



POLI 142A: United States Foreign Policy





Lecture 2: History

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Paradigms

- Well-worn perspectives in world politics
 - Realism
 - Liberalism
 - Constructivism
- Normative versus positive reasoning

American Exceptionalism

- American Exceptionalism: the view that the United States is different from other countries
 - Facts: how different is the US from other countries (i.e. do its foreign policies differ)?
 - Interpretation: what are the reasons for any differences (identify causes)?
 - Analysis: how can we assess exceptionalism (how do we know if our claims are wrong)?
 - Forecasting: how will these differences play out in the future?

Realism

- Realism draws its name from “realpolitik”
 - Champions a sober look at what “really” drives the behavior of international actors
- Tenets of Realism:
 - Actors: states
 - States are egoists (seek to realize prefs)
 - Preferences: States seek power/security
 - Structure: International system is anarchic
 - Security dilemma: self-help system

Liberalism

- Realism draws its name from the 18th-19th century social enlightenment movement
 - Not modern left liberal politics
- Tenets of Liberalism:
 - Actors: more diverse, not just states
 - Preferences: welfare, often economic
 - Structure: markets and institutions

Constructivism

- Constructivists argue that preferences are endogenous (anarchy is what we make of it)
- Tenets of Social Constructivism:
 - Actors: less important than communities
 - Identities form in opposition (“the other”)
 - Preferences: are constructed by the group
 - Social interaction/pressure guides prefs.
 - Structure: norms more than institutions
 - Institutions can be an intermediate step

Designing A Nation

- Most nations evolve systems of government
 - “Path dependent effects”
- The United States is “designed”
 - Unique opportunity to identify influences

History: Themes

- The History of the U.S. is one of expansion
 - growing territory --> growing power --> growing ambitions
- Different factions have different definition of expansion, or differ in their use of territory
 - North, South, West

Contrasts

- Individual/group autonomy
 - U.S. conscientiously autonomous “free”
 - Increasingly centralized and integrated
 - Europe today is only beginning the process that the U.S. resolved in 1865

Contrasts

“Other nations in history have fought in foreign lands and remained to occupy and exploit. Americans, following battle, want nothing more than to return home”

George W. Bush

Contrasts

- Territory
 - The U.S. arguably holds more conquered territory than any other modern country
 - U.S. is self-consciously NOT interested in expanding its territorial holdings today

Contrasts

- Foreign Affairs
 - Avowedly insular (isolationism, ignorance of the world)
 - Most worldly nation in terms of influence

Contrasts

“Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.”

George Washington

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”

John F. Kennedy

The Beginning

- Initial reasons for U.S. revolution obscure
 - Franklin was “British” as late as 1773
- The origins of the U.S. can be found in the seven years war (1754 - 1763)
 - Huge global contest (first “World War”)
 - England (Prussia, colonists) vs. France (R.O.E, native American “Indians”)
 - Arguably, no one wanted the war (Frederick the Great of Prussia provokes)



