



Syllabus
CORE 2560 America Through Foreign Eyes
(Core Theme: Self and Identities)
Spring 2006

Tues./Thurs. 9 - 10:50 a.m.
Mass Communications Building, Rm. 119

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Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 1:15 p.m.-2:30 p.m. and by appointment

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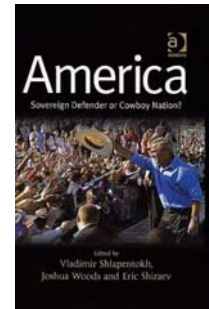
E-mail: cdemonth@du.edu

Class Web Site: We will be using Blackboard

Required Texts:

- *America: Sovereign defender or cowboy nation?* (2005) Shlapentokh, V., Woods, J., & Shiraev, E. (Eds.). Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

This book is available at the DU bookstore and from various online sources (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Associated Press, etc.)



- *Most of our class reading material will be from additional sources. These include: E-copies of essays and articles available through Penrose Library and/or on Blackboard, in-class handouts, web sites, bulletin boards, and other WWW sources.*

Course Objectives

The United States, and Americans, occupy a unique, privileged and powerful position in the contemporary world order. Indeed, according to many scholarly and public accounts, the U.S. has achieved unprecedented status as *the* preeminent world power. Yet despite, or, paradoxically, perhaps because of its status as what some have called a world "hyperpower," large numbers of Americans are mostly, if not totally, unaware of what U.S. global preeminence means to them, and to other people around the world. This course aims to inspire critical reflection on your part about the role of the United States -- its political and economic system and practices, its culture, and, most fundamentally, its social actors, meaning its people(s) -- in a globalizing world. It does so primarily, though not exclusively, by asking a simple, yet crucial question:

- How does the rest of the world view the United States, Americans and, as the international communications and political economy scholar Herbert Schiller has put it, the "U.S./American situation" with respect to globalization?

Course Methods & Approach

The course will use a variety of methods and approaches to inspire interesting and, quite possibly, troubling reflection on your part about the complex American "situation" in a globalizing world. Assigned readings will draw from the work of scholars and writers from a variety of fields and disciplines, including American studies, anthropology, communication, cultural studies, history, international studies, linguistics and language studies, media studies, political science and international relations, political economy, and sociology. These will be written by scholars and writers from around the world.

The course will begin by providing the larger context you will need in order to address, and respond to, how other people from around the world view the U.S. and Americans. First, you will be exposed to diverse analytical, theoretical and political perspectives on globalization and its complex political, economic and cultural dimensions.

Next, we will read a number of different, and often competing, "self" analyses of American foreign policy ("self" means these are written by Americans), with foreign policy here broadly defined to include military, political, economic, cultural and social policy.

The final 2/3 of the course will focus on foreign views of the U.S., Americans, and American foreign policy (with foreign policy broadly defined to include politics, economics, culture, and social policy). We will read selected accounts analyzing the U.S., Americans, and political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of American foreign policy, grouped according to the major regions of the world: Africa, Asia & Australia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and North America (Canada). These assigned readings will provide only a limited view on the U.S. from these regions. They will therefore be supplemented and bolstered by readings that you, yourself, discover, respond to, and discuss, both in class and on the in-class discussion board.

The course will also bring in guest speakers and use audio-visual materials in order to expose you to different ideas and perspectives, increase awareness and understanding, and, most fundamentally, to stimulate critical reflection and thought.

Proactive, hands-on, multi-way learning

This course will rely partially on you to gather new, interesting, thought-provoking, and diverse materials and information from around the world focused on some aspect of the U.S./Americans and their perceived role in, and impact upon, the global order. In this way, *we--including the instructor--* will all learn from one another while also discovering and experiencing the joys and challenges of researching a complex topic such as America's, and Americans', role in globalization as perceived by so-called global "others."

Primary among the methods we will use to promote multi-way learning, dialogue and interesting and informed discussion, and, quite possibly, heated debate about the U.S., Americans and how global "others" view us, "ought to" view us, and how we therefore (ought to) view ourselves and global "others", will be hands-on research, analysis, and several short writing assignments. On both an individual, and group basis, you will be expected to track down foreign representations of the U.S. and Americans, to reflect upon their content and the ways in which you find these to be accurate, inaccurate, useful, thought-provoking, troubling, and so on.

The Internet as a global learning resource

The primary mode of research will likely be the Internet. There, you will be able to find diverse representations of the U.S. and its perceived role in the world in a variety of forms. These might include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- traditional media with an online presence, among them online newspapers, and television and radio station web sites;
- foreign political web sites constructed by foreign government sources;
- web sites for global and foreign public opinion polling organizations such as the Pew Research Center and the Eurobarometer web site;
- web sites for foreign companies, international organizations (the UN, WTO, etc.) non-governmental organizations, etc.;
- web sites for foreign educational institutions such as colleges and universities;
- weblogs;
- discussion boards & newsgroups
- listservs
- e-mail

Current Events

You will be expected to keep abreast of contemporary international events by way of television, radio, print and, especially, web-based news sources. You may read and watch as many different sources of news as you wish. The more the better. However, in order that we can have informed discussion and debate based on the same basic informational foundation, you **must** regularly consume at least **three** of the following news sources:

