New Cold War 1991-2018
Spring 2019
Department of History/University College
Comment: This course is designed to supplement Cold War 1945-1991
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Course Description

New Cold War

Twenty-nine years after the fall of the Iron Curtain Washington and Moscow are once again at daggers drawn. While the Soviet Union went the way of all flesh Putin’s Russia is ascendant, as are tensions between Washington and Moscow. Indeed, draft legislation sponsored by Senators Graham, McCain, and Cardin threaten to impose “crushing economic sanctions” on Russia so draconian the Treasury Department opposes them lest they spark war. Meanwhile, Politico’s recent publication of a leaked White House memo on arms reduction Trump and Putin outlined at Helsinki triggered paroxysms of hysteria among Beltway policy wonks. This course will examine the origins of the New Cold War from 1991 to the present; it will do so using a diachronic/thematic approach. Topics include: NATO expansion, Neo-Triangular diplomacy, de-dollarization, energy diplomacy, strategic arms reductions, hybrid warfare, mutual recriminations concerning election interference.

Syllabus

Unbeknownst to most Americans the first Cold War actually ended in 1987, two full years before the fall of the Berlin Wall in December of 1989. We have the so-called Baker-Shevardnadze Agreements to thank for that by the way, and yet the irony is most Americans—alas, dare I say even some professors—have never heard of the historic settlement that ended the Cold War. Baker-Shvardnadze outlined in precise detail manifold steps both sides pledged to implement, as for example the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, in exchange for Washington’s pledge, inter alia, not move NATO “one inch eastward.” Significantly, Baker-Shevardnadze bears striking parallels to the agreement FDR forged with Stalin. Had Roosevelt lived the post-war order would have looked much like that envisioned in 1991. I want you to keep this point in mind as we delve further into the primary sources I have prepared for you (Selected readings). It is also a myth that people power as portrayed by MTV in 1989 or by Western corporate media—CNN foremost among them—hardened the collapse of the Berlin Wall. In fact, this course operates under the assumption German unification represents a proof of concept, a model as it were; it demonstrates to all and sundry that it was possible for two hostile powers to reach a comprehensive, negotiated settlement, a point interventionist-minded hawks in Washington today would do well to remember as media-driven, Russia hysteria they stoke reaches fever pitch. Cui bono? Who stands to benefit from a New Cold War? Think-tank hawks inside the Beltway? Defense contractors salivating at the prospect of raking in billions? Countries have interests divorced from the somnolent realm of ethics and morality. Moral imperatives are a species of propaganda, a foil used to solicit the assent of the public. That is a good thing for us because it provides grist for the mill, helping us explore the gap between policy and rhetoric. It is paradoxical but it is key to helping you grasp what is really going on. Inquiring minds want to know: are the interests of the United States and the Russian Federation really inimical?
That said, one perception from Cold War popular mythology does persist: I am referring to that bout of euphoria in the West, the one that managed to seduce more than a few Beltway policy wonks to wax philosophical on the perceived benefits of a “peace dividend.” Just as the world was on the cusp of transitioning to such a dispensation, the proverbial bolt out of the blue came with Gulf War I, followed in turn by the Wars of Yugoslav Secession, international crises that called for America to re-assert global leadership. Was that the intent behind these cabinet wars, wars based on advocacy journalism and moral imperatives writ large? Of course with those overseas commitments and deployments NATO acquired a new raison d’etre, thanks in no small measure to the Clinton Doctrine, better known today, mutatis mutandis, as R2P or Responsibility to Protect. NATO enlargement was the brainchild of Clinton administration advisers cut in the mold of Leon Firth, Anthony Lake, Madeline Albright, Richard Holbrooke, Chris Hill, among others. Their actions and policies marked the first crucial steps in the onset of the New Cold War.

I am a Slavist/Byzantinist by formal training. My expertise covers a broad range of cultures and territories from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Anatolia, the Levant (once core Byzantine territories before the rise of Islam), the Caucasus, and Central Asia. I can also access primary sources written in a babel of languages. I am thus in a unique position to offer students rare insight into official Russian sources not available to scholars who specialize in the American side of the equation. The books I have assigned were written by people who actually know something about Russia. Of course, whether you agree with their arguments is up to you. Jack Matlock is a retired U.S. diplomat, our ambassador to Moscow in the 1980s no less, who played an important role in the negotiations that ended the Cold War. He was actually in the room when decisions were made regarding NATO expansion, and he is on record saying so in academic publications. He also knows where the bodies are buried on the question of New Cold War origins. Moreover, he holds an advanced degree in Russian Literature which is rare for American diplomats who on the whole tend to be political appointees. The point is in any quarrel there are two sides, and the truth often lies somewhere in the middle. This course will help you find that middle ground by not falling for Manichaean dichotomies.

