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The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

Department of Space Studies
SPST 203: History of Space 3 Credit Hours – 8 Weeks

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Course Description (Catalog)

SPST 203 History of Space (3 hours)

This course is a history of human activity in space and includes rocketry, space associations, voluntary organizations, human flight, unmanned flight, satellites, science-fiction, and ballistic missiles.

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Course Scope

The History of Space is a survey of humanity's quest to explore outer space, "the final frontier." This course is a history of human activity concerning, about, and in space and includes early humanity's fascination with the heavens, the quest for knowledge about what lay beyond the sky, human flight, unmanned flight, the development of rocketry and satellites, the role of early space associations and

voluntary organizations, space exploration and ballistic missiles and the increased militarization of space, and science fiction.

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Course Objectives

Course Learning Objectives: At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and discuss the importance of space and space travel to humankind from the earliest of times to the present day.
- Illustrate the importance of the early space theorists, science fiction, and voluntary rocketry organizations to the advent of the rocket age.
- Analyze and discuss the German military space program and its importance to the early development of the American space program.
- Analyze and critique the Soviet/Russian and American Space programs and the early manned space programs through the modern space station.
- Categorize and interpret the major space events of the 1980s and early 1990s with regard to space exploration.
- Evaluate and debate the importance and impact of the President Ronald Reagan's strategic defense program to the United States, and other U.S. and international programs, and the militarization of space.
- Discuss cogently the future direction of space exploration and utilization for the United States.
- Demonstrate senior level research and writing skills.

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Course Delivery Method

This course offers students an interactive virtual classroom. Each week's lesson has an introduction comment and assigned readings. Five Discussion questions based on course readings and related topics complement the other aspects of the course.

Since students are expected to fully participate in discussions and interact with the instructor and other students, reading assignments and assigned projects should be completed in a timely manner.

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Resources

Required Texts and Readings:

Burrows, William E. *This New Ocean: The Story of the First Space Age*.
(Modern Library Paperback: New York, 1998.)

Supplemental Readings:

[NASA. NASA History Series Publications.](#)

[NASA. Key Space Policy Documents.](#)

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Contact information and Evaluation Procedures

CONTACT

Students are expected to maintain routine contact with the instructor throughout the course. While the number of these contacts may vary according to individual student needs. If you need to contact the instructor at other times, the preferred method is by e-mail. If phone conversations are desired, please arrange times via e-mail.

GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Official grades are issued by the University on the grade report form. Professors have 7 days from the end of the semester to submit course grades to the University. If students do not receive grades within 30 days of the end of the course, contact the university.

FINAL GRADE CRITERIA

TASK	Percentage
Discussions	20
Research Topic Proposal	2
Research Proposal	4
Research Paper Outline	4
Annotated Bibliography	4
Peer Reviews	6
Research Paper	30
Final Examination	30
TOTAL	100

ASSIGNMENTS

Discussions – There will be eight threaded discussions during the term. These discussions are considered to be **very** important: when you complete this course, you must be able to converse knowledgeably about space with people in the field and with the layperson as well. Thus, the discussions are worth 20% of the overall course grade. You are required to make an original posting, monitor (eg, reply to) all posts on your thread, and respond to at least two of the postings of other students. Your original posting should be substantial, meaning having content that is thoroughly presented. You should also have a solid reaction or response to at least two other postings. A “that’s so true” type of response will result in zero points. A substantive posting is one that comments on a specific aspect of another posting; that adds further information; or that respectfully disagrees with a statement that has been made. I’m not looking for an argument among students, although disagreement is fine, and given some of our topics, expected; what I want is a good discussion.

Introduction: Please take a few moments to briefly virtually introduce yourself to the rest of your classmates. Some items that you may want to provide include: where you live, your academic interests, professional aspirations, hobbies, family, etc.

Discussion #2 – Discuss your ideas regarding the following questions: Why didn’t the U.S. go ahead and launch the first satellite ahead of the Russians? We certainly had the capability. What was lacking – Political will? Foresight? Organizational competence? Something else? Respond in some depth, and comment on at least two other postings in addition to monitoring your own thread.

Discussion #3 – While the world focused on the accomplishments of the Mercury and Apollo programs, many in the space community focused on Gemini. Why did the space community think Gemini was so important? What did Gemini do that was special? Respond in some depth, and comment on at least two other postings.

Discussion #4 – The Shuttle is about to be retired, Hubble will be allowed to deorbit, and the ISS has an obituary notice on file for when it will be needed. What do you REALLY think will be the next steps in space for the U.S.? What do you think they SHOULD be? Respond in some depth, and comment on at least two other postings.

Discussion #5 - Choose a conflict from history (either a war or a particular battle). Briefly describe the conflict (brief is a paragraph or two, in this case), and then describe how it might have been different if either or both sides had had the benefit of space.

Discussion #6 - In your own opinion who won the space race and how?

Discussion #7 - This week your discussion is finding a current event related to space and describe it here. Include the references you used and also why you chose this event.

Discussion #8 - Please share your feelings about this course. What did you find most interesting? How would you change or improve the course?

