Expansionism

McDougall: ‘Facts on the ground’ create expansion
- expansion is a civilian driven event:
- in violent forms, “civil society militarism” (Michael Mann)
- government direction is minimal

Expansionism is not a foreign policy in normal sense
- Northwest Ordinance of Congress of the Confederation (1787); reaffirmed by 1st Congress of the United States in 1789
- Homestead Act not passed until 1862 (a filing fee entitled applicant to 160 acre parcel)

Little international role in expansion from 1820-1840
- Idea that US will expand westward is long-standing
- Revolutions in Latin America lead to Mexican independence
- Slavery question drives US expansion politics

McDougall: Racism does not cause expansion
- Straw Man Argument: ‘racism is the primary causes of expansion,’ or ‘without racist ideologies, there would have been no expansion’
- Race-informed history of expansion: racial beliefs shape the modes and paths of expansion.
  - US excludes non-whites from immigration to US (since 1790, only ‘free white persons’ may be naturalized)
  - Racists beliefs are pervasive, and held strongly in the North as well as the South
o Expansion to majority non-white areas avoided

- Racism and Liberty

  o American form of liberty is premised on self-government
  o liberty cannot survive with servile population in the majority
  o to maintain order, oppressive state institutions will develop
  o limit expansion in non-white majority areas
  o refusal to accept non-whites as citizens at a federal level before Civil War

Texas: Annexation and War with Mexico

Background
- 1821: independent Mexico invited US citizens to settle in Mexico.

- 1830: 30,000 Anglo-Mexican residents outnumber Tejanos

  o Mexico bans further immigration and increases taxes and gov. presence.

- 1835: Santa Anna’s coup fails to improve their plight.

- March 1836: Anglo Texans defeat Mexican army, capture Santa Anna, and gain independence via a secret treaty in April.

- New Republic of Texas reintroduces slavery
Annexation as a Cause of War

- Mexico opposes Texan independence; legal grounds are murky (Santa Anna was coerced into signing treaty

- Congress is divided over annexing Texas when Mexico still claims it.

- Senate rejects Treaty of Annexation with Texas in June 1844 (16-35)
  - Congress approves joint resolution to offer annexation to Texas in March 1845
  - James K. Polk becomes president, intent on securing Texas and lands out to California
  - Texans accept annexation

War with Mexico

- Mexico and US to enter talks over borders of Texas, but dispute US minister’s status (formal v. informal)

- April 1846: Gen. Z. Taylor places troops on Rio Grande River border, and a Mexican incursion leads to skirmish.

- May 1846: Polk was going to ask for declaration of war; with news of Rio Grande skirmish, argues that state of war exists.
- Congress approves military appropriations bill declaring that ‘a state of war exits”
  - US residents in California revolt, and get backing from US military.
  - US wins military victories, but Mexican government in turmoil (13,000 deaths, mostly from disease).
  - Treaty not reached until Feb. 1848: US gets roughly a third of Mexico, including California, and pays Mexico $15 million.

**Oregon Territory**

- US wants border further north; Britain oppose this.
- Polk delivers aggressive addresses (House foreign relations chair calls for ‘54’40 or fight’) and calls for the US to establish de facto control in the region, but minimal military preparations are made.
- War averted with Great Britain in 1846 by settling for 49th parallel borders.