in class, but also a longer film shown outside of class). In recent iterations of the class students have also read *The Ugly American*, a Cold War novel on U.S./Soviet competition for the hearts and minds of Asian peoples. I touch on some of the assigned documents in lecture, in order to model interpretive strategies, but again, sections are the place where most hands-on analysis occurs, due to the smaller class sizes which are more conducive to group exercises and conversations.

Describe the writing requirements in this course.

As noted above, students are required to write two interpretive papers and to take two essay-based examinations. In the most recent iteration of the course, students wrote a 2-3 page op-ed piece based on one of the sources from *America in the World*. This assignment aims to develop students' ability to write public-facing analytical pieces. They also wrote a 5-7 page paper reviewing *The Ugly American* from the perspective of the author of another assigned text. This paper required them to demonstrate their understanding of both texts and their capacity to compare and contrast the authors' perspectives.

Both exams had essay questions that required students to draw on material from multiple weeks. The final exam also had a document interpretation section and a section asking students to evaluate the arguments presented in some of the assigned secondary readings. In addition, there were 5 short in-class quick-writes asking students to think critically about primary materials presented in lecture. For example, after an in-class screening of a clip from *Know Your Enemy: Japan*, students had to write a paragraph on the extent to which the clip supported the argument that the Pacific War was a race war.

How does the course introduce students to the typical critical approaches and methods of the discipline, and to past accomplishments in the field?

One of the major themes in the class is that of continuity vs. change over time. Students grapple with issues such as the similarities and differences between Wilson's and FDR's approaches to foreign relations and changes in Cold War strategy and attitudes about race and human rights. Although the class is sensitive to the pastness of the past, I often use contemporary news items to set up the ongoing historical relevance of materials discussed in class. The primary, secondary and tertiary readings play a major role in exposing students to the kinds of evidentiary materials that historians use, their approaches to these materials, and their major findings.

The lectures complement the readings by focusing on particular case studies (such as Wilsonian interventionism, international development, guns and butter during the Cold War, neocolonialism in Latin America, and the CIA and American democracy). My aim in lecturing is not just to provide information, but to model historical practice, for example, by setting up debates and practicing document interpretation. Sections are even more hands on. I work closely with the TAs to ensure that sections function as historical labs rather than as supplementary lectures.

How does the course foster the goals of humanistic study, including: skill in communication; discriminating judgment and appreciation of ideas; understanding of cultural traditions; appreciation awareness of cultural ethnic and national diversity; and reflection on the human condition?

Writing is an important part of the class. Students are required to write two interpretive papers and to take two essay-based examinations. In the most recent iteration of the course, students wrote a 2-3 page op-ed piece based on one of the sources from *America in the World*. This assignment aims to develop students' ability to write public-facing analytical pieces. They also wrote a 5-7 page paper reviewing *The Ugly American* from the perspective of the author of another assigned text. This paper required them to demonstrate their understanding of both texts and their capacity to compare and contrast the authors' perspectives.

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Students develop oral communication skills through participation in lecture and especially through participation in section, which is discussion based. In section, students often discuss topics in small groups, report back to the larger class, present the viewpoints of document authors, and debate historical decisions and scholarly interpretations.

On the "discriminating judgement" question, students have reported that the course profoundly affected their understandings of their place in the world. In particular, those who have taken only high school history classes prior to enrolling in History 274 report that it was an eye-opener to learn about the ways that other peoples have regarded U.S. actions in the world and to learn about some aspects of U.S. policy that do not receive much coverage in highly celebratory nationalist accounts.



As for “cultural traditions,” the course addresses themes such as human rights, democracy, anticolonial nationalism, and capitalism that surely fall under that rubric. It considers how ideas and beliefs (such as

racism and American exceptionalism) have shaped U.S. relations with the wider world, and it pays a great deal of attention to the development of ideas (such as anti-bolshevism and anti-communism) and social structures and institutions (such as the American Relief Administration, United Fruit Company, Firestone Company in Liberia, apartheid, the national security state, the United Nations, NATO, and the IMF and WTO.)

