

History 6686: Cold War Culture and Politics
Fall 2019
Wednesdays, 5:30 to 8:00 PM
TLC 3205

Instructor: Dr. Elaine MacKinnon

TLC 3222

Office phone number: (678) 839-6048; Email address: emclarn@westga.edu

*****PLEASE NOTE: MY PREFERRED EMAIL ADDRESS IS emclarn@westga.edu;
PLEASE DO NOT USE COURSE DEN EMAIL TO CONTACT ME. EMAIL ME AT MY
WESTGA.EDU ADDRESS**

Office Hours:

My office is Room 3222 in the TLC Building and I will be available for office hours on campus on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 pm—4:00 pm; I will be available for online office hours (conducted via email, skype or Google groups) Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 1 pm EST (these hours may vary from week to week—I will provide announcements through Course Den if the hours will be different for a particular week). I can usually respond to emails immediately if sent during these office hours, but at a minimum within 24-48 hours except on weekends.

Purpose and Overview of the Course

This will be a graduate-level seminar focusing on the history and historiography of the cultural Cold War (1945-1991); we will examine the Cold War as a political, ideological, economic, cultural, and military contest between the United States and the Soviet Union on a global scale. We will examine important dimensions of how the Cold War shaped cultural life in both American and Soviet societies, as well as in the countries where each sought to exert influence and/or exercise hegemony. We will also examine the culture of the Cold War as itself a way of life, a set of ideas and outlooks expressed in patterns of aesthetic, intellectual, recreational, and artistic expression that existed between 1945 and 1991, and that in many respects continues on beyond this chronological framework. Although our primary focus will be on Cold War cultural life in the United States and the Soviet Union, some readings will take us beyond these parameters into the global arena of the Cold War. Students will read, view, and analyze a variety of texts and sources dealing with Cold War propaganda wars, cultural, artistic and sports rivalries, mass media, consumerism, childhood, and top-secret nuclear communities in both the Soviet Union and the United States. One of the most important issues we will examine is the exact relationship among Cold War culture, politics and ideology within American and Soviet societies. To what extent was there an independent “Cold War culture” in either of these societies, and was it a truly dynamic force, or was it primarily a reflection or a tool of political and economic forces that shaped it for their own interests? To what extent did the Cold War and its ideas and ideals permeate mass consciousness, and become ritualized as part of everyday life? How did ideology shape cultural values, preferences and practices of American and Soviet citizens? How different were the American and Soviet Cold War cultures? What was the relationship between high and low forms of “Cold War culture”? To what extent can we speak of a “common” or single Cold War Culture in either American or Soviet societies, or were there competing currents within each, and if so, how did these change over time?

Learning outcomes for the course:

Engagement in this course is designed to enable students

- 1) To assess critically the meaning of the term Cold War and its applicability to the global confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States after World War II
- 2) To understand and assess critically the global scope and ramifications of the decades-long confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States, particularly in terms of culture and cultural life
- 3) To identify major dimensions of cultural forms of competition, persuasion and propaganda that were part of the Cold War rivalry between the US and the USSR after 1945
- 4) To assess critically the existence of specific Cold War patterns of thought, behavior, aesthetic expression, representation of ideas, social practices, etc.
- 5) To assess critically the domestic impact of the Cold War in the Soviet Union and the United States; the ways in which the Cold War shaped and influenced culture, society, and everyday life for Soviet and American citizens
- 6) To assess critically the cultural legacy of the Cold War and the interpretive issues and debates emerging from the study of Cold War culture since 1945

Students will demonstrate their achievement of these outcomes through written and oral assignments: a research paper, weekly readings summaries, three response papers on assigned monographs, two oral presentations, and participation in and leadership of class discussions.

The format for the course is a seminar, organized around weekly discussions of assigned readings. In order for the class to succeed, everyone must be ready to discuss the texts and ask questions. **This means that you must do the readings each week and be prepared to take part in class.**

Required Texts

All of the following should be available for purchase in the campus bookstore or from online vendors.

Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. Illustrated Edition. 2003 ISBN-13: 978-0192801784

Thomas Doherty, *Cold War Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism and American Culture*. Columbia University Press, 2005 Revised Edition 978-0231129534

Shane Hamilton and Sarah Phillips, *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics: A Brief History with Documents*. Bedford/St. Martin's. 2004 **ISBN** 978-0312677107

Margaret Peacock, *Innocent Weapons: The Soviet and American Politics of Childhood in the Cold War*. The University of North Carolina Press, Reprint Edition, 2017. ISBN-13 978-1469633442

Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters*. Reprint Edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0190233105

In addition to the above required books, you have also been assigned articles that can be accessed through Course Den.

Grading:

Class Participation and Weekly Summaries of Readings (25%): Attendance and Participation in seminar discussions will be an important component of your grade. Your willingness to actively participate will be central to the success of this class. This means that it is essential for you to keep up with the required readings so you can discuss them. Failure to keep up with the readings will negatively affect your final grade. This will not be a lecture-based course; we will be focusing on the readings and the insight they provide into key issues concerning Cold War culture and cultural politics. I will be looking to hear your responses to the readings, your analysis of ideas and issues presented, as well as your questions and comments. Each student should feel free to talk about his or her responses and ideas, but everyone should also be considerate of others and allow for fair and equal involvement in discussions. Please listen courteously and attentively to what other students have to say.

As part of your class participation grade, you will be expected to write a two-page summary of weekly readings that includes at least one question for class discussion (except when we read the three monographs by Doherty, Peacock, and Brown—see below for guidelines for response papers) and you will sign up to lead at least one class discussion of assigned readings.

Your weekly summaries will require you to summarize briefly the journal articles and the primary source reader on the Kitchen Debate. If you have multiple articles, you should summarize the basic points of each and try to explain what you see as the main points of commonality and of difference among the different readings. Explain how the set of articles illuminates a particular dimension of Cold War culture. At the end of your summary, you are to provide a question based on the readings for class discussion. The weekly summaries will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

I prefer that your weekly summaries be typed, but will accept handwritten summaries if written neatly. Weekly summaries will not be submitted to Course Den

Readings review/response papers (20%):

For the three monographs assigned for the course (books by Doherty, Peacock, and Brown), you are to write a three page (minimum 800 words) review/response paper based on each. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date scheduled for the discussion of the reading. Papers that are not submitted on time will not be accepted, nor will papers be accepted if you are not in attendance for the class in which the work is discussed (unless worked out with me in advance for an excused absence). These papers will be graded on a regular scale (not pass/fail) and must be submitted to the Course Den assignment folder set up for each one before 5:30 pm on the day the book is to be discussed. You must also be able to access your paper electronically or bring a hard copy to class on the day the reading is due.

A review paper should evaluate the assigned work in terms of its argument, research base, and contribution to the field of Cold War cultural studies. Your paper should give a brief summary of the work and its relationship to Cold War historiography (an analytical summary, not a retelling of the narrative); it should explain the author's argument and how it is related to Cold War cultural studies, and it must analyze the methodology and final conclusions of the reading. Your paper should assess the merits of the author's argument and methodology, as well as the work's contribution to the study of the Cold War.

Be sure to include in your papers answers to the following questions: What is the major thesis of the book? Does the author make a convincing argument that is supported by the evidence presented? What

are the work's strong points? For example, is the book written in a clear and engaging manner? Do the citations indicate that the author thoroughly researched the book? What methodological tools and sources did the author employ? What are the book's weaknesses? What criticisms do you have of the author's style, methodology, research, conclusions?

After evaluating the work as an historical source, you should record your own individual reactions to the reading. What have you gained from reading this book? What do you find to be most significant or most striking about the reading? What do you learn from the work? Do you agree with the conclusions of the author? Why or why not? Would you recommend that this book continue to be assigned in a course examining the Cold War?

Popular Culture Written Analysis and Oral Presentation (20%):

Each student will select an item of popular culture to analyze in an oral presentation. On October 16, each student will turn in a minimum 500 word summary of your main points (double-spaced with one-inch margins) and deliver orally in class a five to ten minute presentation analyzing the relationship between the Cold War and a particular item or artifact of popular culture. You will select, for example, a film or television show, a novel, a piece of music, a comic strip, artwork, etc., and discuss the ways in which this item of popular culture reflected, refracted, or intersected with the Cold War. Be able to explain why this particular item of culture can be defined as "popular." You will also consider the following questions: Was this item itself an active agent of the Cold War? In what ways does this film, novel, etc. reveal or reflect Cold War fears, tensions, and influences? Was this influence conscious or unconscious? Can you determine the purpose of the creator, writer, etc.? How was this item received by its audience? Do you think that people interpreted it in the way its creators intended, or did it become an item that subverted its Cold War purpose? Try to provide for the class a visual example of the item; if a feature film or television show, then show a clip or two from it.

Research paper and presentation (25% for Paper, 10% for Presentation):

You are to write a minimum 15-18 page paper on a particular aspect of the cultural Cold War that you would like to explore in greater depth. Topics can encompass those covered in class but may also include areas of interest to yourself that have not been treated in class or in readings. Ideally, your paper will combine historiographical reading and primary source research – the degree of emphasis that you place on each will vary by topic. For the research paper, you are required to use at least six books (you may not include books required for the course among the six, though you may use them in addition to the six) for your analysis, and no less than five primary sources. If you are interested in writing an historiographical review paper, you must consult with me and be prepared to read and discuss at least ten books. You may speak with me about focusing your paper on a topic in public history or on curriculum design for a high school classroom.

You should choose the topic for your paper by **August 28**. The source list of six books that are relevant for your subject is due on **September 11**. The strongly recommended rough draft for the paper is due **November 20**.

Each student is urged to turn in a rough draft of the paper. Incentive points will be given for complete rough drafts and can be applied to the final grade.

The final draft of the paper is due no later than **Monday December 9 at 11:30 pm, and must be submitted to the Course Den assignment folder set up for it.**

Papers that are turned in after the assigned date will be marked down one letter grade for each day they are overdue.

Beginning on **November 20** and continuing on **December 4**, each student will give a minimum ten-minute oral presentation summarizing the scope and findings of your research or historiographical project. This will be a formal presentation in that you will speak in front of the class as if you were presenting a paper at a conference.

Guidelines: Each paper should be at least fifteen to eighteen pages in length, typewritten and double-spaced, exclusive of endnotes and bibliography (works cited) page. The standard guide of the history department is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 5th edition, or *The Chicago Manual of Style*, available in the reference section of the bookstore and of the library; in addition, the library has copies on permanent reserve--ask at the circulation desk.

You will be graded for both content and style. Each paper should have a concrete thesis; an introduction that states your purpose, what questions you will address and what methodology you will use; a body that develops your argument/thesis in an orderly sequence; and a conclusion that is not just a restating of the topic, but that sums up your argument and explains what you have discovered. Factual material should be clearly presented and relative to the theme of the paper. You need to put forward your own ideas based on reading and research. Do not pour out everything you have gathered; select the facts which best explain, illustrate, or substantiate your points. You should include in your body discussion of the historical literature on your theme, as well as any historiographical debates connected with it. You may want to critically engage a particular author's view on a topic and present your own view. Credit direct quotations of ideas or data of others in endnotes at the back of the paper (or in footnotes at the bottom of the page). I also expect you to incorporate analysis of at least five primary source documents into your paper.

Errors in logic or fact, errors in mechanics (grammar, spelling, and punctuation) and general messiness will lower your grade. Avoid slang or sloppy constructions. Learning how to express your thoughts in a clear and logical manner is an invaluable skill.

DO NOT USE CONTRACTIONS.

PLEASE NOTE: Computer glitches do not excuse you from the established deadlines.

Cheating Policy and Plagiarism:

All papers that you write must be your own work, and that any students who are caught plagiarizing another student's work, a paper from a web site, a textbook, or any other source will automatically fail this course and may be subject to further disciplinary action. Plagiarism is a serious offense that will not be tolerated. This rule is in effect for all assignments, examinations, quizzes, and extra credit work.

