

RUT3442 | THE CULTURE OF THE COLD WAR

Instructor: Dr. Ingrid Kleespies
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"The peaceful atom"



Course Description

Emerging from the chaotic destruction of WWII, the Cold War seemed to divide the world in two in both physical and symbolic ways. It amplified extant political and sociocultural binaries of “good” and “evil,” “us” and “them,” and “capitalism” and “communism” to an unprecedented degree. Under the harsh glare of the threat of total destruction, nearly all aspects of Soviet and American life were organized around these poles for a period of almost fifty years. What were the American and Soviet cultural responses to the intense and unprecedented situation of the “atomic age?” How can we compare these “rival” visions and experiences? In this course, students will be asked to examine the culture of the Cold War from Soviet and American perspectives across a wide range of phenomena (including literature, film, and propaganda) and to consider how and why relations between the U.S. and the USSR came to be framed as a global ideological contest as well as to think about the cultural legacy of the Cold War today.

Required Texts

1. *Nineteen Eighty Four*. George Orwell. Berkley, 2003 (reprint).
2. *The Crucible*. Arthur Miller. Penguin Classics, 2016.
3. *The Spy who Came in from the Cold*. John Le Carré. Penguin Classics, 2013.
4. *Z is for Zachariah*. Robert C. O'Brien. Simon & Schuster, 2007.
5. Additional required texts are located on **E-Learning/Canvas**.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

Attendance and Participation (10%). Attendance (5%) and participation (5%) are mandatory. **Participation in this class is a significant part of your grade:** please come to class having completed the assigned reading and prepared to take part in discussion (see the participation rubric in the class files for additional information).

Unexcused absence cannot be made up. Acceptable excuses include illness, religious holidays, & military obligation. **These need to be documented excuses.** Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to the material covered. Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse, there will be no make-up option for missed exams/assignments. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged prior to absence. Alternatively, students should contact me on return to classes.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See [UF Academic Regulations and Policies](#) for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.

Response Papers + Movie Discussion Questions (30%). Five response papers of 1-2 pages in length (20%) are due over the course of the semester at dates indicated on the syllabus. These require you to respond to some aspect of the reading, film, or class discussion that you find particularly interesting. Please be prepared to share your ideas in class. These are not graded. Additionally, you are required to submit one discussion question about each film/pair of films (10%), whether screened in class or viewed on your own. Questions should be submitted to me via email by **10am** on the day the film is discussed in class.

Oral History Interview (25%). You will be expected to conduct an interview with someone who experienced the Cold War, either in the U.S., the Soviet Union, Eastern Bloc, or elsewhere (e.g. Vietnam, Cuba, etc.). This assignment requires you to a) identify a suitable interviewee, b) prepare a set of relevant interview questions, c) conduct an approx. 60-minute interview, d) prepare a 3-5pp. written summary, and e) prepare a short presentation to share in class (5-10 minutes). Due **November 18**. An oral history training workshop will be held with staff from the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program in class on Oct.7 and your interviewee's name, bio, and draft questions will be due Oct.9.

Research Poster (25%). You will be expected to complete a research poster that explores a question pertinent to Cold War culture. A list of sample topics will be provided, but you will be free to pursue your own topic given instructor approval. Topics due **Nov.4**). Posters will be shared with the class at the end of the semester on **December 4**. Your poster must be accompanied by a short summary (2-3pp.) and a bibliography.

Presentation (10%). You will be expected to participate in one 10-15 minute group presentation on a topic relevant to the course. Topics and sign-up sheet will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

Grading Scale

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	63-66	62-60	59-

Note: A grade of C– is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, please see [University Grades and Grading Policies](#).

Learning Without Borders Internationalization Objectives

The Culture of the Cold War will address a) global and intercultural conditions and interdependencies, b) will ask students to analyze and interpret global and intercultural issues, and c) will ask students to communicate effectively with members of other cultures (and across generations). The course will focus on issues of seminal cultural importance in multiple national contexts, including the U.S., Soviet Russia, and the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, and it will explore the global ramifications of the division of the world into two spheres of influence.

