

HISTORY 282

Dickinson College // Spring 2026
Tue / Thu 1030 am
Classroom: Denny 211
URL: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/hist-282pinsker>

US Diplomatic History

Matthew Pinsker
Office: 61 N. West Street
Hours: Wed. 10am to 1pm
Email: pinskerm@dickinson.edu

America 250 Anniversary Edition

"We have it in our power to begin the world over again."
--Tom Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

Required Book

- George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) [LIBRARY ONLINE]

Additional Readings

- Amanda Frost, "'By Accident of Birth': The Battle over Birthright Citizenship After *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*," 32 *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, 38–76 (2021) [WEB]
- Walter LaFeber, "The Constitution and United States Foreign Policy: An Interpretation," *Journal of American History* 74 (Dec. 1987): 695-717 [JSTOR]
- Thomas H. Lee, "The Civil War in U.S. Foreign Relations Law," *Saint Louis University Law Journal* 53 (Fall 2008): 53-71 [PDF]
- Walter Russell Mead, "The American Foreign Policy Legacy," *Foreign Affairs* 81 (Jan/Feb 2002): 163-176 [JSTOR]
- Walter Russell Mead, "The Return of Hamiltonian Statecraft," *Foreign Affairs* 103 (Sep/Oct 2024) [PDF]

Course Policies

Attendance is expected and participation will be evaluated. Those who miss class for any reason must email a short reflection (about a paragraph or two) within a week of the absence that analyzes the missed reading assignment and includes snippets of quotation. All students must submit an ungraded reflection on the reading assignment for class on 2/5. For further details on course policies, especially those regarding attendance, electronics, accommodations for disabilities, plagiarism, AI use, and general learning objectives, please consult the course website: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/hist-282pinsker/course-policies>

First Essay –Early US Diplomacy

On **Monday, February 23**, students will submit by email attachment a 3-5 page typed, double-spaced essay on a topic concerning early US diplomacy provided to them during the previous week. All essays must include quotations from the Herring book as well as from relevant material featured at the course site, all properly cited using Chicago-style footnotes. Outside research is allowed but not encouraged. Additional information will be available on the assignment guidelines at the course site. Essays will be graded on depth of analysis, use of evidence, and quality of prose. Late essays will be penalized up to 5 points each day.

Second Essay –Modern US Diplomacy

On **Monday, March 30**, students will submit by email attachment a 3-5 page typed, double-spaced essay on a modern US diplomatic topic provided to them during the previous week. All essays must include quotations from the Herring book as well from additional material featured at the course site, all properly cited using Chicago-style footnotes. Outside research is allowed but not encouraged. Additional information will be available on the assignment guidelines at the course site. Essays will be graded on depth of analysis, use of evidence, and quality of prose. Late essays will be penalized up to 5 points each day.

Research Journal posts

Students will submit two research journal entries (2-4 pages each or about 500 to 1,000 words per entry), posted PRIVATE at the course website. These narrative posts will detail research efforts for the final profile papers. The first entry (**due by Monday, April 13**) will describe the nature of the biographical topic and narrate the search for relevant secondary sources, especially in academic books and articles. The second entry (**due by Friday, April 24**) will describe the search for relevant primary sources, produced both BY and ABOUT the subject, especially those available in published or digital format. Journal entries do not require footnotes, but they should include Chicago-style bibliographies and 2 to 3 images, properly captioned and credited. Additional information will be available on the assignment guidelines at the course site. Entries will be graded on research effort, depth of analysis and quality of prose. Late entries will be penalized up to 5 points each day.

Profiles in Diplomacy Papers

By **Thursday, May 7**, students will submit by email attachment a 10- to 12-page biographical paper that analyzes a significant diplomatic contribution from an American historical figure (not serving as president) during the period between 1776 and 2008. Each profile paper should provide background on the person as well as thoughtful context about that period. All papers should analyze someone who appeared in George Herring's *From Colony to Superpower* (2008), and should include quotations from that book, but they should also employ a wide-ranging combination of other scholarly sources and relevant primary sources, especially from ones that have been previously developed in their research journal posts. All essays should be typed and double-spaced as Word or PDF documents with title page and Chicago-style footnotes (no bibliography required). Additional information will be available on the assignment guidelines at the course site. Papers will be graded on research effort, depth of analysis, and quality of prose. Late final papers are not typically accepted.

Grade Distribution

Class Participation	25 percent
Essay 1 –Early US diplomacy	20 percent
Essay 2 –Modern diplomacy	20 percent
Research journal (2 entries)	10 percent
Profiles in Diplomacy papers	25 percent

Day	Date	Discussion Topic	Reading Assignment
Tuesday	1/20	Methods & Expectations	---
Thursday	1/22	Mapping American Statecraft	Mead article (2002)
Tuesday	1/27	Revolutionary Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 1
Thursday	1/29	Partisan Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 2
Tuesday	2/3	Jeffersonian Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 3
Thursday	2/5	Jacksonian Diplomacy --Ungraded reflections due	Herring, chapter 4
Tuesday	2/10	Expansionist Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 5
Thursday	2/12	Lincolnian Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 6
Tuesday	2/17	War Powers –Then and Now	Lee article
Thursday	2/19	Global Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 7
Monday	2/23	First essay due	By 5pm via email
Tuesday	2/24	Birthright Citizenship	Frost article
Thursday	2/26	Imperial Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 8
Tuesday	3/3	Progressive Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 9
Thursday	3/5	Wilsonian Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 10
Tuesday	3/10	NO CLASS (Spring Break)	
Thursday	3/12	NO CLASS (Spring Break)	
Tuesday	3/17	Commercial Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 11
Thursday	3/19	New Deal Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 12
Tuesday	3/24	Alliance Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 13
Thursday	3/26	Constitutional Lions	LaFeber article
Thursday	3/26	WERT LECTURE: Michael Vorenberg	Stern, 7pm
Monday	3/30	Second essay due	By 5pm via email
Tuesday	3/31	Containment Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 14 (pp. 595-626)
Thursday	4/2	Cold War Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 14 (pp. 626-650)
Tuesday	4/7	Brinkmanship Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 15
Thursday	4/9	Vietnam Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 16
Monday	4/13	Research Journal (secondary sources)	By 5pm via course site
Tuesday	4/14	Detente Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 17
Thursday	4/16	Human Rights Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 18
Tuesday	4/21	Reagan-Bush Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 19
Thursday	4/23	Superpower Diplomacy	Herring, chapter 20
Friday	4/24	Research Journal (primary sources)	By 5pm via course site
Tuesday	4/28	Seeking Historical Statecraft	Meade article (2024)
Thursday	4/30	Lessons & Legacies	
Thursday	5/7	Profile Papers due	By 5pm via email