

History 378

Beyond the Iron Curtain



Fall 2017
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:45pm
108 Smith Hall

Professor Erik Scott
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Office: 2610 Wescoe Hall

Office Hours: Mondays 3:30-5:00pm, Tuesdays 4:00-5:00pm and by appointment

Course Objectives

This course will transport you to a distinct time and place: the Cold War-era Soviet Union. Through readings, class discussions, activities, and writing assignments, you will examine a diverse array of Soviet perspectives on a global conflict that defined the second half of the twentieth century, one whose legacy continues to shape our world today. You will learn to critically engage historical arguments and to analyze beliefs, behaviors, and practices in their historical and cultural context by looking at a broad range of primary historical sources, including interviews, memoirs, declassified government documents, films, music, photographs, visual art, and a Soviet novel.

This course will give you a chance to take part in historical debates about the Cold War that resonate to this day, including: Who started the Cold War, and did anyone win it? Was it a time of relative peace or paranoia? How did the two sides view each other and did espionage help them to know each other better? How did people and culture sometimes cross the iron curtain? What is the legacy of the Cold War? In addition, by contrasting the Soviet experience of the Cold War with that of other societies, particularly the United States, and exploring the cross-cultural dialogue and frequent cross-cultural misunderstandings that characterized international relations in this period, you will be better prepared to understand and negotiate political and cultural differences in the contemporary world.

Successful completion of this course satisfies Goal 4, Learning Outcome 2 of the KU Core.

Course Requirements and Policies

Your final grade for this course will be based on the following components:

20% Attendance and Active Participation

20% Take-Home Midterm Exam
Due October 5

30% Writing Assignments

1. Cold War Oral History Project
3 pages in length; 5% of overall grade
Due September 7
2. Historical Analysis of Sergei Dovlatov's *The Suitcase: A Novel*
4 pages in length; 10% of overall grade
Due November 2
3. Fictional Autobiography of a Soviet Citizen During the Cold War
5 pages in length; 15% of overall grade
Due December 7

30% Take-Home Final Exam
Due December 14

Attendance and Participation

This class is not designed as a straightforward lecture course; instead, it is an immersive experience that involves discussion, debate, and in-class activities. Attendance is required and is vital to your success. A roll call will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Excused absences are only granted at the discretion of the instructor and require advance permission or the submission of appropriate documentation (such as a doctor's note). You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading and to participate in all activities. Your participation will be assessed by your individual contributions to group discussions and your successful completion of several in-class

assignments that will explore course themes and require you to draw on assigned readings and films. These in-class assignments will be unannounced, graded on a Pass/Fail basis, and cannot be turned in late. Please be respectful of our learning community by arriving to class on time, listening attentively, and refraining from the use of cell phones and other devices during class.

Midterm Exam

The Midterm will be a take-home assignment and is due October 5. It will cover lectures, readings, discussions, and activities from the first half of the course and consist of identifications, quotations, and short-answer questions.

Writing Assignments

Three writing assignments of increasing length and scope will give you the chance to develop your writing skills over the course of semester. Further details on these assignments and a grading rubric will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard. Assignments should be written in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, and have page numbers in the bottom right corner.

Final Exam

The Final will be a take-home assignment and is due December 14. It will have two parts. Part I will follow the basic structure of the Midterm, covering lectures, readings, discussions, and activities from the second half of the course. Like the Midterm, Part I will consist of identifications, quotations, and short-answer questions. Part II will consist of a longer essay covering the entire course.

Integrity

Our learning community is based on mutual respect and trust. My assumption is that all of us are honorable people and will not lie, cheat, or otherwise behave dishonestly. If confronted with evidence to the contrary, and if investigation convinces me that a student acted dishonestly, the student will fail the course.

The biggest danger for honesty in a course like this is plagiarism (a form of cheating), so be sure to (1) cite a source for any idea not your own, (2) set off quotations in quotation marks, or by indenting, and cite the source, and (3) use a standard style of documentation (we will use Chicago style). Carelessness, ignorance, and lack of time are unacceptable excuses for plagiarism. I am happy to clarify the rules for you. If you are uncertain how to do something properly, ask me before turning in an assignment.

Communication

The best way to contact me is to talk after class and during office hours. The second best way is by email. You are responsible for regularly checking your KU email account for course-related announcements; I will do my best to respond to your emails within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. I will not be able to answer emails about assignments sent less than 24 hours before the due date.

Completing Work on Time

Writing Assignments must be submitted in hard copy and via Safe Assign before the beginning of class on the day they are due. Late writing assignments will be marked down one-third of a grade for each calendar day after the due date that they are submitted.

Procedures for completing the Midterm and Final Exam are somewhat different. The Midterm and Final Exam must be submitted via Safe Assign before 5:00pm on the day they are due. These are time-sensitive examinations meant to synthesize course themes and assess your overall engagement with the course materials. Accordingly, Midterms and Final Exams submitted past the deadline will receive a zero and seriously jeopardize your ability to pass the course.

Incomplete grades will be issued only in emergencies.

Writing Effectively

For writing assignments, please observe the page length parameters, since effective editing is part of the skill of good writing. When grading your papers, I will circle stylistic and grammatical mistakes; to learn more about the nature of these mistakes and how to avoid them in the future, please bring your papers to office hours. To further improve your writing, I recommend that you regularly consult Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, an indispensable guide that I still use myself. The KU Writing Center (<http://www.writing.ku.edu/>) is another great resource offering free consultations and useful advice on writing.

Accessibility

KU's Student Access Services coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible, whether their disability is physical, medical, sensory, psychological, or related to attention or learning. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted Student Access Services, please do so as soon as possible. They are located in 22 Strong Hall; their telephone number is 785-864-4064; their email is achieve@ku.edu. Please also meet privately with the instructor before the second class meeting in order to coordinate the receipt of services.

