The University of Western Ontario  
Department of History  
2016-2017 (Winter Term)

**HIS 9308B: The U.S. and the Cold War**

**Map of missile range in Cuba, 1962 (NARA 595351)**

**Thursdays 9:30 a.m – 11:30 a.m.**  
**Lawson Hall Room 2270C**

**Instructor:** Professor Aldona Sendzikas  
**Office:** Lawson Hall 1222  
**E-mail:** asendzi2@uwo.ca  
**Telephone:** 661-2111, x84377  
**Office hours:** Tuesdays 1:30-2:30 p.m., or by appointment

“There are at the present time two great nations in the world, which started from different points, but seem to tend towards the same end. I allude to the Russians and the Americans. Both of them have grown up unnoticed; and whilst the attention of mankind was directed elsewhere, they have suddenly placed themselves in the front rank among the nations, and the world learned their existence and their greatness at almost the same time.
All other nations seem to have nearly reached their natural limits, and they have only to maintain their power; but these are still in the act of growth. All the others have stopped, or continue to advance with extreme difficulty; these alone are proceeding with ease and celerity along a path to which no limit can be perceived. The American struggles against the obstacles which nature opposes to him; the adversaries of the Russian are men. The former combats the wilderness and savage life; the latter, civilization with all its arms. The conquests of the American are therefore gained by the ploughshare; those of the Russian by the sword. The Anglo-American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends, and gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centres all the authority of society in a single arm. The Principal instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter, servitude. Their starting-point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.”

-- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Vol. II, Conclusion), 1835

“Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you.”
—Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, November 1956

“A wall is a hell of a lot better than a war.”
—U.S. President John F. Kennedy, August 1961

“I want to say, and this is very important: at the end we lucked out. It was luck that prevented nuclear war. We came that close to nuclear war at the end. Rational individuals: Kennedy was rational; Khrushchev was rational; Castro was rational. Rational individuals came that close to total destruction of their societies. And that danger exists today.”


**Course description:**

From the end of the Second World War until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States’ conflict with the U.S.S.R. dominated American military and foreign policy, but it also permeated and shaped political, economic, social, and cultural life in the United States. In this course, we will examine the role of the United States in the creation and waging of the Cold War, American responses to the Cold War, and the
effects on American society of this nearly half century-long standoff between the two emerging superpowers. Rather than attempting a chronological study, we will select and focus on several key events and “battlegrounds” of this war--both actual and symbolic—and examine them through different lenses, including: military, diplomatic, ideological, and cultural. We will also consider how the Cold War continues to shape American government and society today.

Assignments and grading:

- **4 reaction papers (2-3 pages each, typed, double-spaced) (20%)**
  - The reaction paper is a response to the assigned readings for a particular week.
  - The reaction paper should not be a summary of the book you have read, but rather, your reaction and response to what you have read. The first paragraph of your paper should outline the thesis or main argument of the book. The rest of your paper should be your own response: what did you think of the author’s argument? Did he/she argue effectively and convincingly? What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the sources and methodology used? What did you learn from this book? Are there any aspects in particular that struck you? What does this book contribute to our understanding of the Cold War?
  - Reaction papers will be required for the readings assigned for Jan. 19th, Jan. 26th, Feb. 2nd, and March 9th.
  - The paper should be submitted to the instructor via e-mail by noon the day before class. A grade will be assigned each week, based on the paper and discussion.

- **Research essay prospectus (10%)**
  - The prospectus is essentially a road map outlining your plans for your research paper. It should be approx. 4-5 pages in length (typed and double-spaced), and should include:
    - The research question you hope to answer.
    - A description of the primary documents that you plan to examine, and how you will access them.
    - An explanation of why this research is important, and its relation to existing scholarly literature.
    - A working thesis, if appropriate.
    - Methods to be employed (What sort of sources, arguments, and approaches do you plan to use to answer the question? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your approach?)
    - Outline explaining proposed structure of your paper.
    - Preliminary bibliography.
  - The prospectus is due at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 2nd, 2017.
• **Presentation of research in progress (10%)**
  o Near the end of the term, students will give short presentations (10 minutes maximum in length) outlining their research questions, progress and findings.
  o These presentations will take place on March 23rd and March 30th.

