

HTS 3067A -- REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN THE MODERN WORLD

Lawrence Foster
316 DM Smith Building
Phone: 404-894-6845
e-mail: larry.foster@hts.gatech.edu

Spring Semester 2008
M, W, F, 2 p.m.

The twentieth century has been an age of revolutions, terrorism, and upheavals that have radically transformed the lives of millions of men and women. In the wake of the devastating terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent United States interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, Americans have become increasingly concerned to understand the nature, development, and significance of such movements.

This course will begin by presenting a film depicting a classic revolutionary situation and by discussing some of the major theories of how and why revolutionary movements occur. Then we shall focus on four key twentieth-century upheavals--the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Chinese Communist Revolution, the Vietnam War, and the more recent revolutionary movements in Central America (especially Nicaragua and El Salvador).

In each case, we shall consider three primary questions: (1) What were the preconditions for the revolution or upheaval? (2) How was power seized? (3) What pattern of development did the movement take after the seizure of power? Special emphasis will be placed on the relationship between individual leadership and larger social forces in these movements, as well as on the policy questions that these upheavals raise for the United States.

Many different approaches have been taken toward the study of revolutions and other profound social and political transformations. On the one hand, critics of revolutions have dismissed them as an aberration and an inappropriate response to social disorder, and have sought to keep revolutions from happening or to defeat them when they occur. On the other hand, supporters of revolution, most notably various Marxists, have waxed enthusiastic about revolutions and have tried to instigate and direct revolutionary change based on elaborate theories of historical development.

Our approach in this course will be somewhat more modest than either the pro- or anti-revolutionary theorists. Following the lead of Crane Brinton in his Anatomy of Revolution, we shall attempt to formulate some tentative generalizations about the process of change in four twentieth-century revolutionary movements and to suggest the broader significance such movements may have in the modern world.

Evaluation in the course will be based on three mid-semester exams (indicated in the outline on the next page), on class participation, on a book review or research paper, and on a final comprehensive exam. The exams will be based both on the required readings and on the lecture-discussions. The required books provide introductions to the different revolutionary movements we are studying:

Jack A. Goldstone, ed., Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies (Library reserve)
 Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, Second Edition
 Edwin E. Moise, Modern China: A History, Second Edition
 Marilyn B. Young, The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990
 Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America, Second Edition

The class sessions will combine lecture and discussion, as well as films and possible outside speakers. Since the required readings provide only a taste of the extensive literature about these movements, each student will be expected, in addition, to write either a book review or research paper on one of these revolutions or a related movement. The book review or research paper should be between 6 to 10 pages in length. More detailed instructions will be given in class. This special work will allow each student to gain greater understanding of a particular revolution and will encourage more lively and well-informed class discussions.

PLEASE TAKE CAREFUL NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Students are expected to ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY, come ON TIME at the scheduled beginning of class (NO LATER THAN 2:05 p.m.), and be ready to PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS on the assigned readings.

More than 6 unexcused absences from class (2 weeks of class) may be grounds for reduction in the student's overall course grade by as much as one full level (10 points).

Throughout this course, all students are expected to follow the Georgia Tech Honor Code.

OUTLINE OF CLASS SESSIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS:

I. Introduction to the Study of Revolutions

January 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 23, 25

Film: "The Battle of Algiers"

Readings:

Crane Brinton, Anatomy of Revolution, pp. 3-26, 237-271

James C. Davies, "Toward A Theory of Revolutions"

Jack A. Goldstone, ed., Revolutions (selections)

NO CLASS: Monday, January 21--Martin Luther King, Jr., birthday holiday

II. The Russian Revolution of 1917

January 28, 30; February 1, 4, 6, 8, 11

Film on the Soviet Union

Readings:

T. H. Von Laue, "The Setting: The West and the World"

R. R. Palmer & Joel Colton, "The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union"

Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution (entire)

Abraham Ascher, "Reform, Stagnation, Collapse"

EXAM #1 on Topics I and II: Wednesday, February 13

III. The Chinese Communist Revolution

February 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27, 29; March 3, 5

Films on China and Mao Zedong

Reading: Edwin E. Moise, Modern China: A History (entire)

Eric Wolf, "Peasants and Revolutions"

Judith Stacey, "Peasant Families and People's War in the Chinese Revolution"

EXAM #2 on Topic III: Friday, March 7

IV. The Vietnam War(s)

March 10, 12, 14, 24, 26, 28, 31; April 2, 4, 7

NO CLASS: March 17-24--Spring Break--Work on Book Reviews!

