

Course Syllabus: Spring 2015/Dr. Mark Saka/

History 5310:W01/WR1 Seminar: American Foreign Policy and the History of the Cold War

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Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to examine the history of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, 1945-1991, and the role played by China as well as other world powers and regions. I have become aware of my age as I realize that my freshmen students were born in 1996; seven years of the fall of the Berlin Wall, five years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and only know the 21st century. Yet, the Cold War is essential for understanding the modern world. Therefore, especially if you are teaching young people today, I think that this course contains critical information for the next generation of children to know.

Required Readings

Jen, Chen. *Mao's China and the Cold War*, University of North Carolina Press. ISBN # 978-0-8078-4932-3.

Lafeber, Walter. *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2006*. Tenth Edition, McGraw-Hill Press, ISBN # 978-0-07-353466-8

Priestland, David. *The Red Flag: A History of Communism*, Grove Press, ISBN # 978-0802145123.

Rabe, Stephen G. *The Killing Zone: the United States Wages Cold War in Latin America*, Oxford University Press, ISBN # 978-0-19-533323-7.

Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, Cambridge University Press. ISBN # 978-0-521-70314-7

Course Requirements

This course consists of three basic requirements.

The first is to read and write reviews over the five assigned books. The reviews are due at the dates listed in the course outline. Each review should be from 5 to 7 pages, double spaced, with one inch margins and 12 font. The reviews should be turned into me through regular Sul Ross email, do not worry about blackboard.

The second requirement for this course is to research and write a fifteen page paper on a topic on some aspect of the Cold War. I need to approve of your topic. The topic could cover anything from the Cuban Missile Crisis to the Korean War; from the Wars in Central America, to the NATO-Warsaw Pact rivalry; or anything else.

The third requirement is to enjoy the class. Some of these books may seem long and full of information, but again, the information is critical to understanding the modern world.

Course Outline

January 26-Walter LaFeber; Introduction and chapters 1-4

February 2—Walter LaFeber chapters 5-8

February 9-Walter LaFeber 9-11

February 16-Walter LaFeber chapters 13-15

February 23-Jian-Mao's *China and the Cold War*

March 2-Priestland chapters 1-3

March 9-Priestland chapters 4-6

March 16-Priestland chapters 7-9

March 23-Priestland chapters 10-12

March 30-Westad, chapters 1-3

April 6- *Westad, Chapters 4-7*

April 13-Westad, Chapters 8-10

April 20-Rabe- *The Killing Zone*

May 06-Papers due: 5:00 p.m.

Things to Think About

America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2006. By Walter LaFeber

Week One: Introduction and Chapters One Through Four

What does LaFeber mean by the “Burden of History”? LaFeber places the origins of the Cold War earlier than most historians, in the later nineteenth-century, as both expansionist empires confronted each other in northeastern Asia. What were the ideological, economic, and geopolitical bases for the American and Russian empires? How did this competition continue through the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution?

How and why did the alliance forged during the Second World War break down? What were the American economic and political objectives for a postwar world? What were the Soviet objectives? What were the turning point events in the emerging Cold War from 1945 through 1950?

Week Two: Chapters Five through Eight

The 1950s represent a critical decade in the history of the Cold War as the Cold War shifted from Europe to Asia and to the newly decolonizing “third world”? How and why did the United States and the Soviet Union view the Korean civil war as useful to pursue their global as well as domestic interests? How and why did both sides fight the Korean War? How did Joseph McCarthy and McCarthyism “chase out” leading Asianists in the American State Department and academia and how did this in part lead to long term blunders of the United States in the 1960s in regards to Asia and Vietnam? How did Europe remain a focal point of the Cold War during the 1950s (Poland, East Germany, and Hungary)? Why did President Eisenhower choose to pursue nuclear weapons over a large conventional army and why did he grow to fear the growing political and economic clout of the “military industrial complex? Finally, how did the Third World emerge as an arena of superpower conflict, and how did leaders such as Gamel Nasser and the Suez War shift the focus of the Cold War to the Middle East?

Week Three: Chapters Nine through Eleven

These chapters cover a core period of the Cold War , including the growing nuclear arms race, the American wars in Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos), the Cuban Revolution and Missile Crisis, the rise and fall of détente and more. What were the major turning points for the Cold War in the years 1957-1979?

