



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title:	Cold War Confrontation, 1941-89
Course code:	HIST 3006 PRAG / POLI 3014 PRAG
Programs offering course:	Business, Arts and Sciences, Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3.00
Contact hours:	45.00
Term:	Fall 2023

Course Description

Cold War Confrontation, 1941-1989 traces the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, from the beginnings of their tense wartime alliance until the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989. The early part of the course concentrates predominantly on the Soviet-US confrontation in Europe following the establishment and consolidation of Communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe from 1944-48. Particular attention is paid to the events of February 1948 in Czechoslovakia and to the Berlin Airlift crisis of 1949. The period of the relaxation of East-West tensions which followed Stalin's death in 1953 is examined through a focus on negotiations over the fate of Austria and Germany, and the upheavals in Poland and Hungary in 1956. From its European beginnings, the course branches out to consider the Cold War in its global context, especially in its relationship to Third World nationalism, non-alignment, and anti-imperialism. The final weeks examine the crushing of the Prague Spring, the period of Détente, and the sudden and largely unanticipated end to the conflict in the 1980s, with a particular emphasis on the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- critically examine and discuss some of the more controversial topics relating to the Cold War period, such as the decision to drop the atomic bomb; whether the Soviet Union or the United States was primarily responsible for the Cold War; the reasons behind the triumph of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1940s and of its sudden, unexpected collapse in the 1980s; the Khrushchev thaw and the period of de-Stalinization in Eastern Europe; the Cuban Missile Crisis; the significance of Détente, etc. These scholarly controversies will be the main focus of the seminar program;
- analyze the historical relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, particularly as it developed after 1945;
- critically discuss the main rival schools of thought regarding the causes and development of the Cold War: the "Orthodox School," the "Revisionists," the "Post-Revisionists," and the "Post-Soviets";
- examine, write critically about, and discuss some of the key documentary sources relating to the Cold War;
- evaluate the role of great power of strategic and economic interests, competing ideologies (capitalism, democracy, imperialism, communism, Pan-Slavism), nationalism, ethnic conflict, and anti-colonialism in shaping the Cold War conflict.

Course Prerequisites

The course will likely be of particular interest to the following students: (1) History majors; especially those interested in 20th century history. (2) Political science and International Relations majors. However, the course has been taken - and successfully completed - by engineering students, science majors, and business studies majors, among many others. Anybody with an interest in how the contemporary world order came to be should consider taking this course.

Methods of Instruction

The course is taught through a combination of formal lectures (always presented with an extensive PowerPoint slide show), group student presentations (again, it is expected these will use PowerPoint or some other presentation software), and open-ended group discussions.

The Cold War era is one of the first periods in history to be extensively documented from beginning to end through film and television. Documentary films will feature prominently in the course, complementing the lectures and seminar discussions.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Seminar Research Paper	25%
2. Two Group Seminar Presentations, 10% each	20%
3. Mid-Term Take-Home Exam	15%
4. Final Formal In-Class Exam	20%
5. Participation	20%
TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Seminar Research Paper

You will complete a written assignment of approximately 2000-2500 words, due during Week 11. This paper will be based upon topics presented and discussed in the class seminars. It will require students to utilize a variety of secondary sources and to interpret original documents.

Two Group Seminar Presentations, 10% each

Students will give two seminar presentations during the course: the first presentation on one of Seminars 1-4; the second presentation on one of Seminars 5-8. Presentations will be given in small groups and will be around 30-45 minutes long. It is expected that you will use PowerPoint or similar presentation software.

Mid-Term Take-Home Exam

A mid-term take-home exam, comprising two essays of approximately 750-1000 words each, based upon topics discussed in the seminar program for the first half of the course - Seminars 1-4.

Final Formal In-Class Exam

A final formal in-class exam, comprising again of two essays of approximately 750-1000 words each, based upon topics discussed in the seminar program for the second half of the course - Seminars 5-8.

Participation

Assessment of students' participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class.

Students are responsible for following the course content and are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor's or other students' line of thought or argumentation.

The use of electronic devices is only allowed for computer-based in-class tests, assignments and other tasks specifically assigned by the course instructor. Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations. In such cases the student is required to submit an official letter issued by his/her home institution specifying the extent of academic accommodations.

Class participation also includes students' active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor. If missing a class, the student is expected to catch up on the class content and to submit well-reflected and in-depth contributions to Canvas discussions on the particular topic or reflections to the instructor to ensure that his/her absence from the class will not significantly affect his/her participation grade.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field

placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: Course Introduction; Unlikely Allies:

Britain, the USA, and the USSR in World War II.

