



Search forums

Forum 1

American Exceptionalism

• [Subscribe](#)

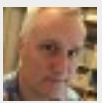
◀ [Censorship & Morality](#)

[American Exceptionalism](#) ▶

Display replies in nested form

Move this discussion to ...

Move



American Exceptionalism

by Joe Escobar – Friday, April 8, 2016, 11:34 AM

This thread is for discussions on the American Exceptionalism topic.

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, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: American Exceptionalism

Sum of ratings: –

[Edit](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



American Exceptionalism and a video

by Robert Edwards – Friday, April 8, 2016, 9:42 PM

Before I get started, I'd like to link a video that despite my best efforts, constantly cropped up in my mind during class these last two weeks. Feel free to watch it, as it definitely calls back to the pre-WW1 period we just covered in chapters 21 and 22.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMqcLUqYqrs>

As for the subject of American Exceptionalism, I do believe the country/nation is something special in the world. I'll admit, I'm biased, I have to be because I was born, raised, and live here and intend to keep it that way until the day I die. We have made great strides in terms of freedom and equality. Segregation is thoroughly discouraged in the country for the most part. Yes there are still problems with racism (Black Lives Matter movement anyone?), but a man is not kept from a job or education just from the color of his skin. Women can hold jobs, CEO positions of corporations, or simply follow the older path of raising a family as a stay-at-home mother with few riots in the streets over it.

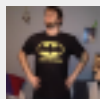
Of course, and in line with the video I linked above, we do have our flaws. Political corruption/incompetence, an acquired fear of our own shadows after 9/11, the abysmal treatment of veterans, I can go on. As a country we are special, but our greatness has transformed and/or diminished as a result of both our successes and failures. Our nations past is one of ever constant change, whether it be quick and clear, or slow and disguised.

One such change is the priorities of our leaders. Back during Roosevelt's time, the office of the president was focused more on building up America into a world power. Imperialism and business interests lead our leaders to expand the nation's might and reach. Nowadays, with America's position as a world power secured and stable, our leaders focus more on maintaining and protecting what we have as a nation. Note the withdrawal of troops from Iraq rather than taking it as a territory of the United States, annexed or otherwise. Before, Imperialism would have drawn our leaders into claiming what territory we could. Our leaders still acknowledge our country to be great (Excluding perhaps Obama, as seen in the material for this section), but they no longer see a need to

prove it or to grow even greater.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Garnering The Exception

by [Barry Peiskee](#) – Sunday, April 10, 2016, 10:36 PM

Identification of a political party would be an efficient way to speak about issues, should everyone in that party all believe the same way on an issue. In this age of identity politics, I would prefer conversations to be guided by the political generalizations, rather than the generalizations be used as an ad hominem. I find it difficult to discuss how an identification influences their analysis of issues, and this is mostly due to the fact that my own bias of how people act would be applied.

Personally, I believe today's political lenses are more blinders than they would be able to guide curious minds. Rather than find out why someone believes in what they do, it seems to be more about how could someone believe this. There is little to no subsistence in answering a question with a short slogan or meme, but all too often this is seen on social media. Using Trump as an example, especially in these current times, would be a great example of lenses.

Donald Trumps name is incredibly polarizing name, causing a panic to trauma from some students attending the University of Michigan. A call to law enforcement was made due to the messages of "Donald Trump", "Build a wall", and "Stop Islam" written in chalk appeared on campus. Through the lense of some left, these chalk markings were threatening enough to call the cops, as they felt "fear" and being "unsafe."

(I will concede to the point that the statement "Stop Islam" can be seen as threatening, as it specifies a group of people who practice the religion, but I don't feel it is a statement in need of a state or federal employee to fix or be involved with. I suppose this is another opportunity to see through the lenses of conservative and liberal ideals.)