Week Four: Chapters Twelve through Fifteen

How and why did the Cold war come to an end? Or did it? During the 1980s, who were the major figures that brought about a formal end to the Cold War (Reagan, Gorbachev, Thatcher, Pope John Paull II, etc.? What were the major turning points of the 1980s that historians can look at that

brought about the end of the Cold War? One of the reasons I chose this book is that the author continues the confrontation between the superpowers to the decade and a half after the collapse of the Soviet Union through 2006. In light of the current confrontations between the United States and Russia over the Ukraine and the possibility of a new Cold War, how did events in the 1990s and early 21st century continue the struggles between the United States and Russia (expansion of NATO eastward, the wars over the former Yugoslavia, the US wars in the Middle East and Central Asia) establish the conditions for the current struggles between the United States and Russia over the Ukraine?

Week Five: Mao's China and the Cold War

China under Mao Zedong's Communist revolution in many ways represented the wildcard or Joker during the Cold War. What pivotal role did China play in the Cold War? How did China re-center the Cold War to Asia and lead the United States into two major wars (Korea and Vietnam) and multiple smaller conflicts (Indonesia, Taiwan, etc.)? How did the rise and fall of revolutionary China serve as the pivot for the rise and fall of the Cold War? What role did the Sino-Soviet split play in this historical process?

Week Six: Priestland; Introduction, Prologue, chapters One through Three.

What were the basic tenants of Marxism? Who were some of the early anarchist, socialist, and revolutionary thinkers that founded the various strands of revolutionary thought from the French revolution through the nineteenth-century? Who was Vladimir Lenin and how did he forge a revolutionary movement based on the ideas of Marx-Engels?

Week Seven: Priestland, Chapters Four through Six

How did Communism develop from the 1920s through the 1950s? Who was Josef Stalin, Mao Zedong and other Marxist theoreticians and leaders during this area? What was or were the Popular Front and associated movements that accompanied the spread and diffusion of Marxist thought and ideas?

Week Eight: Chapters Seven through Nine

This section covers the decade following the death of Josef Stalin, the reign of Nikita Khrushchev and the height of the Sino-Soviet alliance. What were the major challenges following the death of Stalin? Who was Marshall Tito and how and why was Yugoslavia able to maintain independence from the Soviet block and ride a more middle path? How did Mao Zedong plunge China into two catastrophes (the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution?) Who was Che Guevara and how did the Cuban Revolution inspire a generation of younger Communist guerrilla movements?

Week Nine Priestland Chapters Ten through Twelve

What were some of the successes and failures of the Communist block? How did Communist regimes meet the challenges of the 1960s-1970s where it reached its high tide in world affairs? Who were some of the major figures and thinkers in the "New Left" in the West and the Third World

Marxism? Finally, how did Communist regimes and ideas run into stagnation, decline, and ultimately, collapse in the 1970s and 1980s? Does Communism and Communist ideas have a future in the 21st century?

Week Ten: Westad Chapters One through Three

What were some of the core features of the American and Soviet empires and how did these ideological forces give rise to foreign interventions and policy? Why does Westad refer to the United States as an Empire of Liberty and the Soviet Union as an empire of Justice? How did the era from 1945 through the 1970s represent a transitional era in the history of the Nonaligned Movement and how did this era represent a transition for Asia, Latin America, Central America, Southeast Asia etc? Who were the major figures and thinkers of the Nonaligned Movement?

Week Eleven: Westad Chapters Four through Seven

How did the United States confront revolutionary nationalist movements in the Third World, including the Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions? How did Cold War shift to Africa with the decolonization of Southern Africa as well as the emergence of African socialist regimes in the Horn of Africa? Who were the major figures and events in this historical revolutionary process?

Week Twelve: Westad Chapters Eight through Ten

How did the emergence of Political Islam represent a challenge to both the American and the Soviet models of development, ideologies, and Cold War alliances? How did the Iranian and Afghan revolutions/counter-revolutions play a role in this historical process? How did the 1980s represent a turning point in the Global Cold War and how did Reagan and Gorbachev years shape the end of the Cold War? How did the globalization of the Cold War shape Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa?

Week Twelve: Rabe The Killing Zone

How did Latin America emerge, as according to Stephen Rabe, the “Killing Zone of the Cold War”? What price did Latin America pay for the American wars? How did the Cold War affect Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala? Why do you think that most American know very little about the impact of the Cold War on the nations and people of Latin America?