Assignments:

Research Topic Proposal – The research paper topic will be selected by the student with approval of the instructor. Please do not begin your paper without receiving approval! Your research project may be on any topic related to the topics covered in this course.

Research Proposal – Your Research Proposal is worth 15% of your overall course grade, so it will be assessed thoroughly. Be certain to address all of the required topics and sections.

The research proposal has **three parts**. The **first part** is your initial discussion of the problem or issue you are going to research. In order to do this, you may have to do a bit of initial research. At the advanced undergraduate level, you can expect to have to spend some time thinking through the issues or problems you want to explore. The first part of the proposal will be a discussion of what you intend to do. It is this part of the proposal that sets the tone and the parameters of your research. Remember you only have a total of eight weeks to complete the paper, so your topic should be narrow enough that you can fully discuss and develop your idea, and it must be such that it will lead to a unique and specific conclusion.

Once you have described the issue or problem and set the parameters of the paper, you then transition into the **second part** of the research proposal. This part lays out how you plan to approach the paper, the type of research you plan to conduct, and in general, the direction the paper will take. List your sources and identify anything that was particularly helpful or problematic.

Finally, the **third** and most important **part** of the research proposal is the conclusion, or, more specifically, what you hope to conclude. For a research proposal, one may think of the conclusion as the hypothesis, which ideally will be supported to reach a solid conclusion.

The conclusion is the whole purpose behind your paper. It is valid to do research so you can learn more about a topic or inform a reader about a problem and the surrounding issues, but that is not the purpose of *this* paper. The purpose is for

you to draw and report a conclusion. A conclusion may be a recommendation or set of recommendations based on your research for whomever reads the paper, the lessons learned from the examples you gave, lessons that can be applied to a current situation, or a lesson that was not learned and therefore a mistake that had been made in either a current or past situation, or your unique opinion or perspective on how history developed based on the research you did and your analysis.

So, the research proposal must have a working conclusion or hypothesis in mind. The conclusion may change based on further research, but in order to conduct research one must have a goal in mind. Take time and think about how you want to end the paper.

A well written research proposal can serve as the introduction of the paper itself when you begin writing it, but be sure to edit the proposal to reflect the final thinking that you do.

*Your proposal is due by the end of the **second** week of the course. Get started as soon as your research topic has been approved.*

Research Paper Outline

An outline is not elementary school work; professional writers almost always use outlines. Outlines not only help organize your thoughts, but they help you to focus on the topic. The more detailed the outline the easier it will be to write the paper. I find that the more time I spend thinking through and writing a detailed outline, the less time it takes to write the actual paper, and I will often spend almost as much time writing the outline as the paper itself.

Some writers prefer to think through an outline in their heads and then write the research proposal. If this works best for you, by all means follow that pattern.

Annotated Bibliography

The Annotated Bibliography is a reference list of the sources that you will use in your paper. It is more than just a list of sources, though. An annotated bibliography contains a short summary of each source along with an evaluation of the source. This evaluation is a statement of how the material in the source might be used in your paper. An well written annotated bibliography is an invaluable tool in writing a research paper.

Your bibliography should have at least 10 sources. These should be scholarly sources, not simply web articles. Please note that Wikipedia is not scholarly and should not be used as a source for your research.

Peer Reviews

One of the best ways to improve your research paper is to receive reviews from classmates. For this assignment, you will review and give substantial comments on the papers of two of your classmates. Please submit these to the dropbox for grading. The reviews you receive of your own paper will be turned in with the final draft of your research paper.

Research Paper

Finally, with an outline and research proposal in place, you can begin to write. If you're not certain how to start, start anyway. Often once you have words on paper – any words – it becomes easier to get to a finished product.

Please note that in the research paper, all sources of information must be footnoted; endnotes are also acceptable. A selected bibliography of all sources used or referenced is required and must include a minimum of 5 sources including at least 2 accessed through the APUS library. Please note that Wikipedia is not an acceptable source. In addition, please be very careful about using web-based articles as sources; they are typically not peer reviewed and are generally aimed for a public audience. Your sources should be substantive and scholarly.

There is no fixed length minimum or maximum although the paper is worth 30% of your overall course grade. This is an upper level course and a paper commensurate in depth and length with upper level work is expected. The paper length is determined by the parameters the student sets in his or her introduction and the amount of writing necessary to fully develop the topic.

Final Examination – The Final Examination will be an on-line exam. This will not be a multiple choice or True/False exam. The questions will require both knowledge and some thought. The examination will be of the essay type, and you will have about a week to complete it.

Late Assignments: The University encourages all work to be completed according to the course schedule. The University Late Work Policy can be found in the Student Handbook [here](#).

Grading Scale

Please see the student handbook to review the University's grading scale.

Course Outline

Week	Primary Subject Matter	Items Due
1	Introduction to course; early concepts of space and of flight through the early 20 th century.	Research Topic Proposal
2	Rocketry in WWII and the beginning of the Cold War.	Research proposal
3	Space-base reconnaissance; Cold War space programs.	Research Paper Outline
4	Summarizing early space history	Annotated Bibliography
5	Man on the Moon; Quest for Mars and beyond.	
6	Space exploration and the future of space.	Peer Reviews
7	Research work; review	Research Paper
8	Final exam	

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