Peter Sachs Collopy

**America in the Cold War World, 1945–1991**

This is a syllabus for America in the Cold War World, 1945–1991 (HIST 003), a course offered in spring 2016 at the University of Southern California.

The course will meet on Monday afternoons, 2:00 to 4:50, from January 11 to April 25 in Waite Phillips Hall room 200. It will be a discussion–based seminar, though I will punctuate it with occasional presentations. I will be available for office hours before class on Mondays from 1:00 to 2:00 in Social Sciences Building room 263, and encourage you to come by and talk.

**Assignments**

As a seminar, this course is primarily based on learning by discussing the required readings (listed below), so it’s essential that you read and think about them before each class meeting. Each week I will be expect you to email me a short reaction to the reading the day before class. You can use this as an opportunity to raise questions if you’re confused, to comment on arguments you found particularly surprising or compelling, or to suggest ways the reading might relate to previous readings or forthcoming assignments.

In addition, two assignments will each require you to develop your own analysis of a cultural artifact —first a film and then a memoir—in the context of the Cold War, and to present it in a short paper of about five pages. A final assignment will then require you to develop your own historical analysis of an event, person, or cultural or political phenomenon, and to present an argument about how your subject shaped, and was shaped by, America in the Cold War world. That final project may take the form of a traditional research paper of 10–15 pages, or you may speak with me about presenting it in another medium such as a short video or a web exhibit. Your grade for the course will be based 20% on each of the first two assignments, 30% on your final project, and 30% on your reading responses and your engaged and insightful participation in discussions.

**Reading**

The following seven books, each of which we’ll be reading most of, are available for sale at the USC Bookstores and for borrowing at Leavey Library’s circulation desk. The first three are also available online, and all readings outside these seven books will be available through links below.


**Schedule**

- **January 11: Introduction**
- **January 18: No class for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- **January 25: The Atomic Age**
  - Wolfe, *Competing with the Soviets*, introduction and chapter 1.


**February 1: The Bipolar Cold War**
- Wolfe, *Competing with the Soviets*, chapter 2.

**February 8: McCarthyism and the Domestic Cold War**
- Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, chapters 1–2, 4–6, and 8.

**February 15: No class for Presidents Day**

**February 22: Nuclear Families**

**February 29: Decolonization and the Global Cold War**
- Wolfe, *Competing with the Soviets*, chapter 4.
- Paper due contextualizing a film.

**March 7: Intensifications from Latin America to Vietnam**

**March 14: No class for spring break**

**March 21: Black Liberation Movements, 1945–1963**


**April 4: New Radicalisms**
- Wolfe, *Competing with the Soviets*, chapters 6–7.
Alice Echols, “‘Nothing Distant About It’: Women’s Liberation and Sixties Radicalism” (1994).

April 11: New Conservatisms
McGirr, Suburban Warriors, assignment to be determined.
Paper due contextualizing a memoir.

April 18: From Detente to Star Wars
McMahon, The Cold War, chapter 7.
Westad, The Global Cold War, chapters 8–9.
Wolfe, Competing with the Soviets, chapter 8.

April 25: Ends of the Cold War
McMahon, The Cold War, chapter 8.
Westad, The Global Cold War, chapter 10 and conclusion.
Wolfe, Competing with the Soviets, epilogue.

May 9: Final Project Due