I try to broaden students’ understandings of who and what matter in foreign relations history by paying attention to people and groups who did not figure largely in earlier “great white men” approaches. These include the women peace activists of the interwar years, the Civil Rights reformers who pushed for decolonization abroad at the same time they struggled for basic rights within the United States, the assembly line workers who lost their jobs to workers in export processing zones in the early 1980s, the voters who have lobbied on behalf of policy issues as members of ethnic groups, the ordinary people who have encountered each other across national lines, such as during the U.S. occupation of Japan, and the nationalists who have resisted U.S. power in places such as Vietnam and Nicaragua. By exposing students to the perspectives of non-U.S. actors, such as Mao, Castro, Allende, Churchill, Stalin, Mossadeq, and bin Laden, the course helps students understand different lines of thinking and thereby serves as a counter to provincialism.

If the course contains elements of more than one category within the Humanities and the Arts (literature, the arts, historical perspectives, or philosophical perspectives), explain why this course is more appropriate for the category for which it is proposed.

N/A

Is this a course in  Yes  
historical  
perspectives:

What chronological and/or geographical aspect of human history is studied in this course?

The course is chronologically broad, covering over a century (roughly 1914-present), and it is geographically broad, since it is global in scope (the United States having become a leading global power during the time period covered in the class).

Show how the course addresses continuity and change in the human experience and elucidates the development of institutions, ideas, beliefs, and social structures.

As noted above, one of the major themes in the class is that of continuity vs. change

over time. Students grapple with issues such as the similarities and differences between Wilson's and FDR's approaches to foreign relations and changes in Cold War strategy and attitudes about race and human rights. Exam questions typically ask students to assess continuity and change in matters such as U.S. relations with Latin America or the relation between the state and private enterprise. The course considers the development of institutions such as the League of Nations, UN, NATO, Warsaw Pact, and WTO; it considers ideas as they played out, for example, in anti-imperialist and anti-racist movements, in nationalist struggles for unification (as in the cases of Korea and Vietnam), in Cold War ideological struggles between capitalist, communist and non-aligned states; and in modernization programs.) In sum, it considers beliefs and social structures as of pivotal importance to the exercise of power.

Show how the course familiarizes students with significant movements, persons, and events in their intellectual, social, economic, and political contexts.

The course connects domestic and foreign affairs, for example, in its consideration of Vietnam War protests on college campuses and the course of the U.S./Vietnam War, in its consideration of Black freedom struggles in the United States and opposition to apartheid in South Africa, in its consideration of many Jewish Americans' support for Israel in the context of domestic anti-Semitism and the horrors of the Holocaust, and its consideration of the nexus between warfare and migration streams. It mixes attentiveness to political leaders such as Reagan and Gorbachev with attentiveness to social movements such as Solidarity. It considers the economic base that underlay the US ascent to superpower status and challenges to that base (due, for example, to spending in Vietnam and more recent off-shoring and trade imbalances); and to provide yet one more example, it considers how social developments such as anti-racist and feminist activism have changed diplomatic representation and the issues considered to be of diplomatic importance.

Is this a course in  philosophical perspectives:  No

## Western/Comparative Cultures

Show how the course treats topics and issues that promote a deeper understanding of the culture(s) discussed.

Through readings by area studies and foreign relations history experts, lecture coverage, and analysis of primary documents produced by people from the United States and other parts of the world, the course exposes students to some of the social and cultural factors (such as racism, gender and class distinctions, and religious commitments); and specific topics (such as land distribution, labor conditions, opportunities for political expression and participation, human rights contexts, inter-

ethnic politics, access to education, medical care, and resources, connections with larger diasporic communities, ideological commitments, etc.) that have shaped the cultures discussed and their relations to each other. A major goal of the class is to help students understand the perspectives of historical actors and how these perspectives emerged from their specific situations.

