

# HIST 125B Europe in the Global Cold War

YHU 3314: The End of the Cold War

Via Zoom, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays 1:50 p.m. – 4 p.m.

<https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/91425050000>

Instructor: Prof. Mate Rigo

Office Hours: By Appointment



“Europe in the Global Cold War” offers a thematic overview of the history of the post-1945 period in Europe’s East and West, and situates these histories in their global contexts, such as decolonization, environmental change (Chornobyl catastrophe) the struggle of the USSR and the US, the Vietnam War, and debates on the “end of history” around 1989. We will study how events that started in Eastern and East-Central Europe, such as the Russian Revolution, World War II, as well as the collapse of the Soviet Union triggered political and social changes in China, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the world. Through reading diplomatic correspondence, pamphlets, memoirs and literature written by dissidents, party members, and politicians, as well as by watching and reflecting on media footage, we will examine how the Cold War and 1989 ushered in a new world order that is here with us up to the present. The course also focuses on how European states East and West rebuilt ties with the “Global South” through socialist solidarity, development aid and investments, and how the Cold War shapes the institutions and politics of the European Union up to the present.

## Preparation for this Course

We all come to this course with different backgrounds and levels of knowledge regarding the Cold War and modern history, more generally. As a college course, HI 1989 cannot offer a comprehensive rehashing of major events that led to 1989. To the contrary, **discussions and readings assume a basic level of familiarity with the nuts and bolts of modern history.** I have posted **readings that will help bring you up to speed or refresh your memories.** We will not address these readings directly at class, yet I will test your knowledge of this additional material, along with class readings at the **Midterm.**

### **Grading:**

Active Participation and In-class Presentation: 20%

First Writing Assignment (Book review): 25 % JULY 21

Final Group Project: 35%

Final Writing Assignment: 20%

### **Requirements:**

#### **First Writing Assignment**

Your first writing assignment will be a book review on a monograph related to your presentation or a short essay based on my prompts. This assignment has to be between 800 and 1,000 words.

You are encouraged to write on books that you have presented or will be presenting on. You may also choose books that are on our syllabus. For a complete list of books related to 1989 more specifically, please consult: <https://libraries.indiana.edu/revolutions-1989-bibliography-dissertations>

This assignment is due on July 21 at midnight. We will workshop paper drafts on **July 18.** You will get the most out of this workshop if you have a draft ready by July 18.

#### **Main Assignment**

Your main goal during this seminar will be to produce an original group research project with a final deliverable (poster, video, essay etc.) and a final presentation as end products. Pick one aspect of the themes we discussed, conduct in-depth research, and make a joint presentation on it. You should (1) form groups of 3-5 (2) agree on a topic by October and present preliminary findings in class on November 10. Final submission deadline: November 30, 2021.

#### **Final Writing Assignment (as part of the Main Assignment)**

You have to write a 1,000-word mini research paper related to your final group project. This may relate to your first paper but has to rely on primary and secondary sources. Deadline: November 30, 2021.

## **Participation and Presentation**

Seminars of this kind benefit from active participation. Your participation grade is made up of (1) regularity of your contributions at class (33%) (2) the quality of your contributions (33%) (3) and your presentation (34%).

You will be asked to give a brief, **6 to 8-minute** presentation once during the semester and guide follow-up discussions. Presentations should connect to the assigned readings and (i) draw on the main arguments of a specific book (ii) situate it within historiography (iii) single out themes and passages you have found esp. interesting. You are not required to read the entire monograph, but do read chapters and book reviews that allow you to have an overview of the book's argument. In addition, prepare questions related to readings that week.

## **Mid-term Reading “Quiz”**

This course had three unannounced reading quizzes prior to the pandemic. These are now converted into a single, closed-book session that tests the depth of your engagement with the assigned readings.

## **ABSENCE POLICY**

Completing a summer course comes with its particular challenges, yet the course will try to do its best so that students motivate each other to complete the assignments and the course.

You can miss one class without letting me know the reason for your absence or letting me know at all – except, of course, if this is the day of your presentation. For any additional absences, you have to provide a note accepted by Brandeis, such as a medical note (MC), or else, absences will count against your participation grade.

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PRIVACY**

Our academic model encourages open and penetrating discussion of what can sometimes be challenging materials. Additionally, we seek to cultivate an intellectual space in which, as stated in the Faculty Statement on the Freedom of Expression of YNC, “there are no questions that cannot be asked, no answers that cannot be discussed and debated.” This kind of intellectual exploration requires trust and privacy. **Therefore, students may not record and/or distribute course discussions, lectures, lecture slides or handouts, readings, videos, or any course-related materials without prior permission of the instructor. This includes audio recording, video, transcription, and photography.** Any notes which a student takes for their own learning and retention should not be shared beyond the Brandeis community. Students are encouraged to reflect upon and share their learning experiences and ideas in whatever forum they wish. **However,**

**they should not share course content produced by their professor or their peers** (e.g. a peer's essay, comments made in class, posts to a Canvas discussion thread) without prior permission through any channels including social media.

Important Notes: Violation of this policy could result in disciplinary and/or legal consequences.

