

**Frank Costigliola                      History 5560                      Spring 2016**

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### **THE COURSE**

This course is designed for students focused on the history of U.S. foreign relations, other students seeking an overview of U.S. history, and those interested in how the historiography of American history has evolved in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. For the first three-quarters of the semester we will read some “classics” of the past – books and articles that have figured prominently in how scholars have understood and debated the history of U.S. foreign relations. Much of this reading focuses on an 80-year debate among scholars and public intellectuals over the purposes, wisdom, and morality of America’s engagement with the rest of the world.

In the last part of the semester we will switch to the “classics” of the future. Toward this end we will read a volume scheduled to be published in March: *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2016). Each of the book’s 21 chapters lays out an innovative approach to writing history. These methodologies are useful not only for foreign relations history but also for other fields and disciplines. We can reasonably assume that some of the “classics” that will emerge in the next decades will incorporate the approaches discussed in the *Explaining* book.

### **FORMAT**

Attendance at all class sessions is required.

We will have preliminary discussions on the Class Discussions site of the HUSKYCT page for History 5560. By 12 noon each Tuesday, students should post a thoughtful comment (about 2-3 paragraphs in length) on the week’s reading. Your comment must be analytical, not merely a summary of the reading.

The post should consider at least some of the following questions:

1. How do you evaluate the author’s perspective, assumptions, and scholarly and/or political objectives?
2. To what degree does the author succeed with those objectives?
3. How does the author’s apparent intellectual and political orientation shape her or his historical interpretations?
4. What evidence does the author bring to bear, and how does she or he use it?

You are encouraged to refer to the online comments of other students. Feel free to initiate a debate that we could continue in class. Where appropriate you might contact the authors that we are reading. Students are expected to read all the comments before class meets at 6:00 pm that evening.

Our discussions of books, articles, and book chapters will be introduced by two presenters, who should collaborate to decide who will focus on what. In the first three-quarters of the semester, each student will be involved 2 times in introducing the discussion. The main job of the presenters is to address the four questions in the paragraph above. In addition, the presenters should summarize the main arguments of the reading, discuss reviews of the book, and suggest some productive topics for class discussion. Brevity is important in the presentations. We will want to move onto more unstructured discussion. We may also interrupt the presentations to discuss important issues as they arise. Presenters are encouraged to bring a short handout to help others follow their argument: it might be an outline of major points, a set of quotations, printouts or copies from other sources, or anything else they think is appropriate. During the 3 weeks that we are reading the *Explaining* book, each student will introduce one chapter each week.

There are many pages of reading assigned in the course. But that does not mean that we will be expected to read every single page of every book, especially the longer books. Rather, we will develop techniques of “deep skimming” to get at the meat or interpretive perspective of a book through strategic reading. Of course, we will read the shorter books and the chapters and articles more intensively.

All the assigned books except *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition can be purchased fairly cheaply through Amazon or from other used book outlets. The U Conn Co-op bookstore has the books still in print. The third edition of the *Explaining* book is completely different from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions, so it is important that you read that one. [A small but important point: All the royalties from *Explaining* are going directly to the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR).]

## **HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PAPER**

The major written work in the course will be a 15-page historiographical paper that either discusses most of the readings assigned in the course, or uses one or a few of the readings as a take off point for exploring a historiographical topic of your own choosing. You should discuss your proposed topic with me early on in the semester.

Your paper should address a significant historiographical question, make thorough use of relevant secondary literature, demonstrate careful reading of that literature, portray the scholars involved as real people, and show familiarity with the political and cultural contexts of the scholarly debate.

**The paper is due on Monday, 2 May 2016.**

## GRADES

50% class participation, including presentations and HUSKYCT posts, 50% historiographical paper

## SCHEDULE OF READING

Tues., January 19	Introduction
Tues., January 26	Charles A. Beard, <i>The Open Door at Home</i> (1935)
Tues., February 2	Samuel F. Bemis, <i>John Quincy Adams</i> (any edition); Walter LaFeber, <i>John Quincy Adams</i> (any edition)
Tues., February 9	Thomas A. Bailey, <i>A Diplomatic History of the American People</i> (any edition from the 1940s-60s)
Tues., February 16	William A. Williams, <i>The Tragedy of American Diplomacy</i> (1959 edition if possible)
Tues., February 23	Walter LaFeber, <i>The New Empire</i> (1963 if possible) LaFeber, "Foreign Policies of a New Nation"
Tues, March 1	How Classics are Created: The Thomas G. Paterson Papers at the Dodd Center
Tues., March 8	Melvyn P. Leffler, <i>A Preponderance of Power</i> (1992)

- Tues., March 22                      John L. Gaddis, *We Now Know* (1997)
- Tues., March 29                      Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (2005)
- Tues., April 5                         Frank Costigliola, 2 articles on George F. Kennan in  
*Journal of American History*, (March 1997; March 2016  
And the discussion on H-diplo regarding the 1997 article
- Tues., April 12                        *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*,  
Ch. Intro, ch, 1-7
- Tues., April 19                        *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*,  
Ch. 8-14
- Tues., April 26                        *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*,  
Ch. 15-21
- Mon, May 2                             **15-page historiographical paper due**