

HISTORY 423

US(SR): COMPARATIVE COLD WARS

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OBERLIN COLLEGE
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3 00-415 PM TU, TH



For nearly half a century, the Cold War dominated world history and reshaped American and Soviet societies. Responding to perceived existential threats, sensing unprecedented opportunities, (US)SR constructed a world order designed to ensure their security while creating ultimate insecurity. The two superpowers imposed a form of order on the rest of the world. Once the initial front lines of the Cold War were relatively stabilized, proxy wars on the periphery consumed not only the societies in which they were fought but produced profound dislocations in the patrons' social fabrics. The superpowers' clients chafed at the limits imposed by Moscow and Washington but often proved to be adept at manipulating their patrons. Movements for cultural and political alternatives struggled – often against seemingly insuperable odds -- to fashion “third ways” outside the Cold War’s iron binary, whether in areas dominated by the superpowers’ military hegemony, newly independent nations, or within Soviet and American societies.

To prosecute so transcendent a conflict as the Cold War, both the Soviet Union and the United States reordered their political, economic, and cultural priorities, with sometimes paradoxical results, as they tested the boundaries of freedom played out for political advantage globally. Locked in mutual embrace, threatened by catastrophe, but gradually accommodating to a regime of order and predictability, (US)SR became not only the Cold War’s perpetrators but its prisoners. When the Cold War ended not in the nuclear Armageddon so many had feared but subsided peacefully, a new era of peace and freedom seemed

to beckon – but one soon overshadowed by a host of conflicts, some submerged by Cold War priorities but also structured by the monumental conflict's legacy.

This colloquium has two special features this fall. One is a unit on the Korean War with Sheila Miyoshi Jager, associate professor of East Asian Studies at Oberlin. Her germinal book on that conflict, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea*, was published by Norton this summer and has received glowing reviews in *The Economist*, *New York Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*. The other is a unit focused on the Oberlin College Choir's landmark ten-week tour of the Soviet Union in 1964. Choir members will be returning to Oberlin in mid-November, thanks in large measure to the initiative of Tim Scholl, professor of Russian, and we'll have a chance to share in their reunion and recollections.

COURSE GOALS

This course aims has three principal aims: to make you more knowledgeable about the Cold War events and processes; to make you more sophisticated and analytical thinkers, to make you clear, effective, and persuasive presenters.

I. Content:

By the end of the semester, students should be familiar with:

- the political, social, economic, and cultural events, processes, and phenomena that defined the Cold War.
- the individuals who framed and defined the US-USSR relationship
- the general chronology of the Cold War (while being ready to complicate it).
- basic theories, generalizations, and debates on the character and evolution of the Cold War.
- the theories on the end of the Cold War.

II. Cognitive skills:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- identify and relay an argument of a specific readings concisely and precisely
- think critically about an author's approach and execution of a historical problem.
- think historically about events, processes, and significant individuals.
- negotiate several (disparate) perspectives to produce a distinct point of view (i.e. eschew needless relativism)

III. Communication skills:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- present their point of view concisely and persuasively while staying on topic.
- participate in a group discussion in a productive and collaborative manner.

ASSIGNMENTS

There will be two types of written assignments: 8 short analytical response papers and 3 synthetic essays.

Analytical Responses should be between 350-500 words in length and should meaningfully engage with the reading and convey the author's main point of view/argument and his/her supportive logic. The main objective is to convey the significance of the reading and, when appropriate, relate it to either the Cold War more broadly or to the specific subject we are examining. Rather than just a summary, the analytical responses are meant to test your ability to identify the import of the readings you are engaging with. This assignment is designed to help you become an active and engaged reader.

You can choose when to turn in the analytical responses under the following conditions:

1. You must turn in a **hard-copy** at the beginning of the class for the readings that are due that specific day.
2. You **must** write 4 responses before Fall Break and 4 after Fall Break.

Synthetic Essays should be about 6 pages in length (Times New Roman 12 font with 1 inch margins all around) and should reflect on the broader issues of the Cold War. Since these essays are due after we cover each of the larger thematic subsections, the goal is to encourage you to think broadly and critically about the larger questions about the genesis, evolution, and end of the Cold War. The first essay will focus on the origins of the Cold War, the second on cultural aspects of the Cold War, and the final will be a more general retrospective assessment. This assignment is designed to help you express yourself concisely about broad historical problems and precisely synthesize a wide range of material featuring dissimilar vantage points.

GRADING DISTRIBUTION

- Analytical responses: **30%**
- 3 Essays: **50%**
- Oral Participation: **20%**

HONOR CODE

"The word plagiarism derives from Latin roots: plagiarius, an abductor, and plagiare, to steal. The expropriation of another author's work and the presentation of it as one's own, constitutes plagiarism and is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship." [American Historical Association, Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct]. Presenting the work of others as one's own goes against everything that a liberal education is about. It is a serious affront to the other students in the course, to me as a member of the course, and to the plagiariser him/herself. The College requires that students sign an "Honor Code" for all assignments. This pledge states: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." For further information, see the student Honor Code which you can access via Blackboard>Lookup/Directories>Honor Code. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, particularly in the context of joint or collaborative projects, please see me or raise it in class.

