

History 596
Fall 2025
Devine

Paper Option A

This assignment is due **Monday, October 13th**. Please send it to me as an email MS Word attachment or share in google docs any time before 11:59 pm on the 13th. If you would like to discuss the assignment, I'd be happy to meet with you in person or on Zoom. Email me with a few dates and times that you are free and I will try to accommodate your schedule. If you would like me to read a draft of your essay, be sure to send me a complete draft by Thursday, October 9th.

If you prefer, you may skip this assignment and complete Paper Option B which will be due on November 23rd.

DIRECTIONS

Papers **should be 1500 words** (and no more than 1900 words!) They should be double-spaced and the pages should be numbered.

Give your essay a **title** that indicates what the paper is about and makes clear which question you are answering. (Something more revealing than "Essay #1" or "Option A") Clever titles will be duly noted.

Base your essay **entirely** on the assigned course reading. You do not have to (nor should you) draw on **any** outside sources, including AI-generated content.

HOW DO I CITE?

If you are quoting directly from a source, cite the author and page number in parentheses within the body of the text, i.e. (Radchenko, 47). All direct quotes **MUST** be in quotation marks and must be cited. Paraphrases of ideas drawn from the readings **MUST** also be cited. If you feel more comfortable using footnotes in Chicago style format, that's fine. Just make sure you are using the correct citing format.

HOW WILL I BE GRADED?

You will be graded on:

- 1) **focus** (do you start the essay with a thesis statement and does it answer the question asked?)

- 2) **evidence** (do you back up your argument with specific information from the reading and is the supporting information especially effective in making your case?)
- 3) **coherence** (is your argument consistent and understandable throughout the piece? Does each paragraph introduce ONE idea and do the paragraphs flow logically?)
- 4) **scope** (does your paper deal with the question in appropriate depth and breadth?)

THE ASSIGNMENT

Address ONE of the following prompts:

1. In *What America Owes the World*, H.W. Brands chronicles how “exemplarists” and “vindicationists” have alternated in exercising dominant influence over American foreign policy. What factors help determine whether exemplarists or vindicationists exert more influence over policy? How, for example, can a specific political, economic, or diplomatic context favor one side or the other?
2. Taking into account the historical scholarship we have read this semester, what would you say were Josef’s Stalin’s priorities after World War II and to what extent did the policies he pursued advance or undermine those priorities? Ultimately, how significant were Stalin’s own missteps, misperceptions, or misguided assumptions (as opposed to efforts on the part of the West) responsible for drawing his nation into the Cold War – a long, protracted conflict that he himself had wanted to avoid?

[In answering, you can draw on a variety of readings – Roberts, Naimark, Radchenko, Ostermann, etc. – to support your answer.]

3. In reading Radchenko’s account, the breakdown in Sino-Soviet relations after 1949 seems to have been just as likely as the fragmenting of the Grand Alliance after 1945. Why was this the case? What factors stand out as the most compelling explanations for the souring of Sino-Soviet relations?
4. Much like the emergence of the Cold War itself, the division of Germany “did not seem inevitable until it was.” Drawing on the evidence that Ostermann introduces, explain why the division of Germany did occur, and despite each side’s claims (then and later) to have wanted German reunification, division of the country seemed to suit both the US and the Soviets.