

## Contemporary American Foreign Policy

History 5484

Thursdays, 5-8 pm, Spring 2009, Roanoke Higher Education Center Room 708

Professor Tom Ewing (etewing@vt.edu)

The thematic focus of this course will be the changing American role in the world, especially since 1945, with particular attention to the Cold War and United States policy in the Middle East. Class sessions will explore historiography on United States foreign policy as well as strategies, materials, and resources for teaching about America's place in the world. Weekly reading and writing assignments will provide coverage of main topics, focused examinations of case studies, and opportunities for critical analysis of research and teaching implications. Course assignments include opportunities to conduct research, make presentations, and write a paper on key issues and moments in America diplomatic history. The course will cover topics in the Standards of Learning social studies curriculum, including the Marshall Plan, Truman Doctrine, the policy of containment, American wars in Vietnam and Korea, the North Atlantic Treaty System, and the collapse of Communism. Enrollment is restricted to participants in the Teaching American History grant program or graduate students with the permission of the instructor.

### Required Books:

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War. A New History* (2006)

Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (2005)

Niall Ferguson, *Colossus. The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (2004)

Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (2005)

Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat 3.0. A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (2007)

Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars. The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden* (2007)

George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (2008)

### Assignments and proportion of final grade

Readings, participation, and leading discussions	40%
Weekly response papers	20%
Presentation and final paper	40%

Successful participation in this course requires completing readings by the designated dates, contributing to discussions, leading class sessions on a rotating basis, and submitting required weekly written responses (one paragraph) to the entire class by email by the evening prior to the class session. The Blackboard website (<http://learn.vt.edu>) should be used to submit response papers to the instructor and the rest of the class, using vt.edu email addresses.

Readings from the *Words of the Presidents* packet will be assigned during the semester, and will also form the basis for the research presentations and papers. Each student will select one of the presidential speeches, and then complete additional research to present to the class and analyze in the final paper. All research materials should be available through the online resources of the Virginia Tech library. Final presentations and papers must adhere to guidelines designated by the instructor for the class. Assignments and schedule are subject to change, with prior notification.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Discussion leaders</b>
January 22	Introduction	_____
January 29	Friedman, <i>World is Flat</i> , chapters 1-9	_____
February 5	Ferguson, <i>Colossus</i>	_____
February 12	Herring, <i>From Colony to Superpower</i> , ch. 1-7 Words of the Presidents: Wilson speech, April 1917	_____
February 19	Herring, <i>From Colony to Superpower</i> , ch. 8-13	_____
February 26	Gaddis, <i>Cold War</i>	_____
March 5	Westad, <i>Global Cold War</i> , chapters 1-5	_____
March 19	Westad, <i>Global Cold War</i> , chapters 6-10	_____
March 26	Khalidi, <i>Resurrecting Empire</i>	_____
April 2	Coll, <i>Ghost Wars</i> , parts 1-2	_____
April 9	Words of the Presidents: Presentations and discussions	_____
April 16	Words of the Presidents: Presentations and discussions	_____
April 23	Words of the Presidents: Presentations and discussions	_____
April 30	Coll, <i>Ghost Wars</i> , part 3	_____
May 5	Final paper due	