All of your written work for this class must be original; you are not allowed to submit essays that you have written for other courses or that you have completed prior to this semester. You may talk with me if you wish to continue research begun in an earlier class; you would need to submit the earlier paper to me and be prepared to take the research in a new direction or find new sources for analysis.

Every student is expected to understand and to comply with the University of West Georgia's policies on Academic Honor and Academic Dishonesty. They may be found in the Student Handbook, on the web at <http://www.westga.edu/documents/catalogs.php>.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE SYLLABUS. IF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES ARE REQUIRED, THEN I WILL ISSUE A REVISED SYLLABUS.

Tentative Course Outline and Readings Schedule

Wednesday August 14: Introduction/Overview of Course Themes

August 21: History and Historiography of the Cold War

Required Readings:

- 1) McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction*, all
- 2) Michael Hopkins, "Continuing Debate and New Directions in Cold War History," *The Historical Journal*, 50, no. 4 (December 2007), pp. 913-934

No Weekly Summary of Readings Due

August 28: What is Cultural History?/ What Does it mean to Study Cold War Culture?

Required Readings (all accessible through Course Den):

- 1) Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History*, Second Edition (Polity, 2008), "Introduction" and Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-30
- 2) Gordon Johnston, "Revisiting the cultural Cold War," *Social History*, 35, no. 3 (August 2010), pp. 290-307
- 3) "Soviet Culture in the Media Age," Introduction to Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cultural Cold War* (), 1-24 (access through Course Den)

Weekly Summary of Readings Due

September 4: Fighting the Cultural Cold War

Required Readings: (all accessible through Course Den):

- 1) Stephen J. Whitfield, Chapter 1, "Politicizing Culture: Suspicious Minds," in *The Culture of the Cold War*, Second Edition (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 1-26
- 2) Steven Heller and Michael Barson, "Cold War Style, Preface, and "The First Red Scare," in Heller and Barson, *Red Scared: The Commie Menace in Propaganda and Popular Culture* (Chronicle Books, 2001), 8-21
- 3) Frances Stonor Saunders, "Introduction" and Chapter One, "Exquisite Corpse," in *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (The New Press, 1999), 1-31

Recommended: (You may substitute these three for either the Whitfield or the Saunders article if you wish)

Trysh Travis, "Middlebrow Culture in the Cold War: Books USA Advertisements, 1967," *PMLA*, 128, No. 2 (March 2013), 468-473

Samantha Senn, "All Propaganda is Dangerous, but Some are More Dangerous than Others: George Orwell and the Use of Literature as Propaganda," *Journal of Strategic Security*, 8, No. 3, Supplement: Eleventh Annual IAFIE Conference (Fall 2015), pp. 149-161.

John B. Whitton, "Propaganda in Cold War," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring, 1951), pp. 142-144

Weekly Summary of Readings Due

[September 11: The Cinematic Cold War in both the US and the USSR](#)

Required Readings: (all available in Course Den)

- 1) Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood, "American Cinema and the Cold War," Chapter One in Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (University Press of Kansas, 2010), 17-36
- 2) Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood, "Soviet Cinema and the Cold War," Chapter Two in Shaw and Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds*, 37-62
- 3) Steven Heller and Michael Barson, "The Cold War Hits the Silver Screen," in Heller and Barson, *Red Scared: The Commie Menace in Propaganda and Popular Culture* (Chronicle Books, 2001), 74-87 (over half of the article is a listing of Cold War films which could be useful if you want to do a film for your popular culture presentation)

Weekly Summary of Readings Due

[September 18: The Cinematic Cold War: Comparing Cold War films](#)

Required Readings: Prior to class, Watch on Youtube (link is in Course Den as well) the Cold War -era Soviet film, [Spring on Zarechnaya Street](#) (with subtitles)

[September 25: Exploring Cold War America through Television](#)

Required Readings: Doherty, *Cold War Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism and American Culture*, all

***Review/Response Paper Due in Course Den by 5:30 pm. Be sure to bring a hard copy to class or have access to it electronically.