## NETIQUETTE GUIDELINES

- **Manage Noise and Distraction:** Keep your microphone muted unless you are speaking. This will minimise noise and make it easier for everyone to hear. If you can, try to attend class from a quiet space. **Please hydrate but do not eat during class.** *Our class will either be kept at 2 hours, or include a 20-minute break.*
- **Be Present, Not Just in Attendance:** Mute your cell phone and close other applications on your computer (this will also help with connectivity). You wouldn't pass notes in a classroom – so don't use the chat or WhatsApp to 'pass notes' digitally during the online class. It will undermine your focus, that of your peers, and is disrespectful to the class. Be ready to listen and engage with your peers.
- **Manage Appearance:** We are not a collection of screens. We are a learning community. For that reason, we will show our faces during class. You are all encouraged to use virtual backgrounds (**pick ones relevant to course themes!**) and to attend class online dressed as you would for an in-person class.
- **Be Attentive to Tone:** Sometimes we are more hostile or cutting online than we would be in a face-to-face environment. It is ok to be critical or to get angry, and to voice those reactions. At the same time, consider your tone and how you express yourself in ways that get your point across but also maintain health in the learning community. This might mean waiting to express your disagreement after class, or to give people an opportunity to clarify what they meant before assuming the worst.
- **Voice Questions and Concerns:** If you have a question, ask it! Chances are, someone else has the same question so your asking is not just an act of self-help, its an act of intellectual generosity to your class. Similarly, if you have a concern or disagreement, share it either during class or after.
- **Respect Privacy:** Do not record your professor and peers without prior and explicit permission.

### Week 1

#### **Week 1 (July 6 - July 13):**

**Monday, July 8** Introduction to the course

**Tuesday, July 9** Origins of the Cold War I

Peter Holquist, "Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905-21," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, no. 3 (August 29, 2003): 627–30 ONLY, <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.2003.0040> (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)

Letter of Bakunin to Stalin

The Nazi-Soviet Pact (The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact)

Isaac Babel, *Red Cavalry*, "A Letter"

*Presentation:* Stalin and the Cold War; WW2 and the Cold War, Persecuting Nazis after WW2

## **Thursday, July 11 The Origins of the Cold War 2**

Sources:

- Winston Churchill, "Iron Curtain Speech" (selections)
- "The Percentages Agreement"
- Albert Resis, The Churchill-Stalin Secret "Percentages" Agreement on the Balkans, Moscow, October 1944, 368-370 ONLY
- Kennan's Telegrams

*Presentation:* Persecuting Nazis after WW2, Territorial changes after WW2, Decolonization

## **Week 2 (July 14 - July 20)**

**Monday, July 15** Recovering from WW2: Ruins, POWs, "Stunde Null"

**Tuesday, July 16** Sovietization in Eastern Europe

Bottoni, *Long-Awaited West* (selections)

Horváth, *Stalin City*

**Thursday, July 18** Decolonization and European history

Jarausch, "Disappointing decolonization" in *Out of Ashes*

*Presentation:* Civil war in Indonesia, The Indochina War, or another case study of

### **BOOK REVIEW DRAFTS DUE**

## **Week 3 (July 21 - July 27)**

### **BOOK REVIEWS DUE July 22**

**Monday, July 22** "Alternative globalization" and the dark side of development programs

Young-sun Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime, Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 13-48.

Dora Vargha, "Technical Assistance and Socialist International Health: Hungary, the WHO and the Korean War," *History and Technology* 36, no. 3-4 (2020): 400-417.

Béla Tomka, "Globalization in Socialist Eastern Europe: A Turn in Research and Its Discontents," *European History Quarterly* 53 (October 5, 2023): 685-96,

Source: "The USSR withdraws from the WHO"

*Presentation:* Globalization and Alternative Globalization

### **Tuesday, July 23** Tensions: 1956, 1968

Charles Gáti, *Failed Illusions*

John Connelly, *Peoples into Nations*

Vaclav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless*

*Presentation:* Vaclav Havel: The Power of the Powerless, the 1956 Revolution, the Prague Spring

### **Thursday, July 25** The 1960s, sexual liberation and its discontents

Annie Ernaux, *The Years* (selections)

Michel Houellebecq, *The Elementary Particles* (New York: Knopf, 2000) (selections)

Gildea et al, *Voices of Revolt* (selections)

*Presentation:* Michel Houellebecq, Annie Ernaux, *Voices of Revolt* volume

### **Week 4 (July 28 - August 3):**

#### **Monday, July 29** Cold War Bodies – Abortion and Spying in Romania

Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity* (main text + sources at the end)

Verdery, *My Life as as a Spy*, ONLY: 9-23

Short:

-Fertility and Abortion in Czechoslovakia, 1950-2005

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/show/669>

*Presentation:* Romanian socialism, Sex and socialism

**Tuesday, July 30** Cold War Environmental Degradation: Chernobyl

Serhii Ploky, *Chernobyl: History of a Tragedy* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 2019), selections

Chernobyl jokes (only the examples, from p. 331 of *Politics of Joking*)

-Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl*

*Presentation:* Chernobyl

**Thursday, August 1**

**Movie screening: Bolshe Vita**

**Week 5 (August 4 - August 9):**

**Monday, August 5** The collapse of state socialism

*Presentation:* 1989 in a specific country

**Tuesday, August 6** Final Project Presentations

**Thursday, August 8** A New Cold War Today?