Course Policies

Class Demeanor: Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

University Honesty Policy: **Plagiarism will not be tolerated. No use of ChatGPT or other generative AI system will be tolerated. All written work in this course must be your own.** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the [UF Conduct Code](#)Links to an external site. website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Plagiarism, whether from other people or through use of ChatGPT or other generative AI systems, will not be tolerated. All work in this course must be your own. Here is why: writing is hard - but it is also essential to learning, and especially to the development of critical and analytical thinking skills. It is precisely these skills, and the ability to articulate them clearly and persuasively, that you will need to succeed in

any career you choose to pursue. Use of other people's or other entities' work means "short-circuiting" the development of these skills. Presumably that is not why you chose to attend UF.

Please be aware that most of the currently available AI tools are fairly recognizable in their output. This is because machine-generated content tends to produce vague generalities and repeat cliched ideas and unsophisticated (even incorrect) interpretation. This content is *much less interesting* than the ideas and discussion you generate – you are capable of more creativity and insight than the machine.

Staring at the blank page happens to us all – but it's where our best ideas emerge. **Be a writer, not an editor! Be a creator, not a tweaker!** If you are struggling with an assignment, please come see me in office hours or send me an email.

You are free to use spell check, grammar check, and synonym identification tools (e.g. Grammarly and MS Word).

Canvas

Assignments, handouts, grades, etc. will be posted on the course website on Canvas. It is your responsibility to check the website regularly and keep up to date with the class.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the "[Get Started with the DRC](#)" webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Missed assignments may be made up with provision of appropriate documentation and/or for partial credit, pending discussion with instructor.

Illness: If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.

Email Etiquette: Please keep in mind that email is a formal means of communication. I ask that you address me as Dr. Kleespies, both in class and in writing. I also ask that you please limit email to working hours (M-F 9-5) except in case of emergency. Please be sure to check the Canvas site for information about assignments and due dates.

Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under 2 GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

In-Class Recording: Please see class files for the official UF policy regarding in-class recording.

Academic, Health, and Wellness Resources: For information about academic, health, and wellness resources for students, please select the "Campus Resources" option on the left sidebar of the course Canvas page.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading/assignment due on date listed.

WEEK 1 AUGUST 23

Introduction to course; origins of the Cold War and the nuclear age; establishing the postwar order in Europe.

Friday, August 23

Introduction to course, no assignment due.

WEEK 2 AUGUST 26-30

Kennan's "long telegram," Zhdanov and the Soviet response; the Truman Doctrine; staging the Iron Curtain.

Monday, August 26

1. George Kennan, [The Sources of Soviet Conduct](#)
2. Andrei Zhdanov, [Report on the International Situation to the Cominform](#)

Wednesday, August 28 – **No Class**

1. Watch [The Iron Curtain](#) (1948) on your own for **9/4**.
2. Watch [The Russian Question](#) (1948) on your own for **9/4**.
3. Response paper #1 due **9/4**.
4. *1984*, pp.1-183 [Part 1:Chap.1-Part 2:Chap.8] for **9/6**.

Friday, August 30 – **No Class**

1. Watch [The Iron Curtain](#) (1948) on your own for **9/4**.
2. Watch [The Russian Question](#) (1948) on your own for **9/4**.
3. Response paper #1 due **9/4**.
4. *1984*, pp.1-183 [Part 1:Chap.1-Part 2:Chap.8] for **9/6**.

WEEK 3 SEPTEMBER 2-6

Staging the Iron Curtain; 1984 and the Orwellian vision of totalitarianism.

Monday, September 2 - **No Class** (Labor Day)

1. Watch [The Iron Curtain](#) (1948) on your own for **9/4**.
2. Watch [The Russian Question](#) (1948) on your own for **9/4**.
3. Response paper #1 due **9/4**.
4. *1984*, pp.1-183 [Part 1:Chap.1-Part 2:Chap.8] for **9/6**.

Wednesday, September 4

Discussion of *The Iron Curtain* and *The Russian Question*.