**BRITISH POSSESSIONS
IN NORTH AMERICA, 1775**
Before the Outbreak of Hostilities

SCALE OF MILES
0 50 100 200 300 400
--- Proclamation Line of 1763

95° 90° 85° West from 80° Greenwich 75° 70°

The Beginning II

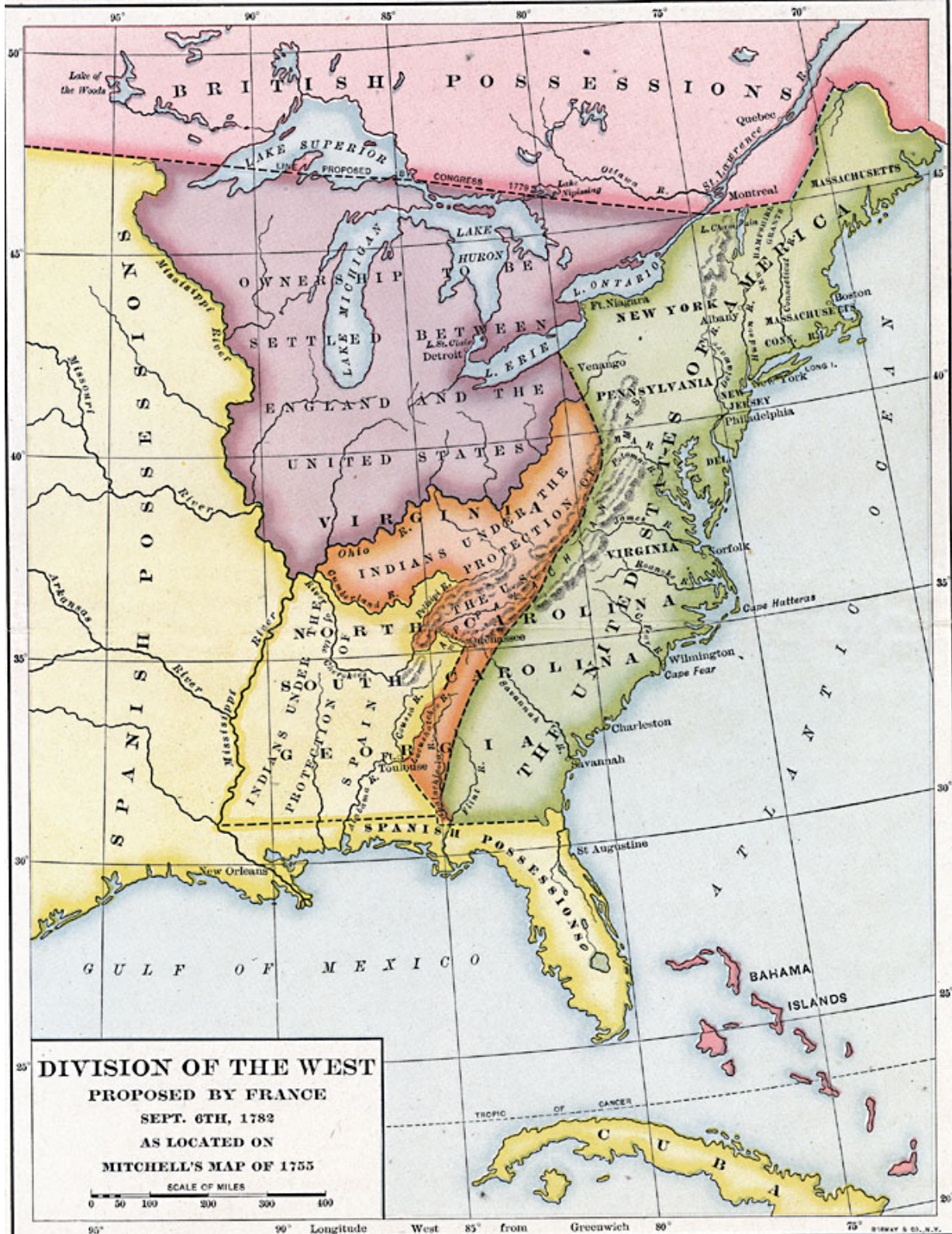
- Initially, the war went badly for the British
 - Braddock ambushed in Pennsylvania
 - Setbacks in Europe, Caribbean
 - George Washington

The Beginning III

- War goes better under PM Pitt
 - British adopt Colonists' strategies/war
 - Louisbourg, Quebec
 - Victory (huge gains for British)

The Disenchantment

- War does several things:
 - British confident, don't need Colonists
 - Colonists confident, don't need British
 - Constraints on Colonists
 - Re-imposition of colonial rule
 - Taxes/representation



Lake of the Woods

BRITISH POSSESSIONS

LAKE SUPERIOR

LAKE MICHIGAN

LAKE HURON

LAKE ERIE

OWNERSHIP SETTLED BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES

VIRGINIA UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE U.S.

NORTH CAROLINA UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE U.S.

SOUTH CAROLINA UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE U.S.