**Course Objectives**

- To question the underlying causes of the New Cold War.
- To distinguish the national security strategies of the United States and the Russian Federation.
- To question discordant media narratives, Altanticist and Multipolar.
- To hone problem-solving skills.

**Required Texts**


Course Schedule

Spring Semester Begins: January 14th
Spring Break: March 10-16th
Last Day of Class: April 26th
Final Exams: May 1st

Week 1, *Introduction: Cold War Redux.*
Readings:
Cohen, *Soviet Fates*
Matlock, *Reagan & Gorbachev.*
Milich Selected Readings #1

Week 2, *Baker-Shavardnadze Agreements.*
Readings:
Cohen *Soviet Fates.*
Matlock, *Reagan & Gorbachev.*
Milich, Selected Readings #2.

Readings:
Matlock, *Superpower Illusions.*
Milich, Selected Readings #3

Week 4, *The Clash of Civilizations.*
Readings:
Matlock, *Superpower Illusions.*
Milich, Selected Readings #4.

Week 5, *Toward Fourth-Generation Warfare*
Readings:
Finish Reading Matlock, *Superpower Illusions.*
Milich Selected Readings #5.

Week 6, *Cabinet Wars.*

Discussion Section on Cohen, *Soviet Fates,* Matlock *Reagan & Matlock, Superpower Illusions.*

Week 7, *NATO Expansion: Toward a Doctrine of Preemption* (Remembering the Johnson/Brezhnev Doctrines)

Mid-Term Exam (One Hour)
Week 8  

**Spring Break**

Week 9, *The Arctic: A New Frontier for Cold War Tensions: Russia’s Northern Sea Route.*

Readings:
Video Documentary on the Northern Sea Route—U.S. Army War College (60 minutes), Watch and prepare notes for discussion.


Readings:
Milich, *Selected Readings* #7.
Video Documentary on the Russian Orthodox Church and its Diplomacy (60 minutes). Watch and prepare notes for discussion.

Week 11, *Energy diplomacy.*

Readings:
Monaghen, *New Cold War;*
Milich, *Selected Readings* #8.

Week 12, *Lethal Shadowplay: AFRICOM, the Wagner Group, and the CAR. What is Russia up to in Central Africa?*

Readings:
Monaghen, *New Cold War.*

Week 13, *Into the Syrian Crucible.*

Readings:
Finish reading Monaghen.

Week 14, *SCO & BRI.*

Readings:
Discussion section on Monaghen.
Milich, *Selected Readings* #11.

Week 15, *Election Interference.*
Readings: Milich, *Selected Readings* #12.
Video Documentary on Russian interference in the 2016 election; American interference in Russian domestics politics (60 minutes). Watch, take notes and prepare for discussion section.
Week 16, Assessing the Trump-Putin Agenda: Arms Control and Ukraine.

Final Exam (One Hour)

Course Evaluation Criteria

30% Active participation in discussion sessions (including Canvas if applicable)
5% Research Paper Proposal (2 pages)
35% Research paper (12 pages)
15% Mid-Term Exam
15% Final Exam

Grading Scale

93=A
90=A-
87=B+
83=B
80=B-
77=C+
73=C
67=D+
63=D
60=D-
57=F

Grading Rubric Assessment Categories

Critical Thinking: defined as a method to evaluate something, student engage in critical thinking when they demonstrate nascent conceptual framework.


Evidence: gleaned from primary and secondary sources; all arguments stand or fall on the basis of logic and source material.

Presentation: arranged from weakest to strongest. Includes concession to opposition.

Insight: eschew narrative in favor of analysis that posits solutions to historical problems.

Scholarly Apparatus: your name, the title, footnotes, page numbers, proper fonts (12 pt) and spacing (double for text, single for footnotes). Historians use the Chicago Manual of Style and so must you in this class. Here is the URL if you want to see some primers.

Important Notes

Academic Integrity: Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that can result in a range of penalties. If you have not read the university’s academic integrity policy do so before the beginning of the course.
Accommodations: Students in need of special facilities or accommodations need to see me during the first two weeks of the session.

Extensions: These will be granted in appropriate situations, but approval must be obtained in advance of the deadline.

Attendance: Two classes is all you can miss without penalty; for each absence thereafter I will reduce of your final grade by one-third.