

HST 203: History of the United States Sp14 (Escobar Meta 41237 41238)

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American Exceptionalism

by Joe Escobar - Friday, April 11, 2014, 11:49 PM

This forum thread is for American Exceptionalism posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the questions in your posts.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: American Exceptionalism

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American Exceptionalism contrasting present and past

by Miranda Townsend - Monday, April 14, 2014, 10:59 PM

A difference in the leader's of our country 100 years ago and those of today concerning American exceptionalism is the idea of that the conservatives believed that it justified America doing whatever it wanted in the world, contrasted with Obama's mentality that bringing freedom and liberty to others and upholding America to a certain standard is what American exceptionalism is really all about.

For the most part our government today is not using American exceptionalism to practice imperialism today like they were 100 years ago when our country's leaders were still conquering and trying to expand American soil overseas. However, our leaders today do still impose American ideals abroad as seen throughout history, such as getting involved in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

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Re: American Exceptionalism contrasting present and past



by Andrew Betz - Thursday, April 17, 2014, 2:41 PM

Miranda,

I feel in the post you made you covered all of the required points fully. You pointed out conservative's 100 years ago used American Exceptionalism to justify "America doing whatever it wanted in the world"; compared to how President Obama uses exceptionalism to bring freedom and liberty to others while upholding America to a high standard. Which like you said demonstrates the true meaning of how American Exceptionalism should be used. I wasn't too sure about how American Exceptionalism could be related to the political spectrum, but after reading your post however it became clear. Also I feel you were spot on with your statements about imperialism being practiced today, compared to the 1900's.

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If it walks like a duck...and quacks like a duck...



by Amanda Daniels - Monday, April 14, 2014, 11:54 PM

What do you get when you give Imperialism a face lift and a name change? American Exceptionalism of course. It's kind of like when a bar or restaurant owners want to revamp their establishment to draw in new business so they will close down for a minute, give the building a coat of fresh paint, change the name, order some new menus (with the exact same food on it just a different look) and maybe even change the staff, especially the management and then reopen. Now let's say you didn't necessarily care for their food in the past but you're willing to try it again now that it's a different "new" restaurant, and what's even more bizarre is the fact that you might actually like the food from the new restaurant even though nothing has actually changed with regards to the way they the food is prepared. Well that's very similar to what they have done with Imperialism or Exceptionalism.

Exceptionalism is the new Imperialism or what I would consider a type of euphemism, which is changing the name of something so it doesn't sound so bad. I don't think people even take the time to think or research anything about what it actually means or stands for, or better yet, what it means to Obama. They just hear the words American Exceptionalism and think "oh ya cool, exceptionalism, I think I am ok with that, sounds exceptionally wonderful to me and it has a nice ring to it. I think I want to be exceptional too or at least I want my country to be exceptional, or don't I?"

I am not so sure thinking of the United States as exceptional is really all the wonderful, the word exceptional in itself, depending on the context that it is used in, can mean very different things. Yes, we can have exceptional athletes that we send off to compete in the Olympics and bring home gold medals they have won, or let's pretend say we have exceptionally affordable health care in our country that everyone can afford and while we're at it exceptional schools as well in all parts of the county, even the poorest and most rural areas have great schools. I said pretend remember. Anyways these are the kinds of things

one might think of when you say that something or someone is exceptional. However if you start making exceptions for people or for countries, now we are talking about something very different here. Like when we say “well we know Obama didn’t get permission from Congress to start a war (I’m sorry I believe the euphemism we are using this these days is “peace acts.”) See how that works “peace acts” sounds much more pleasing to the ear than going to war. Anyways we make an exception because he says he is doing it for our safety, and after all we all want to be safe.” Although, rather than rising above the standards, now we have done the exact opposite here and buried our heads in the sand to the fact that our president has sent our military to fight a war without cause and without our permission which technically is illegal and unconstitutional for him to do this. And so where does it end? There is no limit to the exceptions that can be made for governments, law enforcements, bankers, high level officials etc. which will inevitably lead to one place, total corruption.

One of the biggest reasons that these ideas of global dominance are still as alive and actively pursued today just as they were one hundred years ago is mostly due to the fact that the same group of people or families (the Rothschild’s and the Rockefellers to name a few) that were running the country then, are still running the country now, except for now they really do own everything, our media (newspapers, television networks, etc.) our utilities, our schools, our banks, and unfortunately our government is no exception here to the list of things they own and control. All the presidents in the last one hundred years (even longer really) have had direct ties to the top ruling elite families of the world including both Woodrow Wilson and Obama. That is because they are the ones who pick out the candidates for president and then sway the votes towards whomever it is they have decided will become president. The only way that things could ever change is to expose those who are actually calling the shots and running the country from behind the curtain, and remove them from power.

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American Exceptionalism: Then and Now



by Andrew Betz - Tuesday, April 15, 2014, 1:36 AM

From 1914- 2014 a lot has changed. We have had 17 different presidents in that 100 year span, there has been an enormous amount of change within American society, and the rest of the world. The concept of American Exceptionalism has grown and become a prevalent part in how the government and the citizens of the United States act.

