IR HONORS SEMINAR: AMERICAN EMPIRE?

The purpose of this course is to provide a broad survey of the debate about American power and influence in international affairs, and to provide sufficient background for students to do a major research paper on the topic. Some view the American role today as creating an empire, while others view U.S. influence as just a reflection of the wealth and military might that Americans command. There are many other thoughtful perspectives as well.

In this seminar, there is a substantial amount of reading necessary; and, since much of this is in recent articles, there is no single text for the course. The course will be taught, to the maximum extent possible, in seminar fashion, so you must do the reading before coming to class. We will be covering a broad range of controversial topics which involve a combination of factual and ideological questions. There are also obvious moral considerations in many of the topics. This course will not focus on any one perspective and the seminar is designed to encourage a lively interchange of views.

This is an advanced, honors course designed to help students do research. In the major paper, each student will be expected to explore a theoretical issue, develop a testable hypothesis, and decide what kinds of evidence and methods to use in evaluating the proposition. For many, the course can be an early effort at preparing for the Senior Thesis. The seminar will be limited to 20 students who have a GPA of 3.65 or better.

Requirements:

A) Reading: Assignments are on the attached list.

B) Short Paper: A five-page paper will be due October 2. This paper is to explore potential topics for the major paper.

C) Major Paper: A 20-25 page paper will be due December 11.

D) Exam: There will be a Mid-Term Exam on October 23 but no Final Exam.

E) Class Participation: Each student will be expected to make presentations on assigned reading and participate fully in class discussion.

F) Grading: Short paper 5%, Class discussion 20%, Mid-Term Exam 25%, Final Paper 50%
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What is an Empire?

1. Different Types of Empires:
   Sept. 11
   
   J. Fairbank  The Chinese World Order, 1-14
   
   N. Ferguson  Empire: The Rise & Demise of the British World Order Chaps. 1,6, Conclusion
   
   P. Kennedy  The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, Chaps. 1,2
   
   H. James  The Roman Predicament, 1-38

2. U.S. Behavior as an Empire:
   Sept. 18
   
   C. Krauthammer  "The Unipolar Moment Revisited," National Interest, Winter 2002/03, 5-17
   
   
   J. Snyder  "Imperial Temptations," National Interest, Spring 2003, 29-40
   

3. 1790-1865: The U.S. Vulnerable to Other Empires:
   Sept. 25
   
   D. Merrill and T. Paterson  Major Problems in American Foreign Relations: Vol. 1
   Chapt. 3  "The Great Debate of the 1790s"
   Chapt. 6  "The Monroe Doctrine"
   Chapt. 8  "Manifest Destiny"
Four Opportunities for Empire: What Changed After 1991?

4. 1898:
   Oct. 2
   Merrill & Paterson, Major Problems in American Foreign Relations: Vol. 1
   Chapt. 11 "Becoming a World Power"
   Chapt. 12 "The Spanish American War"
   Chapt. 13 "The Open Door Policy to China"

5. 1919:
   Oct. 9
   M. Macmillan, Paris - 1919, Chapts. 1,2,4,6,30
   Merrill & Paterson, Major Problems in American Foreign Relations: Vol. 2
   Chapt. 2 "W. Wilson & the League of Nations"
   Chapt. 3 "The 1920s"

6. 1945:
   Oct. 16
   S. Hook & J. Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II, Chapts. 2,3

7. Mid-Term Exam
   Oct. 23

8. Post-1991:
   Oct. 30
   S. Hook and J. Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II, Chapts. 9-14
   A. Bacevich, American Empire, Chaps. 5,6
American Dominance:

9. Cultural: Nov. 6
   J. Nye The Paradox of American Power, Chapt. 1
   S. Huntington "The Hispanic Challenge," Foreign Policy, March / April 2004, 30-45

10. Diplomatic: Nov. 13
    S. Walt Taming American Power, 13-108
    B. Lewis What Went Wrong? Chaps. 1-3

11. Economic: Nov. 20
    N. Ferguson & L. Kotlikoff "Going Critical," National Interest, Fall 2003, 22-3
    J. Stiglitz Globalization and Its Discontents, Chaps. 1,2

12. Military: Nov. 27