History 3333 The history of American foreign policy from Nixon to Reagan
Spring 2015
T,R. 11:30AM-12:45PM
Location: Mount Vernon

Instructor: R. Thornton
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Office hours: T,R: 10:15AM-11:15AM

Course Description

Your assignment is to write fifteen, three-page, comparative-analytical papers on any topic raised in class, or based on those listed below; five from group A, five from group B, and five from group C. You are to compare the views of your instructor, with those of any two other authors of your choice. Turn in Group A papers one week after the lecture on the Nixon legacy, roughly a month from day one; Group B papers one week after the lecture on Carter’s legacy; and Group C papers one week after classes end.

Group A: The Nixon-Kissinger Years

1) Explain the crisis of containment and President Nixon’s response to it.
2) Compare U.S. and Soviet arms control strategy (SALT I and the ABM treaty).
3) Compare the strategic views of Nixon and Kissinger, with particular reference to the Soviet Union and China.
4) Compare American and Soviet policy in the Middle East.
7) Discuss the Watergate scandal and its relationship to U.S. foreign policy.
8) Compare Kissinger’s New World Order with Nixon’s Containment.
9) Evaluate Kissinger’s policy toward Israel during and after the Yom Kippur War.
10) Evaluate Kissinger’s policy and purpose in Angola.
11) Assess the Kissinger-Ford relationship.
12) Assess the Nixon legacy and the strategy of détente.

Group B: The Carter Years
1) Evaluate the significance of Moscow’s 1977 strategic weapons’ breakthrough on American strategy.
2) Analyze Carter’s arms control strategy (the “comprehensive proposal” and SALT II).
3) Compare the strategic views of Vance and Brzezinski.
5) Evaluate Carter’s policy toward Asia: Japan, Korean troop withdrawal, and normalization of relations with China.
6) Evaluate Carter’s policy toward the Middle East: the breakthrough to Camp David, and after.
7) Examine the significance of the “Soviet brigade” in Cuba.
8) Evaluate Carter’s policy toward Nicaragua.
9) Evaluate Carter’s policy toward Iran: the fall of the Shah, the hostage crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
10) Assess the oil crisis of 1979.
11) Evaluate the impact of the multiple crises of 1980, including the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, on Carter’s reelection bid.

**Group C: The Reagan Years**

1) Identify and compare the strategic views of Reagan, Haig, and Shultz.
3) Evaluate Reagan’s arms control policies (the Zero option, Start, INF, and SDI) and strategy toward the Soviet Union, especially NSDD-75.
4) Discuss the Falkland Islands War and assess its strategic significance.
5) Discuss Israel’s Lebanon War and its impact on U.S.-Soviet Relations.
6) Discuss the gas pipeline crisis and its impact on U.S. relations with Western Europe.
7) Evaluate Reagan’s policy toward China and its impact on U.S.-Soviet relations.
8) Analyze and assess the significance of the KAL shoot down, the invasion of Grenada, and the Pershing II deployment to W. Germany.
9) Discuss the Reagan Doctrine and its outcome.
10) Evaluate Reagan’s policy toward the Iran-Iraq war, the “Iran initiative,” and the “Contra” connection.
11) Analyze the rise of Gorbachev and discuss its implications for U.S.-Soviet relations.
12) Evaluate Reagan’s legacy and his role in bringing the “cold war” to an end.

No texts required.

Learning Outcomes

Students will
1) acquire a broad understanding of the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy
2) develop the ability to analyze historical issues in strategic context
3) acquire the skills to write about and discuss foreign policy

Grading

Papers constitute one hundred percent of the grade.

Class policies
Attendance is mandatory; unauthorized absence will affect grade
Late work will be accepted, but penalized half grade
The GW code of academic integrity will be strictly enforced