This capstone course represents the culmination of the history major at Brigham Young University. It will provide you the opportunity to demonstrate and apply everything you have learned—including your research and writing skills, analytical ability, and historical knowledge—in a senior thesis. The product of the course will be an original and in-depth research project of article length that should make a distinct contribution to the historical literature on your topic. The final essay should be publishable—that is, able to stand up to peer-review in a professional journal. Indeed, the paper that results from your efforts should be the best work you have done at the undergraduate level.

My field of specialization and research is U.S. foreign relations; your research project in this course must be related directly to this field (e.g. Anglo-American relations during the 19th century, the role of domestic politics in the making of U.S. foreign policy). This requirement serves two purposes: first, it allows me to give you the most effective guidance with your project during the semester; and second, it allows all of the members of the seminar to be generally familiar with the other projects, thus allowing for more discussion and interaction as we proceed.

Expectations, Responsibilities, & Course Policies

**Student Responsibilities:** This is a seminar course, not a lecture course. We will only meet together occasionally during the semester, but your attendance at those meetings is **required**. In those sessions, we will address important historiographical, interpretive, and technical questions, discuss and critique ideas, and cover research and writing strategies. You will a significant portion of the semester working independently on your research project. This type of course structure can be a blessing or a curse; in order to succeed, you will need to be self-motivated, disciplined, and organized. Time management will also be essential to your success (or lack thereof). If you find yourself struggling or grappling with questions, I will be happy to assist you any way I can.

Given the structure of the course, you will need to come to class prepared and ready to actively participate in the discussions—and, most importantly, be open to giving and receiving constructive criticism, a vital aspect of being a historian. Feel free to express opinions that are contrary to what I say, what other students say, or what the readings say. Often, it is through debates over interpretation of historical material that clarity (if not consensus) about the past emerges. Remember, however, that this is an academic environment. A broad spectrum of opinions exists on any given subject and it is **vital** to respect the views of others even if you are convinced that their perspective is totally, completely, and unconditionally wrong. Personal attacks or criticisms based on gender, ethnicity, political predilections, religious beliefs, etc. will not be tolerated. Finally, in order to register for this course, you must have successfully completed the prerequisites (History 200 and English 115); **concurrent enrollment is not acceptable**.

**Course Communication:** This course will not be the BYU Learning Suite, so please be sure to check your e-mail regularly for updates and announcements from me relating to the course. If you do not have an e-mail account, please obtain one (either through the university or one of the many free e-mail services) and update your preferred e-mail contact information on myBYU as soon as possible so that I can contact you if and when necessary. This is also the best way to contact me outside of our seminar meetings or posted office hours.
**LATE PENALTIES:** Failure to submit any of the writing assignments on time will result in a grade penalty. Each 24-hour period after the stated due date will incur a penalty of two letter grades (e.g. B to D), **NO EXCEPTIONS.** Excuses such as getting engaged, broken-hearted roommates, computer catastrophes, “my plane/bus/train was late,” and the timeless “my dog ate my homework” will not cut it. Curiously, tragic tales of death, woe, and misery occur with unbelievable, X-Filian regularity around due dates. Plan ahead to ensure that these cosmic misfortunes won’t affect you. This is, after all, college and you are an adult; you are responsible for your own success or failure.

**GRADE APPEALS PROCEDURE:** If you have a question about a grade you received, you must wait 24 hours after receiving the paper or exam back before making an appeal. Further, I will not discuss a grade with you until you have submitted a *detailed written appeal* discussing your specific concerns. I reserve the right to raise OR lower the grade upon further review. There is an iron-clad, **one-week time limit** on any discussion of a grade.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** As a student at Brigham Young University, you have agreed to abide by the University’s honor code ([www.byu.edu/honorcode/honor_code.htm](http://www.byu.edu/honorcode/honor_code.htm)). In this course, the most relevant aspects of that commitment relate to academic honesty: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and so forth. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) borrowing a friend’s paper, lifting text from digital sources (including “open access” material and the internet), using “paper mills,” and reproducing the ideas and phrases of other authors without credit. The short version is that all work for this course must be your own. A comprehensive definition from the American Historical Association is available at [www.historians.org/governance/pd/curriculum/plagiarism_defining.htm](http://www.historians.org/governance/pd/curriculum/plagiarism_defining.htm). In addition, you cannot “self-plagiarize;” that is, you cannot use a paper from another course (past, present, or future) for this course, and vice versa. *All course work must be created exclusively and originally for this course.* I take these issues very seriously and will prosecute **ALL** violations vigorously.