Abruptly transitioning to the Salon article, I found a few interesting quotes and suggestions. Stephen Walt, who's link was 404'd (not found) was listed as arguing that "...the only real difference between neocons and liberal interventionists is that the latter insist on legitimizing their wars through the U.N. while the former don't care to." I find this statement to be interesting as it hints towards Obama being, or at least sharing neoconservative tendencies. The Libyan conflict that Obama had participated in without the approval of congress backs this claim, but 2 years later requested approval for action in Syria. Perhaps the hinted "interests and values" that Obama touched on during his Libyan speech were more pressing matters than that in Syria.

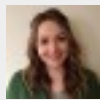
Another interesting point in the article questions if America is the greatest based off of merit, or based off of it being the only nation people have actually lived in. This question is an enjoyable one, as it brings in different perspectives of what is important to others, and what isn't. I feel as though the ability to critique and comment on political, social, or any conversation without fear of federal/state intervention (some exceptions included) is a very big positive for a nations ability to move forward into the future. Stagnation of ideas through possible narrow minded or traditional religious beliefs can ultimately stifle a nations ability to progress. Are we the greatest country? Is there a country that ranks #1 on all positive demographics, and bottom of all negative demographics?

TL;DR: Political identities obfuscate political discussion among the general populace due to a binary system that competes against one another. An uninformed majority will echo out ideas they believe are correct without fact checking, thus spreading misinformation, which could be avoided if they googled the content, or decided to have discussions over periods of days and weeks, rather than seconds and minutes. I myself have a difficult time labeling myself as a particular party as I would rather speak about the issues candidly, without the intervention of who or what I am. If a label is required, then I hereby refer to my political identification as the Peiskee Party.

Sources for Paragraph Trump: <http://nypost.com/2016/04/04/a-new-campus-trauma-the-very-word-trump/>

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: American Exceptionalism

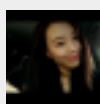
by [Chloe Duryea](#) – Monday, April 11, 2016, 6:35 PM

Separated by over 100 years, what similarities or differences can you infer concerning the country's leaders of Chapter 22 and the leaders of today and their understanding of American Exceptionalism?

The country’s leaders of Chapter 22, which included Presidents McKinley, Wilson, and Roosevelt, without a doubt supported the concept of American Exceptionalism. Some leaders today ultimately have the similar understanding of American Exceptionalism. In Chapter 22, Roosevelt believes that Americans are racially superior. Therefore, it is our obligation to succeed over all other nations in our political and economic affairs. He also believes that other countries such as Asia or Africa are racially inferior, and therefore, can not self-govern themselves. Also, the McKinley administration suggested to rule new territory without the permission of the people who lived on these lands. The committee suggested that the territories it had taken from Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Spain should be made into American colonies (Murrin pg. 730). These examples show that Presidents McKinley, Wilson, and Roosevelt all believed that America is superior and better than any other nation. They sought to extend our nation’s influence abroad. Similarly, most of our leaders today believe that our country is better than any other nation. Ted Cruz was one of the speakers that was shown in the video addressing the issue of American Exceptionalism. He makes it clear that he believes America is the greatest nation because people from all over the world come to America to create any life they want, even when they come here with nothing. He states, “the American Exceptionalism that has made this nation a voice for freedom in the world, a shining city on a hill. That is the promise of America. That is what makes this nation an indispensable nation, a unique nation, in the history of the world” (*speakers on America Exceptionalism*, 2016). Although these leaders are 100 years apart from one another, the theme of American Exceptionalism is still relevant, and they believe that America is superior to other nations.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Is American Exceptionalism are change or still same past of nation?

by [Hyemin Kang](#) – Monday, April 11, 2016, 10:47 PM

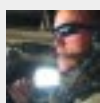
“We see American Exceptionalism not as an empty cry for nationalism, but instead, the blessings of God that keep our nation strong, independent, and free.”

Our nation’s leader no more use exceptionalism because our believe brand of democracy is different from the power of the nation and very potent in the 20th century. The federal government in relation right and state of right. The dower got different past America and present America. I agree this video clip, because has detail about problem of American Exceptionalsi. Every union of difference of the claim. The claim to Exceptionalism are different. Also describe the what world became to freedom to universal.

