## "United States" Field examination

Students preparing themselves in the "United States" Field should propose, for <u>early</u> consultation with the Field examiner, a list of 5 to 7 topics or themes that should, altogether, cover: (1) U.S. relations with nearly all of the major *geographical regions* of the world, (2) U.S. diplomatic history in most of its *historical periods*, including the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, (3) at least one of the "classic" themes (e.g., the evolution of the Monroe Doctrine or, perhaps, the Open Door Policy), (4) at least one issue of major historiographical and political controversy (whether the United States started the Cold War or whether the United States is an "empire" like others, for example), and (5) a "background" topic directly related to the student's probable Ph.D. dissertation subject, as an early start toward actual dissertation research.

In connection with each of the above proposed topics/themes, the student should list a number of books and articles that are especially pertinent—not *just* those that may have been assigned in Fletcher courses. These books and articles should include the best of standard works and also the very newest writings, so that the student is sure to be aware of the relevant scholarly "frontiers"—as these are at present defined, and perhaps as they should be moved or expanded. Be imaginative.

It is important to read and reflect "argumentatively," not merely passively, or merely to memorize. Read current *book reviews* in appropriate professional journals (such as *Diplomatic History* or *Reviews in American History*) as a guide to deciding what books to examine closely. Read *books* only selectively, as time is limited; read the introductions, conclusions, and key chapters. Use only one *textbook* as well as the Morrises' indispensable *Encyclopedia of American History* for straightforward factual reference. Especially regarding the 5 to 7 topics the student selects, carefully read the pertinent sections of Richard Dean Burns, ed., *Guide to American Foreign Relations since 1700*, available in the Ginn Library.

It is important to gain a firm knowledge not just of the historical facts but also a sure sense of the changing historiographical landscape—to know what and where the "mountains" are in the wider range of the *literature* of the Field. It is not necessary to know all the details that lie in every "valley"—*except*, of course, those lying in the immediate vicinity of the topics/themes the student himself or herself proposes as the basis for the examination in the United States Field.

The student has 7.5 hours for the examination which will consist of six questions. Students doing the United States as one of two fields will be required to answer any four questions, those doing it as one of three fields should answer any three questions

Alan Henrikson June 2010