**LEGAL INFORMATION:** If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, contact the University Accessibility Center (1520 WSC), which can evaluate your disability, assist in arranging for reasonable accommodations, and provide me with the appropriate documentation. Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you believe you are being subjected to such behavior, please bring your concerns to me as soon as possible. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with either the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or the Honor Code Office (4440 WSC).

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** An overview of the learning objectives for history majors generally and for this course specifically can be found at [history.byu.edu/undergrad/learning.htm](http://history.byu.edu/undergrad/learning.htm).
ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Please be aware that your previous academic preparation (e.g. writing and research skills, historical knowledge) will affect your performance in this course, and your perception of your effort--by itself--is not enough to justify a distinguished grade. Your grade will be determined on your performance in the following five areas:

1. **Participation and Attendance (15%)**: Attendance at the scheduled seminar meetings and participating actively in discussions (this includes being prepared for the seminar) will be a critical—not to mention required—part of the course. As part of this portion of your grade, you will be expected to read and be ready to comment on all of the common readings, as well as each of the seminar members’ prospectuses and submitted drafts, even if you are not the primary respondent. It will also include oral presentations on the readings, the précis on the readings, and other writing assignments throughout the semester.

2. **Prospectus (10%)**: The research proposal for your thesis should describe your project, the questions you seek to address and answer, your sources, the problems you anticipate, and situate your research within the broader historiography (as well as demonstrating your familiarity with the existing literature). It should also contain any preliminary conclusions that you think may result from your analysis. Be as specific and narrowly focused as you can; not only will this save you a great deal of work, but it will also make your project easier to manage. There is a more detailed description of the prospectus on the handout I will distribute the first day of class. A hard copy of the prospectus will be due on **Monday, October 8 by 10:00 AM in my office**. You should also e-mail your prospectus to the other members of the seminar that morning.

3. **First Submitted Draft & Oral Presentation (10%)**: Presenting your research to an audience of peers is one of the main activities of any historian. This will give you practical experience in both your written and oral skills. You should turn in a polished version of your paper (20-25 pages) complete with a 100-word abstract, footnotes, bibliography, and title page (all properly formatted according to Turabian). This should not be the first, unedited draft of your paper; rather, it should be a solid piece of historical writing in progress which incorporates your arguments and conclusions to date. This draft will be summarized orally by the author and critiqued by the seminar. A hard copy of this draft will be due on either **Friday, November 2 or Friday, November 9 by 10:00 AM in my office**. You should also e-mail your draft to the other members of the seminar on the morning it is due. The oral presentation schedule will be determined on the first day of class.

4. **Critique (2.5% each; 5% total)**: Another important part of being an historian is evaluating the work of your peers. Thus, your critiques should be well-conceived assessments of the arguments, evidence, research style, and organization of your colleagues’ papers. Your criticism should be clear and provide concrete ways in which the papers’ content and arguments can be improved. You will receive a separate handout on what a good critique entails later in the semester. The critiques will be due on the date of the oral presentation by the paper’s author and will form the basis of your own oral critique of the papers you have reviewed. You will need to submit copies of your critiques to me and the authors of the papers you are critiquing on the day they are presented.
5. **Final Draft (60%)**: The final paper should be a well-written analytical (not simply narrative) historical essay of published article length (25-35 pages, exclusive of the required bibliography; longer papers should be avoided without prior consultation) that makes an original contribution to the field of U.S. foreign relations. Your argument **MUST** be based on primary sources, while concurrently demonstrating familiarity with the relevant secondary literature in support of your findings and/or to challenge (or refute) what other scholars have written. It must also conform to both Turabian and the course style guide. Papers that fail to meet these criteria will not be accepted, which is tantamount to an automatic failure for the course. A hard copy of the final draft and the marked copy of your first submitted draft will be due on **Wednesday, December 5 by 12:00pm in my office**.

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**REQUIRED READINGS FOR HISTORY 490**

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. (optional)

History 490 assigned readings (articles, book chapters, etc.)

**N.B. I:** All of the required books will be available at the BYU Bookstore. To subvert the monopoly system, and potentially save yourself some money, you might consider buying books from an alternate source such as bookfinder.com, abebooks.com, or amazon.com.

**N.B. II:** Two books will be on two-hour reserve at the HBLL for this course: Michael Hogan & Thomas Paterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, second ed.; and Melvin Small, ed., *A Companion to Richard Nixon*. You will be responsible for reading selected chapters in these books; see the assigned readings handout for details.