<http://spectator.org/articles/38032/defense-american-exceptionalism>

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



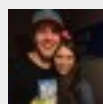
Is American Exceptionalism detrimental to our public education system?

by [Benjamin Marshall](#) – Monday, April 11, 2016, 10:52 PM

Yes, American exceptionalism creates a warped perspective of what the U.S.'s role in history has been. When citizens, especially children are exposed to a one sided account on certain historical events it creates popular opinions that are not based in fact but rather half truths. One prime example is a lack of understanding of the poor treatment of human beings (including American citizens) throughout history because many events in many texts aren't entirely factual. By omitting the negative aspects of US history prevents our society from moving forward as history tends to repeat itself.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



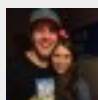
Re: Is American Exceptionalism detrimental to our public education system?

by [Philip Engel](#) – Wednesday, April 13, 2016, 4:47 PM

I totally agree with what you are saying and really liked the example that you gave. I believe this happens in most countries if not all because of the biased way we and others are taught in schools. I feel that no matter how much you try to be unbiased when teaching about a specific event, there still might be a little bit of bias depending on the point of view that it is coming from.

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

Sum of ratings: (1) 0



What Obama Meant

by Philip Engel – Monday, April 11, 2016, 11:03 PM

After watching the video regarding President Obama's reply to the question, "Is the United States exceptional" I have to agree with what Evan Sayet had to say about his answer. What Sayet gets at about what Obama answers the question with is that he is saying that, "yes the US is exceptional, but only because I live here". I believe the question stated before has a lot to do with propaganda.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: What Obama Meant

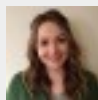
by Barry Peiskee – Thursday, April 14, 2016, 5:25 PM

I understand and can agree that the "exceptional" question is a bit of propaganda, but feel that a nations leader should be able to freely answer the question with honesty, rather than be twisted to pander to politics. He answered the question in the year 2009, which makes me feel as though he wasn't being as candid as he wanted to be, since he would be running for re-election. I would believe his answers to be more curtailed towards his personal appearance and his parties, rather than the question being answered in a propaganda aspect.

Is there a way another nations or countries citizens could look towards a foreign nation and claim that they are exceptional? Personally I think nations who nationalize health care for its citizens is rather exceptional, for example.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Of the arguments and differing points of view expressed by the five speakers in the video clip, who do agree and/or disagree with most?

by Chloe Duryea – Wednesday, April 13, 2016, 4:11 PM

Out of all the speakers shown in the video talking about the topic of American Exceptionalism, I agreed most with Charles Murray. He believes that America used to be an exceptional country. At the beginning of the 19th century, there were many exceptional aspects of America that everyone agreed with. He mentions the physical setting that we used to have in the 19th century, such as the existence of the frontier of moving to the west. This had a very large influence on American culture. The second aspect he mentions is the role of government during the 19th century. The government played a small presence in people's lives, and no other country could say the same thing about their government during this time. This made us exceptional. Another aspect is how neighbors were able to live close to one another during the 19th century. Not many other cultures were able to cooperate with one another like Americans could during this time. Moreover, I agree with Murray about the fact that America still has exceptional aspects today, but not like we did in the 19th century. Many countries today are exceptional. Throughout history, we have had many great awakenings, mostly religious, and we could have a civic great awakening that could have a great influence on our culture today. Murray believes the chances of this are low, but it is possible.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Of the arguments and differing points of view expressed by the five speakers in the video clip, who do agree and/or disagree with most?

by Sara Baker – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 10:12 PM

I agree with some of what you say, however, why should you believe that other countries had the "freedoms" that we possessed even during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? Most countries were ruled by kings and queens, whom although became constitutional rulers of a sort, still remained a Monarchy, giving the "people" much less power and more oversight. America isn't perfect, and although I agree that we had and have our own faults, we were a unique and diverse culture, which could not be matched by the European and even Asian countries, whom the peoples ultimately still had to bow before a King or Emperor.



