

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

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Hours: Wed. 10am to 1pm

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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

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|------------------------------|------------|
| 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) |
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| Tuesday | 1/27 | Revolutionary Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 1 |
| Thursday | 1/29 | Partisan Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 2 |
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| Tuesday | 2/3 | Jeffersonian Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 3 |
| Thursday | 2/5 | Jacksonian Diplomacy --Ungraded reflections due | Herring, chapter 4 |
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| Tuesday | 2/10 | Expansionist Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 5 |
| Thursday | 2/12 | Lincolnian Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 6 |
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| Tuesday | 2/17 | War Powers –Then and Now | Lee article |
| Thursday | 2/19 | Global Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 7 |
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| 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 |
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| Tuesday | 3/3 | Progressive Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 9 |
| Thursday | 3/5 | Wilsonian Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 10 |
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| Tuesday | 3/10 | NO CLASS (Spring Break) | |
| Thursday | 3/12 | NO CLASS (Spring Break) | |
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| Tuesday | 3/17 | Commercial Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 11 |
| Thursday | 3/19 | New Deal Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 12 |
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| Tuesday | 3/24 | Alliance Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 13 |
| Thursday | 3/26 | Constitutional Lions | LaFeber article |
| Thursday | 3/26 | WERT LECTURE: Michael Vorenberg | Stern, 7pm |
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| 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) |
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| Tuesday | 4/7 | Brinksmanship Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 15 |
| Thursday | 4/9 | Vietnam Diplomacy | Herring, chapter 16 |
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| 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 |
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| 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 |
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| Tuesday | 4/28 | Seeking Historical Statecraft | Meade article (2024) |
| Thursday | 4/30 | Lessons & Legacies | |
| Thursday | 5/7 | Profile Papers due | By 5pm via email |