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see me or the Office of Disability Services so that such accommodations may be arranged.

COURSE SCHEDULE

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Theme</i> | <i>Reading/Assignment</i> |
|--|---|---|
| Tu Sept 3 | Introductions – Main Themes of the course | None |
| <i>PART I</i> <i>Political and Psychological Origins of the Cold War 1945-53</i> | | |
| Th Sept. 5 | The Central Tenets of Soviet Ideology | <p>** "Underlying Antagonisms" from Jonathan Haslam's <i>Russia's Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall</i> (New Haven, Yale UP, 2011), 1-28. **</p> <p>G. Roberts, "Stalin and Soviet Foreign Policy" in <i>Origins of the Cold War: An International History</i> [1994], 42-57. **</p> <p>V. Zubok, <i>A Failed Empire</i>, Chapter 2, 29-61.</p> |
| Tu Sept. 10 | The Central Tenets of U.S. Ideology | <p>** John L. Gaddis, "Soviet Unilateralism and the Origins of the Cold War" **</p> <p>Anders Stephanson, "Liberty or Death: The Cold War as U.S. Ideology" **</p> <p>M. Leffler, "National Security and US Foreign Policy," in <i>Origins of the Cold War</i> [1994], 15-41.</p> |
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| Th Sept. 12 | Allies to Enemies 1 | Melvyn Leffler, "The Cold War: What Do 'We Now Know,'" <i>American Historical Review</i> , Vol 104. No.2, 501-524 |
| Tu Sept. 17 | Allies to Enemies 2 | Tony Judt, chapters 4 (The Impossible Settlement) and 5 (The Coming of the Cold War) from <i>Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945</i> (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 100-164. |
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| Th | Sept. 19 | The Rhetoric of Animosity | <p>** Churchill, Winston S. "A Shadow Has Fallen on Europe and Asia." (Iron Curtain Speech) Speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, March 5, 1946. *</p> <p>Stalin, Joseph V. "Stalin's Reply to Churchill." <i>The New York Times</i>, March 14, 1946 (interview with <i>Pravda</i>), p. 4. **</p> <p>Mr. X (George Kennan). "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, July, 1947. *</p> <p>Zhdanov, Andrei. "Report on the International Situation." (Response to X) Speech to Cominform, September 22, 1947. **</p> <p>Novikov, Nikolai. "The Novikov Telegram." 09/27/46. Reprinted from <i>Origins of the Cold War</i>. (Washington, DC: USIP, 2001) *</p> <p>Truman Doctrine Speech</p> |
| Tu | Sept. 24 | The Marshall Plan: A Tragedy that Divided Europe? | <p>Michael Cox and Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, "The Tragedy of American Diplomacy? Rethinking the Marshall Plan," <i>Journal of Cold War Studies</i> Special Forum: The Marshall Plan and the Origins of the Cold War Reassessed Vol. 7, No. 1 (2005): 97-134 **</p> <p>Responses: Gunter Bischof, "The Advent of Neo-Revisionism?" Marc Trachtenberg, "The Marshall Plan as Tragedy" Laszlo Borhi, "Was American Diplomacy Really Tragic?"</p> |
| Th | Sept. 26 | The Berlin Crisis, 1948-1949 | <p>**</p> <p>Daniel F. Harrington, <i>Berlin on the Brink: The Blockade, the Airlift, and the Early Cold War</i> (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2012), pages TBA</p> |
| MONDAY Sept. 30 | | FIRST ESSAY DUE AT 6 PM | |
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| Tu | Oct. 1 | Spies, Panic, and Subversion | <p>Stephen J. Whitfield, <i>The Culture of the Cold War</i> (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press), 1 - 76 **</p> <p>David Johnson, <i>The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pages TBA</p> |
| Th | Oct. 3 | Spies, Panic, and Subversion | <p>Whitfield, <i>The Culture of the Cold War</i>, 77-end</p> |