SPAIN'S POSSESSIONS

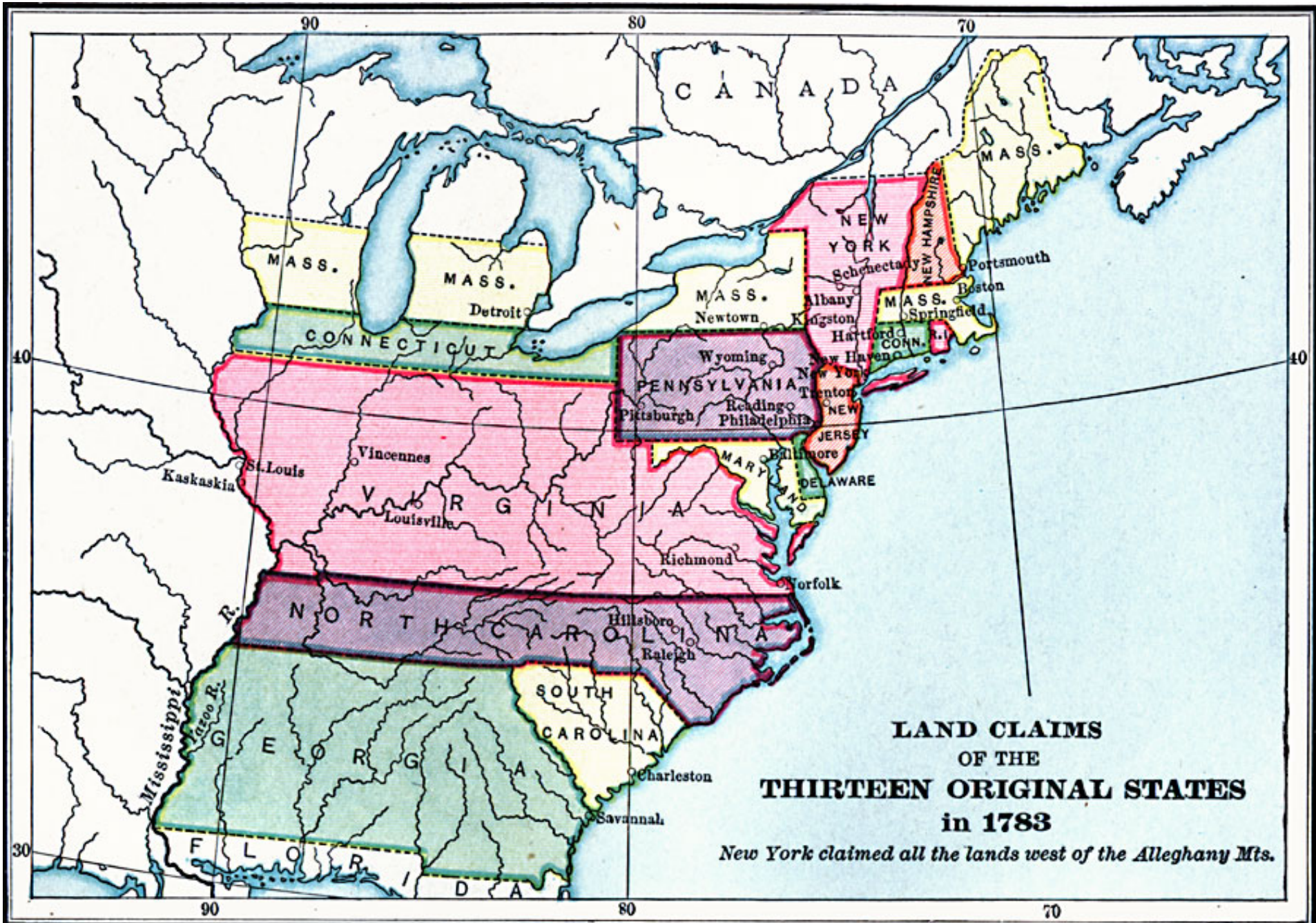
GULF OF MEXICO

BAHAMA ISLANDS

TROPIC OF CANCER

CUBA

95° Longitude West 85° from Greenwich 80° 75°



**LAND CLAIMS
OF THE
THIRTEEN ORIGINAL STATES
in 1783**

New York claimed all the lands west of the Alleghany Mts.

The Constitution

- Compromise:
 - What is the minimum needed to govern?
 - Once in place, new things come along
 - Some entity must deal with them
 - Growth of central (Federal) government



The New Nation II

- Priorities:
 - Disengage/deter “old world” (- Europe)
 - Engage/conquer “new world” (+ West)
 - Business of America is business (+/- Asia)
 - Slavery (+/-)

Old World

- Major powers are in Europe.
 - Difficult/expensive for U.S. to engage them
 - U.S. is weak, will not have much influence
 - George Washington's resignation speech
 - “Avoid entangling alliances”

New World

- “Power vacuum” in interior of N.America
 - U.S. intends to fill/occupy this vacuum
 - Constitution outlines rules for integration of new territories (Canada is included)
 - Momentum: As country expanded --> became more powerful --> expanded

New World II

- Economic exploitation:
 - Natural resources
 - Immigration
 - Displacement of populations
 - “Go west” Horace Greeley

Business

- The U.S. is a business compromise
 - South --> export raw materials (tobacco)
 - North --> trade, finished goods
 - West becomes critical politically (Jackson).

Fundamental Crisis

- End of expansion creates fundamental crisis.
- When it becomes clear that the South will lose demographic/democratic race
 - Violence or defeat are their options
 - Splits U.S. Federation