Required Readings

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

Donald Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Sergei Dovlatov, *The Suitcase: A Novel* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2011)

Required books are available for purchase at the campus bookstore and have been placed on reserve at Watson Library. Additional required readings and materials for each week are posted on Blackboard for you to print out. Reading assignments should be completed before the first meeting of each week.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

The Soviet Union after the Great Patriotic War

August 22: The Soviet Experiment

August 24: Legacies of War

Readings:

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 1-28

Joseph Brodsky, "Spoils of War"

Ilya Ehrenburg, "April 27, 1945"

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (excerpt)

Who Started It?

August 29: Soviet Perceptions of the United States

August 31: Judging vs. Understanding

Readings:

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 29-93

Highlights of Churchill's "Iron Curtain Speech"

Excerpts from *Pravda's* Interview with Stalin

George F. ("X") Kennan, Sources of Soviet Conduct"

Telegram from Nikolai Novikov, Soviet Ambassador to the US

Film:

The Russian Question (USSR, 1948)

Battling for Bodies, Hearts, and Minds

September 5: Living with Borders

September 7: Oral History Assignment Due; Student Presentations

Readings:

Donald Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers*, pp. 3-15, 66-119

Senator Joseph McCarthy's Speech on Communists in the State Department

"Modern Art Was CIA 'Weapon'"

Frida Vigdorova, "Diary of a Russian Schoolteacher"

Rules for Soviet School Children

Competing for Consumers

September 12: Mass Luxuries

September 14: Restaging the "Kitchen Debate"

Readings:

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 94-122

Gyorgy Peteri, "Nylon Curtain—Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe"

Soviet National Exhibition in New York City

Matt Novak, “The All-American Expo that Invaded Cold War Russia”

Everyday Life in the Space Age

September 19: The Soviet Cosmos

September 21: Soviet Science Fiction

Readings:

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 123-162

Donald Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers*, pp. 120-167

Kennedy-Khrushchev Messages During the Cuban Missile Crisis

Asif Siddiqi, “Russian Space History—A Blog Conversation”

Film:

Road to the Stars (USSR, 1958):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CX0oSjwLqI>

States of Surveillance

September 26: Know Your Enemy

September 28: Spy Games

Readings:

Donald Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers*, pp. 168-219

Oleg Kalugin, *Spymaster: My Thirty-Two Years in Intelligence and Espionage Against the West*, pp. 65-134

Sheila Fitzpatrick, “A Spy in the Archives”

Imagining the Third World

October 3: A May-December Romance

October 5: No Class Meeting; Midterm Exam Due by 5:00pm

Reading:

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 163-191

Fidel Castro, Soviet Television Interview on the Occasion of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the October Revolution, November 7, 1977

Film:

I am Cuba (Cuba, USSR, 1964)

Cold War Clashes

October 10: 1968

October 12: Détente and its Limits

Readings:

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 192-226

L. Tachalin, “Friendship University: Two Years Old”

Peking Review, “On Khrushchev's Phony Communism”

Materials on the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia
Soviet Voices from the Afghan War

Socialist Economies

October 17: No Class (Fall Break)

October 19: *Kolejka* (Game)

Readings:

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 227-264

Lewis Siegelbaum, "Soviet Consumerism"

"How Speculation Thrives"

Lev Kuklin, "Knights of the 'Jeans Culture'"

Dissent and Disillusionment

October 24: Voices of Dissent

October 26: Irony and *Sotsart*

Readings:

Donald Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers*, pp. 220-267

Sergei Dovlatov, *The Suitcase: A Novel*, pp. 1-82

Soviet Anecdotes

Emigration

October 31: Getting Out

November 2: Émigré Lives; Dovlatov Assignment Due

Readings:

Sergei Dovlatov, *The Suitcase: A Novel*, pp. 83-130

Yevgeny and Larisa Ryzhik, "Freedoms Lost and Found"

Film:

Refusenik (US, 2007)

Sports in the Cold War

November 7: The Soviet Empire of Sports

November 9: The Red Machine

Readings

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 265-302

Robert Edelman, "Playing Catch-Up: Soviet Media and Soccer Hooliganism, 1965-1975"

Manfred Zeller, "'Our Own Internationale,' 1966: Dynamo Kiev Fans between Local Identity and Transnational Imagination"

Film:

Of Miracles and Men (US, 2015)

Defecting from the Soviet Dream

November 14: Deserting and Defending the Soviet Dream

November 16: Defection and Disillusionment

Readings:

Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 303-335

Donald Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers*, pp. 268-311

Alexandra Costa, *Stepping Down from a Star: A Soviet Defector's Story*, pp. 185-233

Film:

Forgive Me, Sergei (US and Russia, 2004):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkEqC0jHdJ8>

Interview with Alexandra Costa (US, 1989):

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?101110-1/malta-meeting>

New Dreams

November 21: *The Other Dream Team*

November 23: No Class (Thanksgiving)

Film:

The Other Dream Team (Lithuania and US, 2012)

After the Fall

November 28: Vanished Empire

November 30: Post-Socialist Lives

Readings:

Vladislav Zubok, 336-344

Donald Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers*, pp. 312-368

Juliane Fuerst, "Why Do So Many Russians Seem to Dislike the West?"

Making Sense of History

December 5: Legacies of the Cold War

December 7: Fictional Autobiography Due; Student Presentations

Readings:

H-Diplo Form: "The Cold War in Retrospect: 25 Years after its End"

Film:

My Perestroika (US and Russia, 2010)

Final Exam

December 14: Final Exam Due by 5:00pm

The schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.