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**THE FOLLOWING NON-COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF BOOKS WILL BE USEFUL TO YOU AS REFERENCE GUIDES AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING THE SEMESTER:**


H.W. Brands, *What America Owes the World*

Lester Brune and Richard Burns, eds., *America and the Indochina Wars: A Bibliographic Guide*


George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776*


Walter LaFeber, *The American Age*


Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776*

Dennis Merrill and Thomas Paterson, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Foreign Relations*

Robert Schulzinger, ed., *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations*

Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War*

Eugene Wittkopf and James McCormick, eds., *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy*, 4th ed.
The following non-comprehensive list of journals will be useful in your research during the semester; most are accessible through JSTOR, Project Muse, or Historical Abstracts:

- Diplomatic History
- Journal of Cold War Studies
- Cold War History
- International History Review
- Journal of Military History
- Journal of American History
- Peace & Change
- Pacific Historical Review
- Journal of Conflict Studies
- Journal of Policy History
- Presidential Studies Quarterly
- American Historical Review
- Congress and the Presidency
- Political Science Quarterly

The following non-comprehensive list of books is completely optional; however, the books do provide insights into the process of writing, research, and style if you wish to consult them:

- Stefan Berger, et. al., *Writing History: Theory and Practice*
- Wayne Booth, et. al., *The Craft of Research*
- Norman Cantor and Richard Schneider, *How to Study History*
- David Fischer, *Historians’ Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*
- Konrad Jarausch and Kenneth Hardy, *Quantitative Methods for Historians*
- Francis Prucha, *Handbook for Research in American History*
- Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*
- William Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*

You are responsible for everything on this syllabus and all other handouts I will give you during the course, as well as all e-mail communication that occurs during the semester. In the immortal words of Brad Hamilton, “Learn it, know it, live it.” Ignorance is not a valid defense.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

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Week #1: GETTING STARTED

August 29
Introduction to the course & organization (including position lottery & e-mail exchange); research strategies; writing history; ambitious vs. “do-able” topics; sources on the history of U.S. foreign relations; etc.

PRELIMINARY TOPIC SELECTION E-MAIL DUE BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 31 AT 12:00PM

Reading: Preliminary review of literature on your topic
Turabian, review as needed

Week #2: THE HISTORIAN’S CRAFT AND THE STATE OF THE FIELD

September 5
Discuss Gaddis, The Landscape of History; article readings, and assessment of sample 490 essays; library exercise

Reading: Gaddis, The Landscape of History, all
Article readings (see handout)
Sample 490 essays

Week #3: EXPLAINING THE HISTORY, HISTORIOGRAPHY, AND METHODOLOGY OF U.S. FOREIGN RELATIONS

September 12
Discuss article readings

TOPIC SUMMARIES DUE IN CLASS

Reading: Article readings (see handout)

Week #4: WHO’S DOING WHAT?

September 19
Topic presentations & discussion

Reading: Read, make notes, and be ready to comment on topic summaries in class

Weeks #5-7: RESEARCH TAKES TIME...

September 26
NO CLASS: INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS (APPOINTMENTS TO BE SCHEDULED)

October 3-10
NO CLASS: RESEARCH & WRITING

PROSPECTUS DUE MONDAY, OCTOBER 8 AT 10:00AM TO 2161 JFSB
(HARD COPY TO DR. J; COPIES TO SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS VIA E-MAIL)
Week #8: Checkpoint

October 17  Research updates & prospectus discussion; writing an effective critique; problems & questions
Reading: Read and be ready with substantive and written comments on prospectuses

Weeks #9-10: Back to the Grind

October 24-31  No Class: Research & Writing
Drafts 1-6 due by Friday, November 2 at 10:00am to 2161 JFSB (Hard copy to Dr. J; copies to seminar participants via e-mail)
Reading: Read all six draft essays and prepare comments for discussion

Week #11: Presentations I

November 7  Oral presentations & critiques (1-6)
Drafts 7-12 due by Friday, November 9 at 10:00am to 2161 JFSB (Hard copy to Dr. J; copies to seminar participants via e-mail)
Reading: Read all six draft essays and prepare comments for discussion

Week #12: Presentations II

November 14  Oral presentations & critiques (7-12)

Week #13: Thanksgiving

November 21  No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday

Week #14: Research & Revisions

November 28  No Class: Individual Consultations (appointments to be scheduled)

Weeks #15: Final Touches

December 5  No Class: Final Revisions

Final paper due Wednesday, December 5 by 12:00pm in 2161 JFSB (you must submit your marked draft with your final paper)