

U. S. Foreign Service Veteran Offers Course at Senior Colleges

Bob Rackmales' initial commission as a US Foreign Service Officer was signed in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy; his final citation for "superior accomplishment in the conduct of the foreign policy of the United States" was signed in 1993 by President Bill Clinton. During those three decades, Bob served in both traditional State Department bureaus, such as European affairs and Intelligence and Research, and new bureaus established in the 1970s to deal with emerging global issues such as the environment, human rights and democracy promotion.

The course that Belfast and Coastal Senior Colleges will offer via Zoom next month, "Rethinking American Grand Strategy", draws on his years of experience in government as well as on his quarter century of active involvement in the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR). The title of his course is the same as that of a conference called by SHAFR leaders in 2019 and a book based on the conference published by the Oxford University Press in 2021. The twenty-three articles in the book offer perspective on the role that grand strategy has played in American policy from Alexander Hamilton to Donald Trump. Thanks to the cooperation of the Maine library system, course registrants will be able to access key articles from the collection at no cost.

The course is being offered via Zoom on four consecutive Thursday mornings beginning February 10 at 9:30 AM. Although this is the twenty-sixth course that Bob has taught at these local institutions, this is their first simultaneous offering.

Additional courses of interest including "Making Maple", an experiential tree-to-syrup field course beginning February 17 (www.belfastseniorcollege.org), and "The Dark Side of the Universe", an exploration of astronomers' understanding of the role of dark energy and matter beginning February 11 (coastseniorcollege.org).