The first class will explain the requirements for completing the course. There will be a brief, ungraded test to determine the extent of the class' pre-existing knowledge of the Cold War.

The second class will be a lecture, which is intended to provide an introduction to the Cold War period. It looks at the world crisis of the 1930s and 40s, which brought the United States, Great Britain, and the USSR together in an unlikely alliance. We examine tensions in this wartime alliance; the relative contributions made by each ally to the victory against Nazi Germany, social revolutions in World War II Europe on the left and right, and the wartime treaties.

Required reading:

- Mazower (1998): 215-252.

Week 2

Class: Truman Takes Charge; The Yalta Conference.

The first class lecture examines the period from Yalta to Potsdam, and the growing tensions in the US-Soviet alliance over the postwar settlement. We examine Soviet and US postwar aims, and look at two of the early Cold War crises in the Middle East.

The second class presentation seminar will look at the controversies and mythology surrounding the Yalta Conference of February, 1945.

Required reading:

- Reynolds (2006): 235-87.

Week 3

Class: The Origins of the Cold War; The Dropping of the Atomic Bombs on Japan.

The lecture given in the first class focuses on growing tensions in Europe, especially over Berlin. Students will watch a documentary on the Marshall Plan.

The seminar presentation and discussion in the second class will look at one of the most heated controversies in American history: was it really necessary to drop the atomic bomb on Japan in 1945; and was this action the "opening shot of the Cold War," as some historians have alleged?

Required readings:

- Leffler (2010): 67-89.
- Pechatnov, CHCW I: 90-111.

Week 4

Class: Early Cold War Crises in Europe; Who Started the Cold War?

The lecture for the first class focuses on the Berlin Airlift and its consequences for both Soviet foreign policy and the long-term division of Europe.

The seminar for the second class asks the question, "Who or what was ultimately responsible for the Cold War, and was the Cold War inevitable?"

Required reading:

- Roberts (2006): 296-320.

Week 5

Class: The Early Cold War in Asia;

The Consolidation of Communist Rule in Central and Eastern Europe, especially Czechoslovakia.

The first class lecture shifts the course's focus briefly to Asia, and looks at the Chinese Revolution and its geo-strategic consequences, the Korean War, and the early stages of the Vietnam conflict.

The second class seminar examines the consolidation of Communist rule in Eastern Europe, with particular attention to the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February, 1948.

Required reading:

- Logevall (2010): 281-304.

Week 6

Class: New Look: Khrushchev and Eisenhower; De-Stalinization and its Limits.

Midterm Exam Week

The lecture for the first class departs from the death of Stalin in February 1953, possibly the pivotal moment of the early Cold War. Soviet armies withdrew from Austria, and Soviet diplomacy helped resolve crises in Korea and Vietnam. For a moment, a lasting peace settlement seemed within reach. But by 1956, the Iron Curtain was back in place. The lecture looks at the reasons why this happened. Students will watch sections of a documentary on the crushing of the Hungarian Uprising and the events in Poland in 1956.

Students will also watch Peter Watkin's classic 1965 documentary *The War Game*, which hypothesized about the circumstances in which a nuclear war between the superpowers might have broken out in the early 1960s, and what the likely consequences would have been for Britain.

The mid-term take home exam falls due at the beginning of the second class of the week. There will be a screening of Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964).

Required readings:

- Judt (2005): 129-65.

Week 7

Class: The Khrushchev Era; The Berlin and Cuban Missile Crises.

The first class lecture concentrates on Khrushchev's blustering "nuclear diplomacy," the increasing Soviet and US involvement in the 3rd World and the growing Sino-Soviet split.

The seminar and discussion in the second class looks at the most dangerous confrontation of the entire Cold War - the Cuban Missile Crisis of October, 1962.

Required readings:

- Hershberg, CHCW II: 65-

Week 8

Class: Johnson and Brezhnev Take Charge; The Prague Spring.

The lecture for the first class looks at the period following Kennedy's death in November 1963, which was followed a year later by a "palace coup" in the Soviet Union against Khrushchev. Both superpowers found themselves challenged by dissent within their own self-designated "spheres of influence." The lecture also examines crises in Europe and the 3rd World in the 1960s, and the hesitant move towards Détente in the late 1960s.

In the second class Students will watch and discuss sections of the documentary The Fog of War.

Required readings:

- Logevall (2010): 281-304. (From Week 5.)

Week 9

Class: The Rise and Fall of Détente.

The lecture in the first class looks at the origins of Détente in the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially in relation to Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik and the Sino-Soviet split. European arms control agreements are a particular focus.