1. **Response Paper #1** due.
2. *1984*, pp.1-183 [Part 1:Chap.1-Part 2:Chap.8] for **9/6**.

Friday, September 6

1. *1984*, pp.1-183 [Part 1:Chap.1-Part 2:Chap.8].

WEEK 4 SEPTEMBER 9-13

1984 and the Orwellian vision of totalitarianism continued; introduction to Soviet socialist realism.

Monday, September 9

1. *1984*, pp.183-246 [Part 2:Chap.9-Part 3:Chap.1].

***Presentation #1: Cold War Spy Cases: The Rosenbergs and Alger Hiss**

Wednesday, September 11

1. *1984*, pp.246-308 [Part 3:Chap.2-Part 3:Chap.6].

Friday, September 13

1. "The Birth of Socialist Realism from the Spirit of the Russian Avant-Garde," Boris Groys, pp.122-148.

WEEK 5 SEPTEMBER 16-20

"The Thaw" and Ehrenburg's The Thaw; Stalin's death; the Soviet '50s; the Soviet cinematic "soft" Cold War.

Monday, September 16

1. *The Thaw*, pp.1-89

2. Watch [Spring on Zarechnaya Street](#) (1956) on your own for **9/20**.

Wednesday, September 18

1. *The Thaw*, pp.90-154

2. Watch [Spring on Zarechnaya Street](#) (1956) on your own for **9/20**.

***Presentation #2: Origins of the Space Race: Sputnik Launch 1957**

Friday, September 20

In-class discussion of *Spring on Zarechnaya Street* (1956).

1. *The Thaw*, pp.155-228.

2. Response Paper #2 due **9/25**.

WEEK 6 September 23-27

The "Atomic Age," the American '50s, McCarthyism; 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow (1957).

Monday, September 23

1. *The Crucible*, Acts I-II, pp.3-81

2. Response Paper #2 due **9/25**.

***Pres. #3: Cold War Spectacles: 1957 World Festival of Youth and Students**

Wednesday, September 25

1. *The Crucible*, Acts III-IV, pp.83-146;

2. **Response Paper #2** due.

Friday, September 27

In-class viewing of *The Searchers* (1956)

WEEK 7 SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 4

The "Atomic Age," the American '50s, the Cold War Western; competition on the domestic "front:" the "Kitchen Debate" and the American Exhibition of 1959.

Monday, September 30

In-class viewing of *The Searchers* (1956)

Wednesday, October 2

Discussion of *The Searchers* and the Cold War Western.

Friday, October 4

1. "Six weeks at Sokolniki: Soviet Responses to the American Exhibition," pp.185-213.
2. "Who Will Beat Whom? Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959," pp.194-236.
3. [The Kitchen Debate](#) (~15 minutes)

WEEK 8 OCTOBER 7-11

1950s-early 60s: the global Cold War (Korean War, Vietnam), construction of the Berlin Wall; spies and spy novels; Cold War noir.

Monday, October 7 *SPOHP Workshop*

1. Interviewee Name and Bio; Draft Interview Questions due **10/9**.

Wednesday, October 9 |

1. *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, pp.1-82 (ch.1-8).
2. **Interviewee Name and Bio; Draft Interview Questions** due.
3. Watch [One, Two, Three](#) (1961) on your own for **10/14**.

***Presentation #4: Cultural Showdowns: The International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition 1958**

Friday, October 11

1. In-class viewing of short film *Foreigners* (1961).
2. *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, pp.83-152 (ch.9-16).
3. Watch [One, Two, Three](#) (1961) on your own for **10/14**.
4. Response paper #3 due **10/16**.

WEEK 9 OCTOBER 14-18

1960s: Cold War satire; the Cuban Missile Crisis, Brezhnev and the Era of Stagnation, Détente, Prague Spring (1968).

Monday, October 14

Discussion of *One, Two, Three* (1961).

1. *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, pp.153-225 (ch.17-26).
2. Watch [White Sun of the Desert](#) (1970) for **10/16**.
3. Response paper #3 due **10/16**.

