

Appendix 4(c): Course Materials -- Cold War America: Culture and Foreign Relations

Cold War America – Culture and Foreign Policy

History Seminar – HIST 498 C

Autumn Quarter 1999

Th 9:30-11:20, Smith 306

Scott Rausch, instructor

Smith 6

Office hours: W 2-3

Th 11:30-12:30

And by appointment

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course webpage:

<http://students.washington.edu/srausch/498.web/home.htm>

This seminar deals with the intersection of international affairs and cultural developments in post-World War II U.S. history. The course readings and the paper research will focus on the ways in which the Cold War was both a foreign relations phenomenon and a factor in the evolution of American culture in all its various forms. Class readings emphasize some common issues to address: anti-communism at home and abroad, the role of nuclear weapons in policy and imagination, and the question of whether there existed a distinct “Cold War culture.”

Most of the course load for the class will involve the writing of a seminar paper, 12-18 pages, on a topic of the student’s choice, related to the general theme of the seminar. Part of the development of the essay will involve meeting for individual paper conferences, writing an abstract, discussing the topic in class, and the writing of a full rough draft. The paper should be an original work, written by a fledgling historian, which contributes in some small way to the body of historical work on the Cold War and American culture. The final papers will be collected and posted onto a course webpage, for access by other instructors and students who may be interested in pursuing similar subjects or taking part in similar classes. You should feel free to offer any suggestions or expertise regarding the class webpage. We can develop it as best we see fit.

We will also be reading five recent works related to the subject of Cold War America and discussing them in the context of the class. These secondary sources have a heavy emphasis on the early period of cold war, 1945-1960, but we will be addressing the larger history as well. The readings are to help us get a sense of some of the main events and issues up for debate and to stimulate your research interests. They give a greater detail to a particular subject than survey courses will allow, letting the student explore more. In short, the readings are to teach us a little more about the Cold War period and serve as stepping stones to explore the subject further.

To help develop critical reading skills, spread the load around, and ensure a lively discussion, for four of the readings there will be 2-3 people (I like to call them “experts”) in charge of discussion for each class. These students will be ready to stimulate discussion by asking questions, raising issues, presenting opinions, role playing, banging a shoe on the table, etc. The “experts” will help me, the instructor, keep the discussion going each week and will serve in the enviable position as the reigning class authorities on one book.

Readings:

Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light*.

Richard Fried, *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!*

Walter Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*.

Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 8th edition.

Stephen Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*.

Plus: occasional, brief in-class handouts

Grading:

General class participation: 10%

Discussion leading: 10%

Paper assignments

 Topic: 10%

 Abstract: 10%

 Full rough draft: 10%

 Final draft: 50%

(Note: you must complete all of these assignments, including two individual conferences, to receive a passing grade.)

Research paper:

The 12-18 pager is to be on the topic of your choosing, approved by the instructor, which deals with some aspect of the relationship between American culture and the Cold War. (The page range is for a typed or printed, double-spaced, padding-free text with reasonable fonts and margins, not including title page, endnotes, illustrations, etc.) You should begin thinking about a topic immediately, since a brief general statement about your topic is due by October 21. The paper will be longer than your average undergraduate history paper, and you will receive more feedback and greater attention to the development of your paper and your writing skills than in lower division courses. You will meet with the instructor at least twice during the quarter for individual paper conferences, once when you have narrowed down your topic and once after the rough draft is complete. We will also be discussing the research paper in class, where you will have the opportunity to exchange ideas with other students.

I encourage you to make use of my office hours or make appointments beyond the two required visits. You should also get to know the other students in the class. They may be working on similar topics and may be valuable sources of help. This is not a competitive class, but a cooperative one. I hope to reproduce the papers on a website, for other historians and students to view – in a way, you will be published. You will be asked to sign a waiver giving me permission to reprint your papers on-line. You are of course under no obligation to have your final draft reprinted.

The paper topic, abstract, and individual conferences will be graded on a "complete/incomplete" basis (4.0 or 0.0). The "full" rough draft refers to a draft that is nearly complete and of final draft length (at least 12 pp.), as opposed to one that is merely outlined. The full rough draft will be graded based only on its completeness, but the final draft will be given a grade worth 50% of the course grade. Needless to say, the more energy put in the earlier stages, the better the final product. The more complete your draft, the more I can help you refine the final version.

Listed below are some examples of broad topics involved with the Cold War and a list of examples of sources for cultural evidence. The first suggests what to write about, the second where to find evidence for it. These are not exhaustive lists, but take a look and see if anything strikes your fancy. Your paper topic should be a combination of a general topical idea (e.g.,

patriotism, nuclear weapons, gender relations) and a cultural source (newspapers, film, memorials, rhetoric). Although the lists suggest seeing the Cold War developments as fundamental and distinct from cultural ones, as if American culture was only a reaction or expression of the Cold War, one can also see American culture itself influencing the course of international relations. It is a two-way street.

General Topic Ideas for HIST 498 C:

McCarthyism and reaction – in cultural or political institutions
Espionage and subversion – intelligence, loyalty/security, views and effects
Nuclear weapons, arms control and cultural impact, or vice versa
Atomic energy, radiation
Militarism, pacifism, peace activism
Cold War and: domesticity, gender relations, masculinity/femininity, sexuality, family
Patriotism, religious revival
Corporate development, big business, “military-industrial complex”
Labor, labor organization, labor relations
Particular international events as seen in American media
Particular cultural developments and impact on foreign relations
Important individuals in Cold War and cultural context
Counter-culture as response to international developments
American society in the Cold War and: technology, science, engineering, medicine
Views of other cultures through C.W. lens: Russians, Chinese, Latin Americans, etc.
Cold War America and: leisure, travel, recreation, tourism, sport
International athletic competition during the Cold War
Internationalism vs. isolationism
Environmentalism, humanitarian issues, human rights, civil rights
Partisan politics, government organization, bureaucratic, diplomatic
Censorship, publishing, free speech
Local or micro-history – Pacific Northwest, Puget Sound, Hanford, Boeing, specific town or city

Cultural artifacts, examples:

Literature – novels, poems, short stories
Performance – theatre, musicals, music
Film, television, radio, internet
Newspapers – articles, editorials, TV news
Language – word usage, norms, inclusion/exclusion, “foreign” vs. “American”
Art and visuals – incl. poster, advertisement, photography, cartoon, comic book
Genre or styles, e.g. postmodernism, science fiction, spy story
Architecture, clothing, design
Scholarship, non-fiction, academia, education
Identity – race, religion, nationality, gender, orientation, family, the “other”
Political ideology, symbols, rhetoric, political or judicial process
Official, “public” history – memorials, government information/propaganda, legal documents
Demonstrations, marches, graffiti, parades, gatherings, use of public spaces

Class Schedule and Readings:

Sept. 30 Introduction to course; Cold War, culture, history, sources, paper topics

October 7 LaFeber, all

October 14 Hixson, Intro, Ch. 1-3, 6-8 – discussion leaders

October 21 Boyer, Ch 1-2, 6-Epilogue – discussion leaders
Paper topic due

October 28 Fried, all – discussion leaders

(October 22-29: individual paper conference _____)

November 4 Whitfield: forward, Ch. 1-2, 4, 6-Epilogue – discussion leaders

November 11 **No class – Veterans' Day Holiday**

November 18 Paper discussions
Abstract or first paragraph due

November 24 (Wed.) Full rough draft due

November 25-6 **No class – Thanksgiving Holiday**

December 2 Paper discussion; drafts returned

(December 3- 10: individual paper conference _____)

December 9 **No class because of finals period**

December 13 Final draft due