

Please answer two of the following three questions. The length of each essay should be between four and five typed double-spaced pages (readable 12-point font; one-inch margins all around). Essays are due via turnitin.com by 10pm on Thursday, 8 December. Be sure to get a “receipt” from turnitin.com confirming your upload.

1. THE VIETNAM WAR AND THE CULTURAL LENS: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? “More than the strategic and economic models, the cultural model provides the best analytical lens for making sense of U.S.-Vietnamese relations in the 1945 to 1975 period.”

For purposes of definition, the cultural model refers to nationalistic, religious, racial, or gendered values, as well as to assumptions about the meaning of “progress,” “civilization,” or other value-laden concepts. Be sure to consider cultural values held by both Americans and by foreigners, and be sure to explain how the cultural lens relates to the strategic and economic lenses.

For evidence, draw on Hunt’s Chapter 6 and his “Lords of War” chapter, plus any relevant class lecture material. Because this question involves fewer required readings than the other two questions (see below), you should make sure to draw deeply from both chapters.

2. ECONOMICS AND AMERICANIZATION: Americans, both government officials and private citizens, have long attempted to reshape economic practices and general lifestyles in foreign nations. In your opinion, how positive or negative have these U.S. influences been for non-Americans? To the extent that they have been positive, what accounts for their success? To the extent these influences have been negative, how can we explain what went wrong?

For evidence, your essay should draw on three of these four readings: Alidio, Tucker, Cullather, and Blaszczyk/Scranton, along with any relevant class lecture material.

3. LESSONS FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA: Write a paper for President Obama that offers three thoughtful lessons from history that will help him pursue smart foreign policy toward regions or countries such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, and China.

To illustrate your lessons, gather evidence from Makdisi and Hunt’s Chapter 7, plus at least two other class readings and any relevant class lecture material. Each of your lessons needs to draw evidence from at least two different readings. This means that your lessons should be broad and creative, rather than narrowly focused on just one historical topic.

OTHER RULES

- When you develop your thesis in the body of the essay, acknowledge important opposing points of view and weave a rebuttal into your analysis.
- Your essay must include numerous brief quotations from the available readings. Wherever possible, use a primary-source quotation rather than a secondary-source quotation. To find primary sources in Cullather, Makdisi, and other secondary-source articles, look for places where the author quotes from historical actors and use them to make your point.
- When you quote from a source, be sure to introduce the author and context of the quotation in the essay. See my writing tips on avoiding unattributed quotations.
- No outside research is encouraged, and you need to obtain my permission at least two days in advance to cite outside readings. So long as you use only our class materials, you do not need a formal bibliography.
- The rules for common-sense parenthetical citations that we used before still apply.
- Remember to review the tips on writing page posted on my personal faculty website.
- Although you may converse with classmates on general ideas, this is the equivalent of a final exam, and all work (gathering evidence and writing) should be your own.