Films on Vietnam

Reading: Marilyn B. Young, The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990 (entire)

BOOK REVIEW due--Wednesday, April 2

EXAM #3 on Topic IV-- Wednesday, April 9

V. Central American Revolutionary Movements

April 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23

Films on Central American Revolutions

Reading: Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America, Second edition (entire)

VI. Final Discussion/Summation:

How can/should the United States Respond to Revolutionary Movements?

April 25

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, April 29, 11:30 a.m.

HTS 3067--Revolutionary Movements in the Modern World
Lawrence Foster--Spring Semester 2008
READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1

January 7/9--begin Crane Brinton, Anatomy of Revolution, pp. 3-26, 237-271
January 11--begin Jack Goldstone, ed., Revolutions, pp. 1-17: "Introduction: The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions"

Week 2

January 14--begin James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolutions" (Library on-line reserve)
January 16-- begin "Classic Approaches to Revolution," in Goldstone, pp. 21-36 (Library on-line reserve)
January 18--begin Von Laue, "The Setting: The West and the World" (Library on-line reserve)
Begin work on book review

Week 3

January 21--NO CLASS: Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday Holiday
January 23-- begin Palmer and Colton, "The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union," pp. 696-717 (Library on-line reserve)
January 25-- begin Palmer and Colton, "The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union," pp. 717-739 (Library on-line reserve)

Week 4

January 28-- begin Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, Introduction and chapter 1 (pp. 1-39)
January 30--begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 2 (pp. 40--67)
February 1-- begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 3 and 4 (pp. 68-119)

Week 5

February 4--begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 5 (pp. 120-147)
February 6--begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 6 (pp. 148-172)
February 8--begin Abraham Ascher, "Reform, Stagnation, Collapse," in his Russia: A Short History, pp. 202-243

Week 6

February 11--Review for EXAM #1

February 13--EXAM #1

February 13--begin Moise, Modern China: A History, pp. 1-29

February 15--begin Eric Wolf, "Peasants and Revolutions," in Goldstone, pp. 55-63

Week 7

February 18-- Moise, pp. 30-52

February 20--begin Moise, Modern China, pp. 53-85

February 22--begin Moise, Modern China, pp. 86-113

Week 8

February 25--begin Moise, Modern China, pp. 114-155

February 27--begin Moise, Modern China, pp. 156-187

February 29--begin Judith Stacey, "Peasant Families and People's War in the Chinese Revolution," in Goldstone, pp. 287-296

Week 9

March 3--begin Moise, Modern China, pp. 188-237

March 5-- Review for EXAM #2

March 7-- EXAM #2

March 7--begin Marilyn B. Young, The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990, pp. 1-36

Week 10

March 10--begin Young, Vietnam Wars, pp. 37-88

March 12--begin Young, Vietnam Wars pp. 89-123

March 14--begin Young, Vietnam Wars, pp. 124--171

Week 11

March 17-21--NO CLASS--Georgia Tech Spring Break

Week 12

March 24--begin Young, Vietnam Wars, pp. 172-209
 March 26--begin Young, Vietnam Wars, pp. 210-231
 March 28-- begin Young, Vietnam Wars, pp. 232-253

Week 13

March 31--work on Book Reviews
 April 2--BOOK REVIEWS due
 April 2--begin Young, Vietnam Wars, pp. 254-299
 April 4--begin Young, Vietnam Wars, pp. 300-329

Week 14

April 7--Review for EXAM #3
 April 9--EXAM #3
 April 9--begin Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America, pp. 1-18
 April 11-- begin LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions, pp. 19-85

Week 15

April 14--begin LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions, pp. 87-146
 April 16--begin LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions, pp. 147-196
 April 18--begin LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions, pp. 197-270

Week 16

April 21--begin LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions, pp. 271-324
 April 23--begin LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions, pp. 325-368
 April 25--Review for FINAL EXAM

FINAL EXAM--Tuesday, April 29, 11:30 a.m.