

# America and the Cold War

Spring 2024 – Government 312L (U# 37260)  
T/Th 11-12:30 – Mezes Hall 1.306

Instructor: Prof. Z. D. Barany ||| Office: Batts 3.156 ||| Office hours: T/Th: 1:30-3

Teaching Assistant: HeartLee L. Harman ||| [heartleeharman@utexas.edu](mailto:heartleeharman@utexas.edu) ||| Office hours

The Cold War lasted for more than four decades spanning most of the second half of the Twentieth Century and had a major impact on the lives of virtually everyone in that period, including the generations of your parents and grandparents. What were the origins of the Cold War? Who were its main protagonists? What were the most important events and how did they impact upon the final outcome? The main protagonists of the Cold War were the U.S. on the one hand and the Soviet Union along with its East European allies: this course will focus on them.

The objective of this course is to familiarize beginning undergraduate students with the main actors, events, and developments and to stimulate an appreciation of the complexities and nuances of international politics of this important era that continues to have a major impact on contemporary world politics. At the end of the semester, you will be able to intelligently discuss the political history of U.S.-Soviet relations and the Cold War in all major world regions. We will begin with a thorough examination of the Cold War's origins and then follow events, mostly through the eyes of American presidents from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to George Bush, Sr. The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 is the course's endpoint.

There is only one book to read but the lectures will not follow the book. There are three non-cumulative midterm exams. The midterm exams will be based on the book, the lectures, the PowerPoint Presentations, and the documentaries we will show.

## Grading:

Midterm 1:	25
Midterm 2:	35
Midterm 3:	40

## Assigned book:

Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (Basic Books, 2019), 710 pp. – ISBN-978-1541674097

## Rules

1. I will treat you as adults and I want you to treat this class as adults. I will be in class on time and so should you be. If you do not think you can make it at 11AM or stay until 12:15PM, ***please do not*** register for this class. Just take another class. Also, please do not come in late or leave early: it distracts your fellow students and the instructor.
2. Speaking of treating you as adults: we will not call roll, it is entirely up to you if you choose to attend. The “Reading Schedule” is only a suggestion: if you are comfortable reading the reading assignments the night before an exam, that is your decision. There will be no quizzes to gauge whether you had done the reading for the day. All PowerPoint Presentations will be available on canvas – though they may not cover the entire lecture.
3. All electronic devices must be shut off throughout the entire class period. If this is a deal-breaker, I understand – take another class. You may ***not*** use a laptop in the classroom (except when you’re taking the exams). If you are interested in why you are actually going to learn more and have a better time doing it this way, read this brief *New York Times* article:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html>

## Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

## Academic Integrity

We take plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty very seriously and all assignment will be thoroughly checked with the most recent software. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further

information please visit the Student Judicial Services Web site:  
<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Refer to the Dean of Students Student Judicial Services website or call 471-2841 for the official university policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty. What constitutes plagiarism? See [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint\\_plagiarism.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plagiarism.php) or check out the UT Libraries' plagiarism module: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

## Topics and Readings:

### Week 1

1. January 16      Introduction to the Course
2. January 18      Origins: The Adversary  
Read: 1-18    ||| PPP1

### Week 2

3. January 23      Origins: The USSR the U.S. & World War II  
Read: 19-42    ||| PPP2
4. January 25      The Onset of the Cold War and the Falling of the "Iron Curtain"  
Read: 43-70    ||| PPP3

### Week 3

5. January 30      George F. Kennan and Containment  
Read: 71-98    ||| PPP4
6. February 1      Alternatives to Containment: Paul Nitze and NSC-68  
Read: 99-128   ||| PPP5

### Week 4

7. February 6      Eisenhower and the "New Look"  
Read: 129-158 ||| PPP6

8. February 8      Rebellions in Eastern Europe and the Suez Crisis  
Read: 159-182. ||| PPP7

Week 5

9. February 13      Two Germanys and the Berlin Crisis  
Read: 183-208 ||| PPP8

10. February 15      View: "Vietnam"

Week 6

11. February 20      **First Midterm**

12. February 22      JFK, LBJ, and "Flexible Response"  
Read: 209-232 ||| PPP9

Week 7

13. February 27      The Cuban Missile Crisis  
Read: 232-260 ||| PPP10

14. February 29      The Prague Spring and the Upheavals of 1968  
Read: 261-286 ||| PPP11

Week 8

15. March 5      Yugoslavia and the Middle East during the Cold War  
Read: 287-312 ||| PPP12

16. March 7      No class

March 11-17:      **SPRING BREAK!**

Week 9

17. March 19      Nixon, Ford, & Kissinger: Détente and Differentiation  
Read: 313-338 ||| PPP13

18. March 21 Jimmy Carter and the End of Detente  
Read: 339-364 ||| PPP14

Week 10

17. March 26 The Soviet Union under Brezhnev  
Read: 365-394 ||| PPP15

18. March 28 The War in Afghanistan  
Read: 395-448 ||| PPP16

Week 11

19. April 2 Solidarity in Poland  
Read: 449-500 ||| PPP17

20. April 4 **Second Midterm**

Week 12

21. April 9 The Cold War in Latin America  
Read: 501-526 ||| PPP18

22. April 11 Ronald Reagan's Worldview  
Read: 527-578 ||| PPP19

Week 13

25. April 16 The Holy Alliance  
Read: 579-616 ||| PPP20

26. April 18 Human Rights and Trade  
Read: 617-631 ||| PPP 21

Week 14

27. April 23 Reagan, Gorbachev, and the End of the Cold War  
Read: review/reread ||| PPP 22

28. April 25 **(In-Class) Third Midterm Examination**