

## **History 753**

### **The Cold War as World Histories**

Mondays, 3:30pm – 5:30pm  
Spring 2009  
University of Wisconsin  
5255 Humanities  
Course web site: <https://learnuw.wisc.edu/>

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Office hours: Mondays, 10:AM to 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**

- Connelly, Matthew. *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).
- De Grazia, Victoria. *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006). Paperback.
- Dower, John. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000). Paperback.
- Fitzgerald, Frances. *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and Americans in Vietnam* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972). Paperback.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Paperback.
- Kenney, Padraic. *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe, 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). Paperback.
- Leffler, Melvyn P. *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007). Paperback.
- Maier, Charles. *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007). Paperback.
- Mazower, Mark. *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008).
- Stueck, William. *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). Paperback.
- Suri, Jeremi. *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Paperback.
- Zubok, Vladislav M. *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Paperback.

### **Reading Assignments**

This course includes a heavy load of weekly reading – generally 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 5/11)**

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 weaknesses, 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!

1/26 Introduction: What does it mean to study the Cold War as World Histories?

**Part I: The Geopolitics of Empire**

2/2 Gaddis, *We Now Know*.

2/9 Maier, *Among Empires*.

2/16 Zubok, *A Failed Empire*.

2/23 Westad, *The Global Cold War*.

**Part II: Occupations and Interventions**

3/2 Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*.

3/9 Dower, *Embracing Defeat*.

**3/11 Special Seminar with Geir Lundestad, Norwegian Nobel Institute.**

3/16 SPRING BREAK – No class.

3/23 Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*.

3/30 De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*.

**4/3 Special Seminar with Robert Brigham, Vassar College.**

4/6 Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake*.

**Part III: Openings**

4/13 Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*.

4/20 Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*.

4/27 Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution*.

5/4 Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*.

**5/11 Historiography Essays Due.**