- ✓ The NYT.com (<http://www.nyt.com>)
- ✓ The World Press Review (<http://www.worldpress.org>)
- ✓ BBC online (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/?ok>)
- ✓ Deutsche Welle (English -- or German, if you know it) (<http://www.dw-world.de/>)
- ✓ Al Jazeera (English -- or Arabic, if you know Arabic) (<http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage>)
- ✓ Singapore Straits Times (<http://straitstimes.asia1.com.sg/>)

Exams, Assignments, Homework, & Participation

Exams: There will be a midterm (25%) and final exam (25%). The exam formats will include multiple choice, T/F, matching, short answer, and short essay questions. All material presented in class -- both by the instructor AND by guest lecturers -- is "fair game" for exam questions. The final will NOT be cumulative.

Individual Writing Assignments (three): There are three individual writing assignments. Assignment sheets for these will be posted on Blackboard.

Deadlines: Barring extreme circumstances, you will be expected to turn in assignments by deadline, or you will receive a zero (F) on that assignment.

Revision: You may revise all three writing assignments. You are strongly urged to come in and talk to me before revising. *I will average the first grade you earn with the second*

grade you earn for your final grade. If you received a 75 on the first story and a 90 on the second, your final story grade would be a an 83.

Anonymous critique: Expect to occasionally see your work in class. If you do see your work on the computer projection screen or in photocopied form, do NOT take it as a form of negative or personal criticism. We will be critiquing each another's writing in order to learn from each other and to become better writers and thinkers.

Short discussion board posts & writing assignments: I will use in- and out-of-class writing prompts and require that you do some short written homework assignments in order to keep you writing and thinking about a variety of important critical social and cultural issues and considerations relevant to the course. Most of these prompts and homework assignments will be posted to the class electronic bulletin board. This will allow other members of the class to benefit from your insights. Hopefully, this bulletin board will also facilitate exchange of ideas, information and knowledge among students. In fact, I will be relying heavily on you to facilitate learning and exchange on the class discussion board. So, for example, one periodic homework assignment will require that you locate, read, post a response to, and post a link to interesting foreign views on various aspects of the U.S./Americans and their role in the global order. You will also be required to follow one another's links on occasion and post your own response to the online representation -- and to your classmate's response.

Group discussion leaders: Eight groups of 3 to 4 people will be assigned to track down two short supplemental readings relevant to the assigned readings on their assigned date and lead an informal discussion on those two readings. The rest of the class will be required to read the readings and post a response to one of three questions posed by the designated group on the class discussion board.

Participation & Attendance: In-class participation and discussion are vital to a healthy and effective learning environment. You may be periodically called upon to ask/answer questions. You will also be called upon to participate in short in-class group activities and subsequent group presentations. Student names must be affixed to any group work (overheads, etc.) and will be used as a partial basis upon which to determine individual participation grades. At any given time during the quarter, I may take "spot" attendance. Those who fail to show up regularly will see their participation grade drop, perhaps radically.

Grading & Attendance

Grading Breakdown:

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-----|
| • Three individual writing assignments | | = | 25% |
| - personal reflection paper | 5% | | |
| - study abroad student interview paper | 7.5% | | |
| - analysis paper | 12.5% | | |
| • Group discussion leaders assignment | | = | 5% |
| • Participation | | = | 10% |
| • Short in- and out-of-class discussion board assignments | | = | 10% |
| • Midterm | | = | 25% |
| • Final (<u>not</u> cumulative) | | = | 25% |

Grading Scale:

93%+	A
90%-92%	A-
87%-89%	B+
83%-86%	B
80%-82%	B-
77%-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67%-69%	D+
63%-66%	D
60%-62%	D-
59% -	F

If you attend class, do the required work and have a reasonable grasp of the information, you should have no trouble earning at least a "C," which indicates satisfactory work.

With the exception of documented absences [official doctor's note, etc.] you will NOT be allowed to make up an exam, paper, presentation, etc. if you miss class. If you have a legitimate, documented reason for missing an upcoming class [official CU athletic/extracurricular event, etc.], it is your responsibility to inform the instructor beforehand. Lecture notes will be posted to the class web site. However, It is your responsibility to contact other class members for in-class notes, assignment sheets, etc. if you miss class.

Policies

1. Rude or abusive behavior such as talking excessively while the instructor or fellow students are addressing the class and/or personal verbal attacks on another student, groups of students, or the instructor will not be tolerated. This type of behavior will have an extremely negative impact on your participation grade!
2. PLEASE turn off all cell phones/pages, etc. before coming to class. Thank you :-).
3. Cheating or plagiarizing the work of another will result in an automatic "F" for that assignment. Additionally, university policy permits harsher actions. If you have any questions about what constitutes (or does not constitute) plagiarism, ask me before you turn something in.
4. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please let me know as soon as possible.
5. If you are involved in DU athletics or some other form of extra-curricular activity that will interfere with your attendance, you are required to let me know far ahead of time so that we can make any accommodations that are allowed according to official DU policies.
6. If you have any questions or concerns during the course of the quarter about anything, please feel free to contact me. E-mail (cdemonth@du.edu) is far and away the best way to reach me!