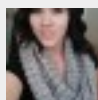
Re: American Exceptionalism
by [Ryan Coltrane](#) – Thursday, April 14, 2016, 2:33 PM

The USA is "special" just like every other nation on earth. There are things that make us differnt, some things we do better than most. others we do worse. Still we do just about the same as comparable nations.



American Exceptionalism, Do our leaders still use it?
by [Agustin Aguirre](#) – Friday, April 15, 2016, 8:46 PM

I do believe our nations leaders still use exceptionalism just without the want to conquest and use racism. Our nations leaders know we are exceptional not just because the whole nation is exceptional , but because we have something no other nation has, uniqueness. Thus other nations are generally seen as trying to follow or catch up, but never do.



Exceptionalism Today
by [Kalli Schroeder](#) – Friday, April 15, 2016, 10:00 PM

Similarities in our leaders today vs. our leaders from over 100 years ago involving exceptionalism is the seriousness and respect towards our “God given right”. Woodrow Wilson was an exceptionalist who believed in society’s God given right so intently that he believed he was a saint sent from God to ensure that the government wouldn’t take that away. According to americanforeignrelations.com, Woodrow Wilson “believed strongly that the force of America is the force of moral principle and that the idea of America is to serve humanity”. According to The Washington Post president Obama is “too quick to criticize the country for its failings at home. When it comes to the oversea exercise of American power overseas, they contend that he’s too cautious, too skeptical and insufficiently convinced of America’s unmatched role as a force for good.” Obama focuses more on the internal affairs while Woodrow was convinced America was meant to serve other countries in their attempt to regain their God given rights. Leaders today do no not use exceptionalism as they did at the turn of the 20th century.



Re: Exceptionalism Today
by [Sara Baker](#) – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 10:01 PM

So then what makes one country better than the other? You write as if America was worse, or less than other countries, and imply that Obama, being more concerned with foreign affairs believes that as well. If our country is so much "worse" that others, or lacking in things which make it unique and "better" than why should we even be a country? Why shouldn't we just let other countries overtake us? If there isn't anything worth being or regaining uniqueness as a country than why should we be any different than Russia, Africa, Asia and even Iraq. I don't mean to be rude, but what you said didn't really state anything other than what was already stated, but your tone implied much of what you "weren't saying."



A) Do our nations leaders still use American Exeptionalism B) (Insert country here) exceptionalism thoughts
by [Joshua Crocker](#) – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 1:39 PM

A) I do in fact believe our nations leaders, or want to be leaders, do in fact still use exceptionalism. As the article quoted President Obama in saying, "I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism." Which brings up an interesting point and parallel I shall address in point B. Now Obama is just one leader and his time in office is nearing a close so I will bring up a possible next leader of our country. The loved Donald Trump, well maybe not loved but you can not deny that he has quite a few followers these days. What is his campaign slogan? "Make America Great Again" I do believe. So what does this infer? I believe it infers that Trump himself believes in american exceptionalism

but believes we have fallen away from being exceptional. I don't know if he believes in it as our founding fathers or Ronald Reagan did where it would be a God given right but you can't deny that he is speaking of restoring the belief in the U.S being exceptional and maybe even superior to other countries.

B) Now to point B which Obama brought up quite nicely. Every country believes they're exceptional. Is that truly the case? Does our uniqueness as a country make us exceptional or is it just the fact that the U.S is actually exceptional. Lets look at the two countries Obama mentioned; Britain, and Greece.

The Greeks one day were exceptional, they were one of the worlds leading powers. They invented democracy and republics. They had great kingdoms throughout the Mediterranean. Do you think the bankrupt Greeks still find themselves exceptional today? I doubt it. I am suggesting here that exceptionalism comes and goes as a country reaches its peak then falls to its resting place.