PART II

**1953-1979: Unruly Satellites,
Disobedient Subjects**

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| Tu | Oct. 8 | 1950's US Counterculture | Jeremi Suri, "The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960-1975," <i>The American Historical Review</i> Vol. 114, No. 1 (2009), pp. 45-68. |
| Th | Oct. 10 | 1950's Counterculture in the USSR and divided Germany The Enigma of George Kennan | ** Mark Edele, "Strange Young Men in Stalin's Moscow: The Birth and Life of the Stiliagi, 1945 - 1953." <i>Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas</i> Vol. 50 No.1, 37-61. ** Uta G. Poiger, "Rock 'n' Roll, Female Sexuality, and the Cold War Battle over German Identities," <i>The Journal of Modern History</i> Vol. 68, No. 3 (1996): 577-616 ** John Lewis Gaddis, <i>George F. Kennan: An American Life</i> (New York: Penguin, 2011), pages TBA ** Clayton Koppes, "Solving for X: Kennan, Containment, and the Color Line," <i>Pacific Historical Review</i> , Feb. 2013 |
| Oct. 22, 24 | | Fall Break | |
| Tu, Th, Oct. 29, 31 | | The Korean War | Special session with Prof. Sheila Miyoshi Jager, author of <i>Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea</i> (New York: Norton, 2013) ** Readings to be announced |
| Tu | Nov. 5 | Khrushchev's Bombshell and the Hungarian Revolt/Revolution | ** The full text of the so-called Secret Speech (On the Personality Cult and its Consequences) delivered by the First Party Secretary Nikita Khrushchev the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU on Feb. 25 1956. ** Henry Kissinger, <i>Diplomacy</i> (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 550-67. ** The introduction to Charles Gati's <i>Failed Illusions Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt</i> (Stanford University Press, 2006) |

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| Th | Nov. 7 | Prague Spring and Czech Intellectuals | <p>**</p> <p>Mark Kramer, "The Prague Spring and the Soviet Invasion in Historical Perspective," in <i>The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968</i>, 38-88</p> <p>**</p> <p>Vladimir V. Kusin, <i>The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring: The Development of Reformist Ideas in Czechoslovakia 1956-67</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1971), 36-68.</p> <p>**</p> <p>Miloš Forman, <i>The Firemen's Ball</i>, 1968, (Czechoslovakia)</p> |
| Cold War Cultural Competition | | | |
| Tu | Nov. 12 | | <p>Prof. Tim Scholl Presents on US(SR) Cultural Exchanges</p> <p>**</p> |
| Th | Nov. 14 | | <p>Clayton Koppes, "The Real Ambassadors: The Cleveland Orchestra Tours the Soviet Union, 1965," paper presented at Conference on East/West Cultural Exchanges, Jyvaskylva, Finland, June 2012</p> <p>**</p> |
| Sat | Nov. 16 10 30 am to 2 pm | | <p>Tim Scholl, paper on Oberlin College USSR Choir Tour, 1964, presented at coference on East/West Cultural Exchanges, Jyvaskyla, Finland, June 2012</p> <p>**</p> <p>Yale Richmond, "Cultural Exchange and the Cold Wear: How the West Won," <i>American Communist History</i>, Vol. 9 (No. 1, 2010), 61-75</p> <p>**</p> <p>Symposium on Oberlin College Choir Tour to USSR,</p> |
| Tu | Nov. 19 | Soviet Jewry | <p>**</p> <p>Boris Morozov, (comp.), <i>Documents on Soviet Jewish Emigration</i> (London: Frank Cass, 1999)</p> <p>Read Documents: No. 5, No. 24, No. 43, No. 45., and No. 57</p> <p>**</p> <p>Henry L. Feingold, "Jackson-Vanik: The Elusive Search for an Economic Lever," in <i>"Silent no More": Saving the Jews of Russia, The American Jewish Effort, 1967-89</i></p> |
| Th | Nov. 21 | Cold War Civil Rights | <p>**</p> <p>Thomas Borstelman, <i>The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena</i> [2001], pp. 74-84, 110-118, 164-171, 242-259.</p> <p>**</p> <p>Mary Dudziak, <i>Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy</i> [2000], pp. 248-54.</p> |
| Tu, Nov. 26 | | | Essay 2 Due at 6 pm |
| PART III | | <i>The End and New (?) Beginnings, 1980-1991</i> | |
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| Nov. 26, 28 | No Class - Thanksgiving Break | |
| Tu Dec. 3 | The Gorbachev Factor | ** Andrei Grachev, <i>Gorbachev's Gamble: Soviet Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War</i> (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 163-233. |
| Th Dec. 5 | End of the Cold War | ** Thomas Blanton, "U.S. Policy and the Revolutions of 1989" in <i>Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989</i> [2010], 49-98. |
| Tu Dec. 10 | End of the Cold War | ** Vladislav Zubok, "Why Did the Cold War end in 1989? Explanations of 'The Turn'," in <i>Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory</i> , Odd Arne Westad (ed.) ** Jeremi Suri, "Explaining the End of the Cold War: A New Historical Consensus?" <i>Journal of Cold War Studies</i> Vol. 4. No. 4. (2002) |
| Th Dec. 12 | A Retrospective | Robin Hessman, <i>My Perestroika</i> , 2010 |
| MONDAY, Dec. 16 | | Essay 3 due by 12 noon |