The Cold War:
American and Soviet Foreign Policy

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The Cold War is one of the central stories of our time. Two great powers stood face to face for two decades, and their confrontation shaped the military, economic, and ideological debates of our times. In several instances, the United States and the Soviet Union stood "eyeball to eyeball" and both nations--with their great military and technological resources--seemed on the brink of a battle that would have totally obliterated the other.

This course examines the policies--both domestic and international--of the two great nations that shaped this foreign policy confrontation and caused the world to live on the brink of nuclear war for almost 40 years. The course has as its premise that a combination of domestic politics and international entanglements generated much of the tensions that led to these policies, and to the mis-perceptions and fears that kept the policies going.

The course is both topical and chronological. Each week we will investigate one of the major chapters in this confrontation. By and large, we will look at these topics from two perspectives: First we will look at American domestic and foreign policy (Burt Levin) and then we will examine the comparable period/topic from the Soviet perspective (Roy Grow). Then we will look at the ways the interaction of American and Soviet politics shaped the deepening Cold War tension.

Requirements

- A mid-term examination (40%);
- A 20-page research paper (40%);
- Attendance, active participation in class discussions, and completion of the assigned readings before class (20%)

Texts:


Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev, (Harvard University Press)

Robert M. Gates, From the Shadows, (Touchstone)

In addition, we will distribute a series of short handouts that will be considered required parts of the reading list.

Reading Assignments

Week of:

Sep 14-16 INTRODUCTION: REVOLUTION AND WAR

LeFeber, America, Russia, and the Cold War, Intro., Ch. 1
Powaski, The Cold War, Ch. 1.2

https://acad.carleton.edu/curricular/POSC/classes/Posc235/F99/index.html
Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, Prologue, Ch. 1

Sep 21-23 WORLD WAR II AND THE POST-WAR WORLD

LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, Ch. 2, 3, 4  
Powaski, *The Cold War*, Ch. 3  
Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, Ch. 2

Sept. 23: Discussion of paper assignment

Reading: Allison, "Conceptual Models of the Cuban Missile Crisis" *American Political Science Review*. (Handout)

Sep 28-30 KOREA AND THE STRUGGLE IN ASIA

LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, Ch. 5  
Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, Ch. 3

Oct 5 EUROPE, NATO, and the BLOC

LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, Ch. 6, 7, 8  
Powaski, *The Cold War*, Ch. 4  
Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, Ch. 4, 5

Oct 12-14 KENNEDY, KHRUSHCHEV, AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, Ch. 9  
Powaski, *The Cold War*, Ch. 5 (pp. 135-52)  
Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, Ch. 6

*Oct. 14: Blue book examination*

Oct 19-21 JOHNSON, BREZHNEV, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR ASIA

LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, Ch. 10  
Powaski, *The Cold War*, Ch. 5 (pp. 152-66)  
Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, Ch. 7

Oct 26-28 NIXON AND THE ERA OF DÉTENTE

LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, Ch. 11  
Powaski, *The Cold War*, Ch. 6  
Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, Ch. 8  
Gates, *From the Shadows*, Ch. 1-10

Nov 2-4 REAGAN AND GORBACHEV

LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, Ch. 12  
Powaski, *The Cold War*, Ch. 7, 8  
Gates, *From the Shadows*, Ch. 11-20

Nov 9-11 THE END OF THE COLD WAR

LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, Ch. 13  
Powaski, *The Cold War*, Ch. 9
Nov 16 LESSONS

Powaski, *The Cold War*, Conclusion
Gates, *From the Shadows*, Ch. 29

Nov 21 *All work due*