

**U.S. Foreign Policy (HIST 4342)**  
**Fall Semester 2025**  
**Tuesday / Thursday 12:30-1:45 PM**  
**Classroom: MADLA 209**

**Instructor: Dr. William Kiser**  
**Office: Central Academic Building 313F**  
**E-Mail: [william.kiser@tamusa.edu](mailto:william.kiser@tamusa.edu)**

**OFFICE HOURS:**  
**Tuesday & Thursday 11:00-12:00 or By Appointment**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will examine the history of twentieth century U.S. Foreign Policy with a strong emphasis on the Cold War. Important themes include global colonialism and imperialism, military conflict, socialism, communism, capitalism, democracy, nuclear weapons, and U.S.-Soviet diplomacy into the modern era.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To develop critical thinking skills through classroom discussion, extended-length reading and writing assignments, and essay exams.
2. To practice and improve analytical writing skills.
3. To understand the history of The Cold War within the context of political, social, and cultural change over time.

**REQUIRED COURSE READINGS:**

- John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (any edition)
- Anna Funder, *Stasiland: Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall* (any edition)
- Selections from Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* (posted to Blackboard)

**EXAMS**

There will be two tests: one midterm exam and one final exam. The exams are given in essay format to allow you to demonstrate your understanding of historical topics and to provide your own interpretations of events and themes. It is more important that you be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills by positing and defending an historical argument, rather than simply regurgitate a laundry list of names and dates. Prior to the exams, you will be provided with a list of five possible essay questions to study. Of those five, two will be on the exam, and you will select one question to write your essay on. You must bring a blank green/blue book to each exam. The questions will be based on lecture, class discussions, and supplementary readings.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to write two essays on the supplemental readings. These essays must be at least 1,200 words in length, double-spaced, with standard 1-inch margins and 12-point font. Additional instructions will be provided during the semester.

## GRADING SCALE

Midterm Exam: 200 Points

Final Exam: 200 points

Book Essays: 400 points (2 essays worth 200 points each)

*Atlas Shrugged* Exam: 100 points

Attendance & Participation: 100 points

## TOTAL POINTS: 1000

**A = 1000-900; B = 899-800; C = 799-700; D = 699-600; F = 599 and below.**

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Attendance:** Class attendance is mandatory. You will not be able to succeed in this course if you habitually miss class. Please be punctual – do not arrive late, and do not leave early. If you know that you will be late or must leave early, please inform me ahead of time.

**Extra Credit:** I do not offer extra credit.

**Blackboard:** This course has a Blackboard site, which is where your grades will be posted. I will also use Blackboard for course announcements throughout the semester.

**Make-Up Exams:** Make-up exams are only allowed for emergencies such as debilitating illness, a death in the immediate family, and religious or school functions. In any case, you must provide documentation of your absence in order to be allowed a make-up exam.

**Late Paper Policy:** I do not accept late papers. All assignments must be turned in by the deadline.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please be respectful in the classroom. Do not get up and leave early, turn your cell phone to silent mode, and do not hold personal conversations during lecture or discussion. Laptops may only be used to take notes.

**Communication:** E-mail me at any time regarding questions or concerns that you might have. I do my best to respond to email within one day. You may also schedule an appointment to speak with me in my office outside of regular office hours.

**Statement on Artificial Intelligence:** All student work must be generated by the students themselves. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing or any other portion of an assignment for them. This includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments, as well

as using artificial intelligence tools including but not limited to ChatGPT, OpenAI, and Grammarly.

### **Support Services & Disclosures**

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu), calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics>.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120. All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit <http://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling>. Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331. Additionally, the TELUS Student Support

App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Academic Misconduct: Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic misconduct including, but not limited to, a grade of 'F' on the particular paper or assignment or a failing grade in the course. Also, a referral may be issued to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities where the sanctions can vary up to possible expulsion from the University. Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If you are ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact your instructor for an assessment of the situation. All student term papers and other written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software.

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/current-year/fall-2025.html>

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

### IMPORTANT DATES:

**September 4: *Atlas Shrugged* Exam**

**October 9: First Book Essay Due (Gaddis)**

**October 16: Midterm Exam**

**December 4: Second Book Essay Due (Funder)**

**December 8-12: Final Exam Week**

### **Week 1: August 26, August 28**

Tuesday: Course Introduction & Syllabus

Thursday: Capitalism and Communism

**READINGS: *Atlas Shrugged* (Blackboard)**

### **Week 2: September 2, September 4**

Tuesday: *Atlas Shrugged*

Thursday: **Atlas Shrugged Exam**

**READINGS: *Atlas Shrugged* on Blackboard**

### **Week 3: September 9, September 11**

Tuesday: Origins of the Cold War

Thursday: Origins of the Cold War

**READINGS: Gaddis for First Writing Assignment**

### **Week 4: September 16, September 18**

Tuesday: World War II & Atomic Diplomacy

Thursday: Atomic Weapons

**READINGS: Gaddis for First Writing Assignment**

### **Week 5: September 23, September 25**

Tuesday: Nuclear Proliferation

Thursday: Marshall Plan & Berlin Crisis

**READINGS: Gaddis for First Writing Assignment**

### **Week 6: September 30, October 2**

Tuesday: Truman Doctrine & Containment Policy

Thursday: Truman Doctrine & Containment Policy

**READINGS: Gaddis for First Writing Assignment**

### **Week 7: October 7, October 9**

Tuesday: Korean War

Thursday: National Defense Initiatives; **First Book Essay Due (Gaddis)**

**READINGS: Gaddis for First Writing Assignment**

**Week 8: October 14, October 16**

Tuesday: Exam Review

Thursday: Midterm Exam

**Week 9: October 21, October 23**

Tuesday: The 1950s: American Life during the Cold War

Thursday: The 1950s: Eisenhower's Presidency

**READINGS: Funder for Second Writing Assignment**

**Week 10: October 28, October 30**

Tuesday: Dr. Strangelove Movie

Thursday: Dr. Strangelove Movie & Discussion

**Week 11: November 4, November 6**

Tuesday: Vietnam War

Thursday: Détente and the Nixon Doctrine

**READINGS: Funder for Second Writing Assignment**

**Week 12: November 11, November 13**

Tuesday: Communist Containment in Latin America; Conservatism and the Cold War

Thursday: Cold War Diplomacy in the 1970s

**READINGS: Funder for Second Writing Assignment**

**Week 13: November 18, November 20**

Tuesday: The 1980s and the End of the Cold War

Thursday: The Cold War in Popular Culture

**READINGS: Funder for Second Writing Assignment**

**Week 14: November 25**

Tuesday: Bush Doctrine & The War on Terror

Thursday: No Class (Thanksgiving)

**READINGS: Funder for Second Writing Assignment**

**Week 15: December 2, December 4**

Tuesday: Current Events: Russia and Ukraine

Thursday: Current Events: "The Trump Doctrine"?; **Second Book Essay Due (Funder)**

**Week 16: Final Exam -- Thursday, December 11th from 10:00-11:50 AM**