Show how the course provides at least one of the following: (i) a broad description and analysis of the interaction of intellectual, artistic, political, economic, social, and other aspects of a society's cultural life; (ii) an intensive investigation of the cultural life of a society or group in a particular time and place; (iii) a focused investigation of particular aspects of the culture of a society or group (e.g., its art and architecture); or (iv) a comparative investigation of cultural systems and the development of constructs for cross-cultural sensitivity and analysis.

Through readings by area studies and foreign relations history experts, lecture coverage, and analysis of primary documents produced by people from the United States and other parts of the world, the course exposes students to some of the social and cultural factors (such as racism, gender and class distinctions, and religious commitments); and specific topics (such as land distribution, labor conditions, opportunities for political expression and participation, human rights contexts, inter-ethnic politics, access to education, medical care, and resources, connections with larger diasporic communities, ideological commitments, etc.) that have shaped the cultures discussed and their relations to each other. A major goal of the class is to help students understand the perspectives of historical actors and how these perspectives emerged from their specific situations.

If the course contains elements of both the Western, U.S. Minority, and/or Non-Western categories, show how the emphasis of the course makes it more appropriate for the Western/Comparative Cultures category for which it is being proposed.

The course contains both "Western" and "Non-Western" material because its main point is the interconnections between different parts of the world. Although it argues against a reification of both "the West" and the "non-West", students have commented over the years on their particular appreciation of its coverage of Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, because they tend to come to the course with more Eurocentric understandings of international politics. It appears that for most students who attended high school in the United States, the inclusion of significant non-Western material provides the greatest departure from their high school history classes. Yet although the class has a substantial "Non-Western" component, it does center the United States and it does pay ample attention to Soviet and European relations with the United States. The course thus shows how an ostensibly "Western" nation, the United States, engaged with other nations, empires, capitalist actors, and peoples, sometimes in concert with other "Western" nations. Although it is critical of outdated and misleading dichotomies between "Western" and "Nonwestern" history, it illuminates the global production of the United States and, by extension, other places that have come to be understood as "Western" as well as the impact that "Western"

powers (the United States foremost among them after World War II) have had on the “Nonwestern” world.

Show how the course provides understanding and awareness of significant aspects of the cultural tradition evolved from the confluence of Greek and Roman philosophical thought and European religious traditions, i.e., the cultural traditions associated with European and North American countries; OR show how the course provides understanding and appreciation of significant aspects of the cultural traditions of both Western and Non-Western cultural traditions, and indicate the comparisons and contrasts drawn between the different traditions.

This class is a history of world politics, governance, and society from top-down and bottom-up perspectives. It combines attention to the tremendous power exercised by the United States from the 20th into the 21st century with attention to developments from around the world, including anticolonial nationalism, Communist revolutions, economic rivalries, and war. As stated earlier, one of the aspects of this class that makes it of particular value for understanding the historical construction of “the West” is its attentiveness to connections between the “West” and other parts of the world. Rather than conveying the erroneous impression that the “West” and “non-West” developed independently from each other, it shows how global interconnections have shaped the world that we inhabit today, including specific cultures in all parts of the world. Additionally, the course rejects the premise that the “West” signifies a unified category, instead drawing attention to political divisions within the “West.” And finally, it critically appraises how statements of high principle meshed with practices on the ground on the part of multiple states and political systems.

## Additional Course Information

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Does this course replace an existing course? No

Does this course impact other courses? No

Does the addition of this course impact the departmental curriculum? No

Has this course been offered as a special topics or other type of No

experimental  
course?

Will this course be  
offered on-line?

Face-to-Face

Faculty members  
who will teach  
this course:

Professor Kristin Hoganson

Course ID:           1003682

Comments to  
Reviewers:

Course Edits  
Proposed by:

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Key: 4860