[October 2: Cold War and Religion](#)

Required Readings: (all available in Course Den)

- 1) Irvin D.S. Winsboro and Michael Epple, "Religion, Culture and the Cold War: Bishop Fulton J. Sheen and America's Anti-Communist Crusade of the 1950s," *The Historian*, 71, no. 2 (Summer 2009), 209-233
- 2) Eugene Ford, "Washington Formulates a Buddhist Policy, 1954-57," Chapter 2 in Eugene Ford, *Cold War Monks: Buddhism and America's Secret Strategy in Southeast Asia* (Yale University, 2017), 40-64
- 3) Tony Shaw, "Of Gods and Moguls," Chapter 4 in Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 103-134

Weekly Summary of Readings Due

[October 9: Cold War Consumerism](#)

Required Readings: Hamilton and Phillips, *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics*, all

Weekly Summary of Reading Due

October 16: Cold War Popular Culture Presentations

October 23: Sports and the Cold War

Required Readings: Read at least THREE of the following articles, all available in Course Den

- 1) Toby C. Rider, "Projecting America. Sport and Early US Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960," in Rider and Witherspoon, eds., *Defending the American Way of Life*, 13-27
- 2) John Gleaves and Matthew P. Llewellyn, "The 'Big Arms' Race: Doping and the Cold War Defense of American Exceptionalism," in Toby C. Rider and Kevin B. Witherspoon, eds., *Defending the American Way of Life: Sport, Culture and the Cold War* (The University of Arkansas Press, 2018), 49-65
- 3) Kevin Witherspoon, "America's Team: The US Women's National Basketball Team Confronts the Soviets, 1958—1969," in Rider and Witherspoon, eds., *Defending the American Way of Life*, 99-112
- 4) Kevin Witherspoon, "An Outstanding representative of America: Mal Whitfield and America's Black Sports Ambassadors in Africa," in Rider and Witherspoon, eds., *Defending the American Way of Life*, 129-140
- 5) Thomas M. Hunt, "Sport and American Foreign Policy during the 1960s," in Rider and Witherspoon, eds., *Defending the American Way of Life*, 189-217

Weekly Summary of Readings Due

October 30: The Cold War and Childhood

Required Reading: Peacock, *Innocent Weapons: The Soviet and American Politics of Childhood in the Cold War*, all

***Review/Response Paper Due in Course Den by 5:30 pm. Be sure to bring a hard copy to class or have access to it electronically

November 6: Life in the Cold War: Closed Nuclear Communities

Required Reading: Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters*, pp. 3-161

November 13: Tragic and Toxic Legacies of the Cold War—Comparing Soviet and American Nuclear Communities and Accidents

Required Readings: Brown, *Plutopia*, pp. 165-end

***Review/Response Paper Due in Course Den by 5:30 pm. Be sure to bring a hard copy to class or have access to it electronically

November 20: Research Paper Presentations/Cold War and Memory

Required Readings: Rosanna Farbol, “Commemorating a War That Never Came: The Cold War as Counter-factual War Memory, Chapter 7 in Tea Sindbaek Andersen and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, eds., *The Twentieth Century in European Memory* (Brill, 2017), 149-169
Catherine Gunther Kodat, “Dancing Through the Cold War: The Case of “The Nutcracker,”” *Mosaic, An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, 33, No. 3 (September 2000), 1-17

***Rough Draft of Research Paper Due in Course Den Assignment Folder by 5:30 pm

[November 27: THANKSGIVING BREAK](#)

[December 4: Research Paper Presentations and Final Thoughts on the Cold War and Cold War Culture](#)

Required Readings: Stephen Whitfield, “The Cultural Cold War as History,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, 69, No. 3 (Summer 1993), 377-392

Recommended Reading: Edward Pessen, “Appraising American Cold War Policy by its Means of Implementation,” *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (December 1990), 453-465.

**FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN COURSE DEN
ASSIGNMENT FOLDER MONDAY DECEMBER 9 BY 11:30 PM**