The seminar and discussion in the second class focuses on the critical period between 1977-1980, with the collapse of Détente and the development of the so-called "Second Cold War" of the 1980s.

Required readings:

- Schulzinger, CHCW III: 373-94.
- Njolstad, CHCW III: 135-55.

Week 10

Class: The Second Cold War; 1977-80: The Pivotal Years of the Cold War?;

Assessing the Reagan Presidency.

The lecture for the first class dissects some of the inaccurate and unfair mythology regarding the Détente period, and President Carter's role in the late Cold War in particular. We examine the Camp David Accords, the Chinese Alliance and the rise of Solidarity, and the Eastern European dissident movement.

The seminar and discussion for the second class examines the controversies surrounding the role of the Reagan administration in ending the Cold War.

Required readings:

- Mitchell CHCW III: 66-88.
- Fischer (2010): 267-288.

Week 11

Class: The Gorbachev Phenomenon;

the Revolutions of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe.

The lecture for the first class of this final week focuses on the internal factors within the Soviet

Union and its empire that led to the collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe, and to the ultimate collapse of Soviet communism itself. The personal role of Mikhail Gorbachev will be examined in some detail.

For the second class, students will watch and discuss two documentaries from the CNN series *The Cold War*, both related to the revolutions of 1989 and the collapse of Soviet Communism.

Seminar Research Papers fall due at the beginning of the second class for Week 11.

Required readings:

- Brown, CHCW III: 244-266.
- Roberts, CHCW III: 513-534.
- Levesque, CHCW III: 513-534.

Week 12

Class: The Soviet Collapse, 1989-1991.

For the first class, the final lecture will examine the causes of the Soviet collapse from the 1980s to the early 90s.

The final seminar of the course - held in the second class - will examine the revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe in 1989: their causes, course, and consequences.

Required Readings:

As for Week 11.

Week 13

Class: Final Exam Week

Students will sit a final, formal in-class exam.

Course Materials

Readings

- Ambrose, Stephen E and Douglas G. Brinkley. *Rise to Globalism*. Penguin, 2010: 190-224.
- Brown, Archie. "The Gorbachev revolution and the end of the Cold War." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW III: 244-266.
- Fischer, Beth A. "United States Foreign Policy in the Era of Reagan and Bush." In Leffler, Melvyn P. & Odd Arne Westad, eds. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War III – Endings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010: 267-288.
- Hershberg, James G. "The Cuban Missile Crisis." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW II: 65-87.
- Judt, Tony. *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*. Penguin, 2005: 422-49.
- Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*. London: Allen Lane, 2005: 129-65.
- Leffler, Melvyn P. "The emergence of an American grand strategy, 1945-1952." In Leffler, Melvyn P. and Odd Arne Westad, eds. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War 1 – Origins*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010: 67-89
- Levesque, Jacques. "The East European Revolutions of 1989." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW III: 513-534.
- Logevall, Fredrik. "The Indo-China Wars and the Cold War, 1945-1975." In Leffler, Melvyn P and Odd Arne Westad, eds. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War II – Crises and Détente*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010: 281-304.
- Mazower, Mark. *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. London: Penguin Books, 1998: pp. 215-252.
- McMahon, Robert J. "US National Security Policy from Eisenhower to Kennedy." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW I: 288-311.
- Mitchell, Nancy. "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW III: 66-88.
- Njolstad, Olav. "The Collapse of Superpower Détente 1975-1980." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW III: 135-55. Penguin, 2005.
- Pechatnov, Vladimir O. "The Soviet Union and the World, 1944-1953." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW I: 90-111.
- Reynolds, David. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt and the International History of the 1940s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006: 235-87.
- Roberts, Adam. "An "incredibly swift transition": reflections on the end of the Cold War." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW III: 513-534.
- Roberts, Geoffrey. *Stalin's Wars: From World War II to the Cold War, 1939-1953*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006: 296-320.
- Schulzinger, Robert D. "Détente in the Nixon-Ford Years 1969-76." In Leffler & Westad, CHCW III: 373-94.

Recommended:

- Ambrose, Stephen E. & Douglas G. Brinkley. Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938. London: Penguin Books, 1997: 126-170.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997: 1-52.
- Judt, Tony. Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945. Penguin, 2005: 165-96.
- Lafeber, Walter. America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2002. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002: 104-129.
- Mazower, Dark Continent, pp. 367-401.
- Priestland, David. The Red Flag: Communism and the Making of the Modern World London: Penguin Books, 2010: 452-500.
- Zubok, Vladislav M. A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev. New Cold War History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007: 123-62.