Wednesday, October 16

Discussion of *White Sun of the Desert*; [Seventeen Moments of Spring excerpts].

1. **Response paper #3** due.

***Presentation #5: Cold War Broadcasting: RFE/RL, Voice of America**

Friday, October 18

No Class – Homecoming

WEEK 10 OCTOBER 21-25

1960s: Cold War satire cont'd, Cold War noir, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Brezhnev and the Era of Stagnation, Détente.

Monday, October 21

In-class viewing of *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*.

1. Watch [The Manchurian Candidate](#) (1962) on your own for **10/25**.
2. Response Paper #4 due **10/25**.

Wednesday, October 23

In-class viewing of *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*.

1. Watch [The Manchurian Candidate](#) (1962) on your own for **10/25**.
2. Response Paper #4 due **10/25**.

Friday, October 25

Discussion of *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Dr. Strangelove*.

1. **Response Paper #4** due.
2. Watch Andrei Tarkovsky's [Stalker](#) (1979) for **10/28**.

WEEK 11 OCTOBER 28 – NOVEMBER 1

1970-80s: late Cold War, the second Cold War; Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, 1980 Olympic boycott.

Monday, October 28

Discussion of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979).

2. Response Paper #5 due **11/1**.

Wednesday, October 30

1. Excerpted chapters from *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Alexei Yurchak), pp.1-18, 158-206.
 2. Response Paper #5 due **11/1**.
 3. Research poster topic proposal due **11/4**.
- *Presentation #6: Cold War Sports I: World Ice Hockey Championship 1969, World Chess Championship 1972, Olga Korbut (1972 Olympics)**

Friday, November 1

1. *Z is for Zachariah*, pp.1-129, chapters 1-12.
2. **Response Paper #5** due.
3. Research poster topic proposal due **11/4**.

WEEK 12 NOVEMBER 4-8

1970-80s: late Cold War, the second Cold War, cont'd.

Monday, November 4

1. *Z is for Zachariah*, pp.130-249, chapters 13-26.
 2. **Research poster topic proposal** due.
 3. Interview due **11/18**.
- *Presentation #7: Cold War Sports II: 1980 Olympics: "Miracle on Ice," US boycott**

Wednesday, November 6

In-class viewing of *Dead Man's Letters* (1987)

1. Response paper #5 due **11/13**.
2. Interview due **11/18**.

Friday, November 8

In-class viewing of *Dead Man's Letters* (1987)

1. Response paper #5 due **11/13**.
2. Interview due **11/18**.

WEEK 13 NOVEMBER 11-15

1980s: nuclear anxiety; end of the Cold War and the "end of history?"

Monday, November 11

No Class – Veterans' Day

1. Interview due **11/18**.

Wednesday, November 13

Discussion of *Dead Man's Letters*

1. **Response paper #5** due.
2. Oral history interview due **11/18**.

Friday, November 15

1. "The End of History"
2. Oral history interview due **11/18**.

*Presentation #8: Cold War Defections (Kim Philby, Mikhail Baryshnikov, et al.)

WEEK 14 NOVEMBER 18-22

Oral history interview presentations.

Monday, November 18

Interview Presentations.

1. **Oral history interview** due.

Wednesday, November 20

No Class [ASEES conference]

1. Watch [Goodbye, Lenin!](#) on your own for **12/2**.

Friday, November 22

No Class [ASEEES conference]

1. Watch [Goodbye, Lenin!](#) on your own for **12/2**.

WEEK 15 NOVEMBER 25-29: NO CLASS

THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 16 DECEMBER 2-4

Conclusion

Monday, December 2

In-class discussion of [Goodbye, Lenin!](#)

Wednesday, December 4

Poster Session

OPTIONAL FILMS/READING

Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949)

Rouben Mamoulian's *Silk Stockings* (1957)

Jack Arnold's *The Mouse that Roared* (1959)

Vasilii Pichul's *Little Vera* (1988)

Karen Shakhnazarov's *Vanished Empire* (2009)

Deutschland 83 (series)

Askold Kurov's *Leninland* (2013)

Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium