

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 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.

Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (2001).

Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, revised edition (2008, revised from 1988 original).

Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (2002).

Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (2003).

Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (2005).

Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2nd edition (1996, revised from 1991 original).

Audra J. Wolfe, *Competing with the Soviets: Science, Technology, and the State in Cold War America* (2012).

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.

Michael D. Gordin, *Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War* (2007), chapters 1, 6, and 7.

Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (1985), chapters 1, 10–13, 26–27, and epilogue.

February 1: The Bipolar Cold War

McMahon, *The Cold War*, chapters 1–2.

Westad, *The Global Cold War*, introduction and chapters 1–2.

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

Jennifer S. Light, *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America* (2003), chapter 1.

Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985), chapters 13–14.

May, *Homeward Bound*, introduction and chapters 1, 4, 6–7, and 9.

February 29: Decolonization and the Global Cold War

McMahon, *The Cold War*, chapters 3–4.

Westad, *The Global Cold War*, chapters 3–4.

Wolfe, *Competing with the Soviets*, chapter 4.

Paper due contextualizing a film.

March 7: Intensifications from Latin America to Vietnam

McMahon, *The Cold War*, chapter 5.

Westad, *The Global Cold War*, chapter 5.

Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (2004), preface, introduction, and conclusion.

March 14: No class for spring break

March 21: Black Liberation Movements, 1945–1963

Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, prologue and chapters 2–4.

March 28: Black Liberation Movements, 1964–1991

Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, chapters 5–6 and epilogue.

Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (2012), introduction and chapter 5.

April 4: New Radicalisms

Wolfe, *Competing with the Soviets*, chapters 6–7.

Doug Rossinow, “‘The Revolution Is About Our Lives’: The New Left’s Counterculture” (2002).

Alice Echols, “‘Nothing Distant About It’: Women’s Liberation and Sixties Radicalism” (1994).

Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (2006), chapters 1–2.

April 11: New Conservatism

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