• **Research essay (40%)**
  o The research essay can be about any aspect of the United States’ involvement in the Cold War. It should be based on, or begin with, or be supported by, an examination of primary documents from a Cold War-related event.
  o The research essay should be 20-25 pages in length (excluding footnotes and bibliography), typed and double-spaced.
  o It will be due two weeks after the last class session, i.e.: Thursday, April 20th, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

• **Participation (20%)**
  o Informed and thoughtful participation in class discussion each week is required. Please come to class having completed the assigned readings, and be ready to share your analyses of them, to respectfully exchange ideas with the other members of the class, and to ask—and answer—questions. In addition, you should follow current events, particularly in terms of U.S. foreign policy, and be prepared to discuss them within the context of the Cold War.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 (January 5th):**
1. Introduction.

**Week 2 (January 12th):**
1. The end of WWII.
2. The atomic bomb.
3. The historiography of the Cold War.

**Readings:**
• X (George F. Kennan), “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” in *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947, pp. 566-582:
• NSC-68 (April 14th, 1950):
  https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/.../10-1.pdf
• The Baruch Plan for Control of Atomic Energy (June 14th, 1946):
• NATO founding treaty, April 4th, 1949:
  http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm
• Excerpt from Michihiko Hachiya, M.D., Hiroshima Diary: The Journal of a Japanese
  Physician August 6-September 30, 1945, translated by Warner Wells, M.D. (1955)
  (available on the OWL course website under “Resources”)
• Excerpt from Nuclear Explosions and Their Effects (The Publications Division,
  Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958) (available on
  course website)
• Excerpt from David Bradley, No Place to Hide (1948) (available on course website)
• “The Nuclear Refugees of the Marshall Islands,” in Exposure: Victims of Radiation
  Speak Out / The Chugoku Newspaper, translated by Kirsten McIvor (1991) (available
  on course website under “Resources”)

Week 3 (January 19th):
  1. Atomic culture: co-existing with the bomb.

Readings: Choose one of the following books to read, and submit a 3-4 page reaction
paper to the instructor, by e-mail, by noon on Wed. January 18th.
• Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (1988)
  (available online through Weldon website)
• Paul S. Boyer, By the Dawn’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the
  Dawn of the Atomic Age (1985/1994) (available online through Weldon website)

Week 4 (January 26th):
  1. Historians of the Cold War
  2. The hot wars: Korea and Vietnam
  3. The Pueblo incident (1968)

Readings: Choose one of the following books to read, and submit a 3-4 page reaction
paper to the instructor, by e-mail, by noon on Wed. January 26th. In your reaction paper,
try to place the book you read into one of the four main periods of Cold War
historiography.
  o George Kennan, American Diplomacy 1900-1950 (1951)
  o George Kennan, The Nuclear Delusion: Soviet-American Relations in the
    Atomic Age (1982)
  o George Kennan, Russia, the Atom, and the West (1958)
  o Herbert Feis, The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II (1966)
- Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (1957)
- Thomas A. Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early Times to Our Day* (1950)
- Tony Smith, *Thinking Like a Communist: State and Legitimacy in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba* (1987)

**Week 5 (February 2nd):**
1. Fear in Cold War America:
   a. Communism in America
   b. HUAC and McCarthyism
   c. Spies in America
Readings: Choose one of the following books to read, and submit a 3-4 page reaction paper to the instructor, by e-mail, by noon on Wed. February 1st:

- Lillian Hellman, *Scoundrel Time* (1976) (Huron)
- Senator Charles E. Potter, *Days of Shame* (1965) (Weldon)

Week 6 (February 9th):

1. Competing with the USSR:
   a. The Kitchen Debate
   b. Khrushchev comes to America
   c. The U2 incident
Readings:
- U.S. State Department documents re: the U-2 incident: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/u2.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/u2.asp)

Week 7 (February 16th):
1. Cuba:
   a. Castro comes to power
   b. The Bay of Pigs
   c. The Missile Crisis
   d. The legacy

Readings:
- “Radio-TV Address of the President to the Nation from the White House,” Oct. 22nd, 1962
- Prime Minister Fidel Castro’s letter to Premier Khrushchev, Oct. 26th, 1962 (the two documents above are available at: [http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/docs.htm](http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/docs.htm))

♦ CONFERENCE WEEK – No class on February 23rd ♦
Week 8 (March 2nd):
1. Ethics/morality in Cold War foreign policy
2. Research essay prospectus due!

