

History 753 The Cold War as World Histories

Mondays, 1:20pm – 3:20pm
Fall 2006
University of Wisconsin
5245 Humanities Building
course web site: <https://learnuw.wisc.edu/>

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Office hours: Mondays, 10:AM-Noon
or by appointment

Course Aims

This is a graduate reading course designed to encourage and facilitate historical research across regions and methodological approaches. In this course we will treat the Cold War as both a *multicultural* and a *multidimensional* historical subject. This involves attention to the many diverse interactions among peoples, institutions, and cultures that pervaded the period. We will analyze the conjunctions and disjunctions between different historical voices: center and periphery, rich and poor, political and social.

The phrase “Cold War as World Histories” indicates that this course seeks to contribute to an emerging and creative scholarly conversation about internationalizing the study and teaching of history. We will define this endeavor broadly to include the following topics, among others: the international state system, world economic systems, decolonization, nationalist revolutions, domestic dissent, détente, human rights activism, and religious revivalism. In examining each of these topics we will rely on many analytical perspectives including, among others: great power diplomacy, imperialist expansion, social mobilization, the politics of memory, race, culture, and gender. “The Cold War as World Histories” situates all of these concerns in a global context that transcends the geographic boundaries of any particular nation-state or the details of any particular set of events. In approaching the Cold War, we will analyze the complex webs of causality that connect thoughts and actions in distant lands.

This course self-consciously crosses many traditional scholarly boundaries. The instructor has intentionally chosen a diverse group of students with different disciplinary, methodological, geographical, and personal points of view. Through intensive discussions and written assignments our collective community will encourage the exploration, analysis, and synthesis of divergent perspectives on the history of our contemporary world.

Assigned Readings

Books for Purchase at the University Bookstore

- Borgwardt, Elizabeth. *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).
- Connelly, Matthew. *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Paperback.
- Fursenko, Aleksandr and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005).
- Grandin, Greg, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).
- Holloway, David. *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). Paperback.
- Jacobs, Seth. *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia, 1950-1957* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). Paperback.
- Leffler, Melvyn P. *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993). Paperback.
- McCormick, Thomas J. *America's Half Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After*, Second Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). Paperback.
- Plummer, Brenda Gayle, ed. *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Paperback.
- Power, Samantha. *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003). Paperback.
- Suri, Jeremi. *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003). Paperback.
- Von Eschen, Penny M. *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004). Paperback.
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Yaqub, Salim. *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Paperback.

Reading Assignments

This course includes a heavy load of weekly reading – at least a full book per week. Students are expected to read all of the assigned materials carefully and critically *before each seminar meeting*. Focus on each author’s key arguments and how they relate to larger historical concerns and debates – how is the author trying to change the way we think about Cold War history? Interrogate narrative strategies – how does the author assemble his or her story for the purpose of convincing the reader? Pay close attention to sources – how does the author “prove” his or her point? Most important, as the semester progresses think about how the assigned readings relate to one another – how is each author responding to other scholars?

Weekly Response Essays

Each week by 5:PM on the Sunday before class, all students should post a short response essay on the course website. This response essay should include 3 basic paragraphs. The first paragraph should summarize the key arguments in the readings and their significance. The second paragraph should analyze how the week’s readings relate to other course and outside texts. The third paragraph should offer the student’s critical assessment of the week’s readings: What was most persuasive? What was least persuasive? Which are the issues and questions that need more attention? What kind of new research do the readings inspire?

Final Historiography Essay (due 12/18)

At the end of the semester, students should revise their weekly response papers to formulate a coherent 20 page analysis of the historiography on the Cold War as World Histories. What are the key debates in the literature? What are the points of consensus and the points of controversy? What sources do historians use for this period? How do historians of this period compose their narratives? Which issues and perspectives are neglected?

The final essay should NOT simply compile the student's weekly response papers. Instead, it should draw on the weekly papers and our seminar discussions to build a detailed survey and critique of the books we have read. The final essay should focus on big themes and it should integrate the books, rather than treat them as stand-alone entities. Most important, the final essay should evaluate the field – its strengths and weakness, its accomplishments and potential.

The historiography essay should reflect clear thought, detailed analysis, and polished writing. It should be scholarly and creative. Make sure you proofread and revise your essay before submission!

- 9/11 Introduction: What does it mean to study the Cold War as World Histories?
- 9/18 The New Deal and the Postwar Order
Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*.
- 9/25 The Origins of the Cold War
Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*.
- 10/2 Yom Kippur – NO CLASS
- 10/4 2:30 – 4:30pm RESCHEDULED**
The Nuclear Revolution
Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*.
- 10/5 Noon Special Lunch Seminar with Campbell Craig**
- 10/9 Cold War Political Economy
McCormick, *America's Half-Century*.
- 10/16 Religion and the Cold War
Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*.
- 10/23 The Cold War in the Middle East
Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*.
- 10/27 9:45am Special Seminar with Melvyn Leffler**
- 10/30 Decolonization
Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*.
- 11/6 The Crises of the late 1950s/early 1960s
Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*.

11/13 Civil Rights and the Cold War

Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World*.

Plummer, ed., *Window on Freedom*.

**11/17 University of Wisconsin-University of Chicago Collaborative Graduate
Student Workshop**

11/20 Cold War Dissent and Détente

Suri, *Power and Protest*.

Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* – I will distribute sections of this forthcoming book.

11/27 The Cold War and the “Third World”

Westad, *The Global Cold War*.

12/4 Genocide and Human Rights

Power, *A Problem from Hell*.

12/11 Competing Cold War Narratives

Gaddis, *The Cold War*.

Grandin, *Empire’s Workshop*.

12/18 Historiography Essays Due