Now lets focus our attention on the Brits who while maybe not so abruptly as the Greeks have suffered a similar fate. They once held the worlds largest empire and ruled the oceans with a massive navy. At that time they were exceptional weren't they? They were the top power in the world from that little island smaller than the size of Oregon. That is exceptional. But again they fell from the graces, while no they are not like the Greeks and are still a world power they are not near what they once were. Some in England may still believe in English exceptionalism but that number is dwindling.

My final example is Rome. Roman exceptionalism outlasted their empire. Which I believe is true exceptionalism. Is it not more exceptional to have your name, culture, customs, and beliefs last centuries longer than your empire itself? Even today historians look back at Rome as one of the most exceptional empires ever. The same way historians may one day look at the United States. What has happened to all the empires despite their belief in exceptionalism? That belief alone has gotten them nowhere and it seems as though they have all fallen. My belief is that American exceptionalism was true and had its place in time. But that time has passed, the U.S is on the downhill spiral. Lets see how strong American exceptionalism is. Will it stand the test of time as Roman exceptionalism or will we fall from the graces as Greece did?

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



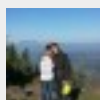
Is America Unique, or Have we Been Lost to Tolerance?

by [Sara Baker](#) – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 2:26 PM

Is America still exceptional? This is the question that we wrestle with, and come to very different conclusions about as individuals as well as a nation. Exceptionalism is defined by Merriam–Webster as “*the condition of being different from the norm; a theory of expounding exceptionalism especially of a nation or region.*” Several authors pointed out in the video clip, that, that which made us *exceptional* no longer exists, and also makes the point that if anything we are a country now which conforms rather than transforms. I find this statement true, as the years pass, and the government grows larger, the voice of reason, and the true majority of people being silenced by the few. Our laws are being turned over in favor of outcry, not the majority vote, and our freedom to disagree is being replaced with tolerance. I think our country has the potential to become exceptional once more, however that potential grows dim the larger our federal government grows and the less rights we possess as individuals. Children now want the government to do everything for them, rather than thinking that they *are* the government. In addition, children are more likely to despise their own country rather than love it, and more likely to tear it down than build it up. So the question isn’t about Americas exceptionalism, but if there still a chance that it could become exceptional once more.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Obama probably practices his speeches in the mirror

by [Dan Johnson](#) – Saturday, April 16, 2016, 10:32 PM

Obama's view of American Exceptionalism is quite literally splitting the distance between anti–Iraq war rhetoric and conservative talking points about America's greatness. I could imagine him looking into the mirror as he practices his speeches attempting to look like the perfect mix of open–minded modern man ready to talk sensitively and tough–chinned yahoo ready to prove his toughness to his friends in a bar fight. In the process, Obama becomes a walking slew of watered down acceptable versions of existing social, political, and ideological norms available to him. For example, instead of invading the Middle East and staying in believing constantly in imminent victory for ten years, he instead generates a juggernaut of a drone program, which he can use to obliterate Middle Eastern towns and villages reaffirming the belief that Americans are at constant threat from

people 1000s of miles away. It's a unique form of American Exceptionalism relative to past forms--a nice balance of polar ends. He doesn't view that America necessarily has a unique right to invade countries and dictate their governments and societies if they don't fit American values, but he does view that America has a unique right to blow up a country's government and society if they don't fit into American values. With this view comes the burden of responsibility of having to constantly wreak chaos in other countries while members of those countries renew their hatred once more only to incite more attacks, and the cycle continues. If there is anything completely consistent about the Obama administration with past administrations is that they believe that they have unique control over the fate of the Middle East and for that matter, the fate of humanity when they don't, at all. If he did have control, he wouldn't have to look like he's practicing his speeches in the mirror in a presidency where he never seemed to stop campaigning.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

 [Moodle Docs for this page](#)

[HST 203 Sp16 \(Escobar Meta 41147 41146\)](#)