

## HIST 456 - Cold War America

Saxe – Palmer 207, 2-4:30 M

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Office Hours – M 10-11; T 8:30-9:30 or by appointment, 307 Clough

### Course Description:

This course will survey the United States' involvement in the Cold War and how conflict with the Soviet Union shaped postwar international affairs, domestic politics, and American culture and society. Students will learn about the rise of the Soviet-American global rivalry and how this competition played itself out in different theatres. Readings will cover the growth of tensions over issues like the Truman Doctrine or Communist control of Vietnam, as well as Cold War nuclear policies. In addition, students will study the development of domestic anticommunism, the rise and fall of McCarthyism, and how the drive against the Soviets influenced domestic politics. Further, the course will examine Cold War culture in the United States and discuss issues of consensus and dissent in American society. Finally, students will be asked to assess the long-term implications of the Cold War on US foreign policy and American politics and culture, and what relevance the Cold War has in today's "multi-polar" world.

### Required Texts:

Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*.

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War, A New History*.

James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*

Don Munton and David A. Welch, *The Cuban Missile Crisis*

Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism*.

The professor will provide additional readings throughout the course.

### Course Requirements:

#### **Exams**

There will be two exams for this class:

Exam on Cold War terminology and chronology up to 1980

September 20 – 10% of final grade.

Take home final exam (1500 words); given December 6

Due in class, December 15 – 10% of final grade.

#### **Class Participation**

Active participation in class discussion is the best way to achieve a good class participation grade. Class participation also includes good conduct. Failure to participate in class, neglecting to do the reading for the day, sleeping or leaving during class, playing games on your laptop or doing text messaging during class may all have a negative impact on your grade - 20% of grade.

## **Essays**

The hard copy of all essays should be typed, double-spaced, and have page numbers. Essays should be affixed with either a clip or staple. They should also have the following at the top of the first page: name, a meaningful title, date, and the word count.

Ex:

Joseph Welch

US History is Great: Rhodes College and My Life

February 1, 2009

680 words

Also, an email copy of your essay must be sent to the professor on the due date. The title of the document should be your last name and the number of the essay. Ex: "Welch2"

In addition, any use of sources must be cited using Chicago-style footnotes (see [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) for help or you may ask the instructor). A title page and works cited page are not necessary. At the end of each essay, the Rhodes pledge should be printed and signed.

Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a penalty on the essay's grade.

### Book Review –

You will construct a 1250-1500 word book review on an outside reading approved by the instructor. Remember, this is a review, not a book report. You want to discuss the contents of the book, but also debate its findings, put it in proper historiographical context, and render your own opinion about the work's merits. This book may not be a secondary source for the student's final essay. Due October 11 in class. 10% of final grade.

### Short essay on the Cuban Missile Crisis–

You will read *The Cuban Missile Crisis*. In 750-1250, you will decide who won the Cuban Missile Crisis (you must identify a winner). Due November 1 in class. 5% of final grade.

### Short essay on the end of the Cold War –

You will read Tom Engelhardt's *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*, as well as other selections on the importance of the Cold War to American life. Using Engelhardt as a starting point, I want you to assess the costs and benefits of the Cold War to America using material from the class. The essay should have a clear thesis and be between 1000 and 1500 words. Due November 29 in class. 5% of final grade.

### Research Essay –

Research paper of approximately 4500 words. This paper must be a work of original research on a Cold War theme. The most difficult challenge of this kind of paper is to decide on a workable topic. A quick survey of the required readings may help to narrow down an area of interest. Another approach is to look at the types of sources that are both

available and interesting to the writer and develop a topic from that point. The nature of the topic of this paper is wide open, but it will need to be related to the themes of the course. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor to discuss any questions with finding or shaping a topic. 40% of final grade.

List of deadlines for the final essay

1. September 27 – Introductory paragraph and bibliography

This is a 200-300 word abstract of your proposed topic in as detailed form as possible. You will also need to include a preliminary list of primary and secondary sources. This needs to be a hard copy turned that I receive in class

2. October 25 – Final Bibliography

The final list of all the sources you will include in your essay.

3. November 15 – Final draft of essay

The last draft of your essay is due. It needs to be typed and double-spaced, and it must include a bibliography. Due, in class, and an email copy must be sent to me, as well.

4. December 6 – Revised draft

After receiving comments from the professor, students will have the option of revising their draft. Students can improve their paper grade up to one full letter grade through revision. Due, in my office by 5, and an email copy must be sent to me, as well.

Course Policies:

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed one absence without penalty. Students are required to find out what they missed in class on the day of their absence. If students miss more than one class, they are required to meet with the professor to discuss their absences. Failure to do so will result in the lowering of a student's final grade by one third grade point for every absence over one. Please consider this policy when planning for extracurricular activities (sports, mock trial, etc.)

Due dates and times for writing assignments are fixed. All assignments are due in class, not in the professor's mailbox. Late assignments will receive a failing grade. All assignments must be turned in to the professor. Failure to complete an assignment will result in a failing grade for the class. If you have questions about plagiarism, please talk to me directly.

The professor supports the Rhodes College Honor Code.

Course calendar:

Monday, August 30

The Cold War Begins - International Conflict (Gaddis, Prologue; Ch. 1- 3)

Monday, September 6

Labor Day – no class

Monday, September 13

Trials and Tribulations – The International Arena Continued (Gaddis, Ch. 4)

September 20

US in Decline? (Gaddis, Ch. 5, 6)

Exam on Cold War terminology and chronology up to 1980

September 27

The War at Home - McCarthyism before McCarthy (Schrecker, Ch. 1-5; Documents, 1-9)  
Introductory paragraph and bibliography due in class

October 4

McCarthyism before McCarthy II (Schrecker, Ch. 6-10; Documents, 10-15, 17-20)

October 11

Cold War Cultural Studies (articles provided by instructor)  
Book review Due

October 18

Fall Break

October 25

McCarthyism (Schrecker, Ch. 11-16; Documents, 16, 21, 22)  
Final bibliography of research essay due in class

November 1

Cuban Missile Crisis (Munton, Welch)  
Essay on the Cuban Missile Crisis due in class

November 8

Stalin Goes to the Movies – Cold War Film (Selections from *Big Jim McClain* to *Dr. Strangelove*)

November 15

War's End (Gaddis, Ch. 7, Mann all)  
Final draft of research essay due in class

November 22

Gender and Race in the Cold War (Tyler May, selections and Dudziak, selections)

November 29

Post Cold War (Englehardt, all)  
End of Cold War essay due in class

December 6

The Historians Cold War (Gaddis, Epilogue)  
Receive take home final,  
Revised draft of research essay due in class (if necessary)

December 15

Take home final due in class, 1PM