

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
FALL 2009

Problems in American Foreign  
Policy: The End of the Cold War



HISTORY 4091  
TUES/THURS, 8:00AM-9:15AM, 323 LECONTE HALL

### **Instructor Information**

Name: Nathan Vigil  
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Phone: 404-483-9183  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Office Location: 234 LeConte Hall

**Course Description** The fascinating international history of the end of the Cold War, 1977-1992. The course begins with an examination of the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union during the presidency of Jimmy Carter. Early course sessions will focus on Carter's moral diplomacy, the Iran hostage crisis, and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. We will then study the evolution of the Cold War during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, giving particular attention to Reagan's massive nuclear arms build up and harsh anti-Soviet rhetoric during his first term in office and his surprising pursuit of nuclear disarmament and improved US-Soviet relations during his second term in office. We will then consider the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and the ways in which Gorbachev's reform efforts completely transformed Soviet society and foreign policy. The course will also explore in detail the dramatic revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989, including the Polish Solidarity movement, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, and the violent overthrow of the Communist government in Romania. We will then study the collapse of the Soviet Union and the various factors that led to this epoch-changing development at the end of 1991. The course will end with a survey of US-Russian relations from 1992 to the present.

### **Required Texts**

Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*. New York: Random House, 1990.

Slavenka Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.

Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997.

Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last's Days of the Soviet Empire*. New York: Random House, 1983.

Gaddis Smith, *Morality, Reason, and Power: American Diplomacy in the Carter Years*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1986.

Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy that Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994.

### **Grading**

There will be a total of 1000 points available for students to earn in this class. These points will be distributed as follows:

Class Participation: 200 points (20%)

Research Paper: 250 points (25%)

Midterm Exam: 250 points (25%) Final

Exam: 300 points (30%)

The grading scale is: 940-1000 = A, 900-930 = A-, 870-890 = B+, 840-860 = B, 800-830 = B-, 770-790 = C+, 740-760 = C, 700-730 = C-, 670-690 = D+, 600-660 = D, and 0-590 = F.

### **Class Participation**

Most class sessions will be centered on a lecture. Many class sessions, however, will contain some discussion component, and a small number of class sessions will be devoted solely to discussing the weekly reading and video assignments. Some sessions may include short quizzes and in-class writing exercises to facilitate discussion and to gauge the students' mastery of the reading assignments. Throughout the semester, students also will be invited to post comments on the course website. The Class Participation grade will include attendance, participation in class discussions, performance on in-class quizzes, and posting comments on the class website. The Class Participation grade will constitute 20% of the final grade.

### **Research Paper**

Early in the semester, students will be required to select a topic related to the end of the Cold War about which they will write a 12-13 page Research Paper. The Research Paper assignment will consist of several steps, including a written proposal, meetings with the Instructor, an annotated bibliography, and a final draft – all of which will be graded. The Research Paper assignment will constitute 25% of the final grade.

### **Exams**

There will be a Midterm Exam and a Final Exam. Exam questions will be drawn from lectures, class discussions, and weekly reading and video assignments. The Midterm Exam will be worth 25% of the final grade; the Final Exam will be worth 30% of the final grade.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

As your instructor, I will strive to ensure that the lectures and class discussions are well-organized, informative, and engaging. In return I ask that you treat the classroom with great respect. To this end, I require that you arrive to class on time, stay awake and in your seat for the entire class period, refrain from eating or chewing tobacco in class, turn off all cell phones before entering the room, and avoid extraneous conversations and all other forms of distracting behavior. Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. Students who fail to abide by these guidelines will lose points from their Class Participation grade.

### **Honor Code**

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

### **Class Website**

The website for this course is located at <http://www.endofcoldwar.com>. This website will contain a wealth of information related to the course, including announcements, copies of lecture outlines, weekly reading and video assignments, instructions for the research paper, and more. In addition, there will be a place on the website where students will be asked to post comments in response to lectures, videos, and assigned readings. Part of the class participation grade will be based on the student's participation in the course website.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

#### **Week One: Course Introduction and Overview of the Cold War, 1945-1977**

1) Tues., August 18: Course Introduction 2) Thurs., August 20:  
Overview of the Cold War, 1945-1977

#### **Week Two: Jimmy Carter and the Death of Détente, 1977-1980**

3) Tues., August 25: Jimmy Carter's Conflicted Presidency in Détente 4)  
Thurs., August 27: Carter Chaos and Détente's Demise

#### **Week Three: Ronald Reagan's New Cold War, 1981-1983**

5) Tues., September 1: Ronald Reagan: The Ultimate Cold Warrior 6) Thurs., September 3: To the  
Brink of Nuclear Armageddon, 1981-1983

**Week Four: Reagan's Reversal and Gorbachev's New Thinking, 1983-1985**

7) Tues., September 8: The West Seeks Peace: The Thatcher Referral and the Reagan Reversal, 1983-1984 8)  
Thurs., September 10: The Rise of Mikhail Gorbachev and the Dawn of a New Era

**Week Five: The Transformation of US-Soviet Relations, 1985-1987**

9) Tues., September 15: Superpower Summitry and the Breakthrough INF Treaty, 1985-1987 10)  
Thurs., September 17: **Class Discussion:** Analyzing Documents

**Week Six: Gorbachev's Great Experiment: Reforming the Soviet Union (I)**

11) Tues., September 22: Glasnost and the Return of History 12)  
Thurs., September 24: Video

**Week Seven Gorbachev's Great Experiment: Reforming the Soviet Union (I)**

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**Week Nine: Eastern Europe in the Annus Mirabilis, 1989 (I)**

Office Location: 234 Le Conte Hall  
15) Tues., October 13: The Cold War in Eastern Europe: From the Brezhnev Doctrine to the Sinatra  
Doctrine  
16) Thurs., October 15: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland

**Week Ten: Eastern Europe in the Annus Mirabilis, 1989 (II)**

17) Tues., October 20: Film, The Fall of the Berlin Wall 18) Thurs.,  
October 22: The Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia

**Week Eleven: George H. W. Bush and the End of the Cold War**

19) Tues., October 27: Violence Rocks Romania 20) Thurs., October 29: The Prudent  
President and the Cold War's Conclusion

**Week Twelve: The Collapse of the Soviet Union (I)**

21) Tues., November 3: The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the USSR 22)  
Thurs., November 5: Nationalism and the Dissolution of the USSR

**Week Thirteen: The Collapse of the Soviet Union (II)**

23) Tues., November 10: **Class Discussion:** What caused the collapse of the Soviet Union?  
24) Thurs., November 12: Capitalism, Chaos, and Corruption: US-Russian Relations during the Yelstin  
Years

**Week Fourteen: US-Russian Relations Since the End of the Cold War**

25) Tues., November 17: *The Return of the Russian Bear: The Putin Years* 26) Thurs.,  
November 19: **Class Discussion:** The Current State of US-Russian Relations

**Thanksgiving Break**

**Week Fifteen: The Collapse of the Soviet Union (III)**

Tues., December 1 : Final Exam Review Thurs.,  
December 3: Final Exam

Fri., December 11: Research Paper Due (11:00am)