Looking at President Wilson and how he was reluctant to get involved in the First World War demonstrated that he felt we should not get involved in something that is none of our business. “Woodrow Wilson told Americans that this was a European war; neither side was threatening a vital American interest” (Textbook 772). However today I don’t feel as if this happens very often because we think we are exceptional; I think the government has embraced the concept of “American Exceptionalism” and feels the need to involve its self in the majority of world conflicts. For example with the North Korea and its nuclear program. However being a major contributor to the United Nations the US really has no choice but to get involved in these conflicts today in order to try and maintain world peace. As in 1914 with the absence of the League of Nations, or the UN, then the US could stay out of particular world events if they wanted.

A quote from President Obama that I took from the Salon article demonstrates the modern concept of "American Exceptionalism" "the United States isn't like other countries; ours is a country with unique power, responsibilities, and moral obligations." The previous quote shows the extent of how the leaders of today understand American Exceptionalism.

I do not believe that America uses exceptionalism to practice imperialism like it did at the turn of the century. I feel America does not try to take land and control the people of said land like it once did; the US is more subtle in the way of trying to influence the political leaders of other countries to benefit itself.

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Agree with change/Military strength/Contradiction



by Miranda Townsend - Friday, April 18, 2014, 11:02 PM

Andrew,

I agree with you on the fact that a lot has changed in American society over the past 100 years. And I also saw how your comparison of Woodrow Wilson's reluctance to get into WWI with the way our government behaves today, in regards to rarely staying out of foreign affairs, a great illustration of one major way things have changed.

The lack of the UN in those days was a good point that directly relates to another way things have changed over time. I also think the status of our military compared to how strong our military is today may have played a role in the behavior of our government.

One thing I found ironic was how The American Spectator article says, " Progressives view the constitution as a roadblock, as they seek unlimited federal government...."

Then the article identifies President Barrack Obama as the "darling" of the progressive movement. And finally, contradicts this later when Obama is quoted as saying, "And frankly, there are enough Americans, including me who love it and our country far too much to allow our exceptionalism to be bartered for the further expansion of any already out of control federal government."

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Past and Present American Exceptionalism



by Daniel Halverson - Tuesday, April 15, 2014, 1:46 AM

In terms of similarities, both the leaders today and from 100 years ago both had strong feelings on the state of the United States as being one of the best countries in the world. Differences from today's leaders from 100 years ago include the past time leaders trying to expand and conquer more land to spread the power of the country to other countries that they could take over. Leaders today aren't as in the business of taking over land from other countries.

Today I do not feel that the United States government is using exceptionalism in order to practice imperialism like in the turn of the 20th century. I do believe instead they are using

exceptionalism to make other countries be more like the United States, but not actually trying to take over any land.

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American Exceptionalism then and now



by Paige Nibley - Tuesday, April 15, 2014, 9:59 AM

There is no question that American Exceptionalism exists today as it did in the 20th century during the time of American expansion. However, the American Exceptionalism that exists today is quite different. In the article titled, "In Defense of American Exceptionalism," the author claims that, today, "We see American Exceptionalism not as an empty cry for nationalism, but instead, the blessings of God that keep our nation strong, independent, and free." In the web video clip titled "Causes of Imperialism," on the other hand, nationalism is listed as one of the five causes. Imperialism was a goal of American leaders in the early 20th century based on the idea of American Exceptionalism and their duty to expand a superior race. We see this especially in protestant missionaries of the late 19th century and their attempt to convert people abroad to the superior Anglo-Saxon race. Today American Exceptionalism is not used as a claim for expansion of the United States, but rather as a proud way of describing our unique ideals as a nation that keep us "strong, independent, and free."

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exceptionalism isn't free



by Shane Lundberg - Tuesday, April 15, 2014, 9:59 AM

Over the past 100 years of American presidencies a lot has changed. US foreign policy, domestic issues as well as the economy have all played a part in shaping American "exceptionalism". It is understood that over time our society's definition of "exceptionalism" has changed. During the Roosevelt and Wilson era it carried an entirely different connotation. The American-Spanish War, the Cold War and the War on Terrorism are all products of American "exceptionalism" but does this mean that they're all the same?

During the American Spanish War the US knew that taking the Philippines would promote American "exceptionalism". WWII "exceptionalism" was rooted in our economy and our industry might. The Cold War was different. Imperialism was shaping up to be a technological force rather than brute force. The War on Terror is rooted in our belief of homeland security and freedom. So to say that American "exceptionalism" hasn't changed would be absurd.

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Re: exceptionalism isn't free



by Daniel Halverson - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 7:32 PM



I totally agree with you and it would be completely wrong for anyone to say that exceptionalism has not changed. During past presidencies when attempting to make other countries like them, they wouldn't try to help other countries get better and improve, instead, try and force the country to adopt our policies and how they did things. Unlike those times, i would not say it is like that in today's day and age. While America may be involved with other countries, there is no imperialistic agenda to other countries.

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