Readings:
- Lora Anne Viola, “The Gulf of Tonkin Incident and Deception in American Foreign Policy,” in *Revisiting the Sixties: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on America’s Longest Decade*, eds. Laura Bieger and Christian Lammert (2013) (available on course website)

Week 9 (March 9th):
1. Cold War culture:
   a. Art
   b. Literature
   c. Film

During today’s class, we will be visiting the McIntosh Gallery to tour the new exhibit, “Cold Front.” (To be confirmed.)

Readings: Choose one of the following books to read, and submit a 3-4 page reaction paper to the instructor, by e-mail, by noon on Wed., March 8th.
• Peter Biskind, Seeing is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties (1983) (King’s)
• Bernard F. Dick, The Screen is Red: Hollywood, Communism, and the Cold War (2016) (King’s)
• Stephen J. Whitfield, The Culture of the Cold War (1991) (Weldon)
• Thomas Hill Schaub, American Fiction in the Cold War (1991) (Weldon)
• Margot Henriksen, Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age (1997)
• Jeff Smith, Film Criticism, the Cold War, and the Blacklist: Reading the Hollywood Reds (2014) (available online through Weldon website)
• Susan A. George, Gendering Science Fiction Films: Invaders from the Suburbs (2013) (available online through Weldon website)
• Rebecca Prime, Hollywood Exiles in Europe: The Blacklist and Cold War Film Culture (2014) (available online through Weldon website)
• Greg Barnhisel, Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy, 1946-1959 (2015) (available online through Weldon website)
• Robert J. Corber, Cold War Femme: Lesbianism, National Identity, and Hollywood Cinema (2011) (available online through Weldon website)
• Jeffrey Montez de Oca, Discipline and Indulgence: College Football, Media, and the American Way of Life During the Early Cold War (2013) (available online through Weldon website)
• Michael L. Krenn, Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War (2005) (Weldon)
• Ferenc Morton Szasz, Atomic Comics: Cartoonists Confront the Nuclear World (2012) (Weldon)

Week 10 (March 16th):


For this class, we will be joining Don Wright Faculty of Music Professor Emily Ansari’s class, 9542B: Musical Americanism, for a discussion of music and the Cold War. (Time and place to be determined.)

Readings (available on the OWL course website):

UP.) [Please note that since these are chapters of a book that is currently under review by the publisher, you may not cite nor share these articles.]

**Week 11 (March 23rd):**

1. The Space Race  
2. The Cold War in the 1970s  
3. Research presentations.

**Readings:**

- Space Race Progress Memo, VP Johnson to President Kennedy, April 28th, 1961: [https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/7WOiWcuDTkOAVpkCA19_Ig.aspx](https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/7WOiWcuDTkOAVpkCA19_Ig.aspx)
- Reitler-Feldman Letters, 1962: [https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/gLQPx4-1Gky60QY6nmXEjA.aspx](https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/gLQPx4-1Gky60QY6nmXEjA.aspx)

**Week 12 (March 30th):**

1. Reagan’s Cold War: The Evil Empire  
   a. Reagan, Brezhnev, Gorbachev  
   b. The Berlin Wall  
   c. The submarine war  
2. Research presentations.

**Readings:**

• President Reagan’s speech at Moscow State University (May 31st, 1988): http://millercenter.org/president/reagan/speeches/speech-3416
• Excerpt from: John Piña Craven, The Silent War: The Cold War Battle Beneath the Sea (2001) (available on course website)
• Excerpt from Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew, Blindman’s Bluff: The Untold Story of American Submarine Espionage (1998) (available on course website)
• Excerpt from: Ramsey Flynn, Cry from the Deep: The Submarine Disaster that Riveted the World and Put the New Russia to the Ultimate Test (2004) (available on course website)

Week 13 (April 6th):
  1. Conclusions, ramifications, and wrap-up.

Readings:
• Mick Broderick, “Is This the Sum of Our Fears?”, in Scott C. Zeman and Michael A. Amundson, eds., Atomic Culture: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (2004) (available on course website)
• “Conclusion: History, Memory, and the Cold War,” in Jon Wiener, How We Forgot the Cold War: A Historical Journey Across America (2012) (available online through Weldon website)
• Excerpt from Ellen Schrecker, Cold War Triumphalism: The Misuse of History After the Fall of Communism (2004) (available on course website)