This seminar will allow students to do in-depth research on the political history of the Cold War. This is not an introduction to the Cold War; students are expected to know the basic history and arguments as a prerequisite. We will cross-walk theories and analytical approaches from political science with the historical accounts of the events and evolution of the Cold War, asking both how we can explain this history and how it confirms or disconfirms more general arguments.

The primary requirement is writing a 30-40 page research paper on a topic of your choosing. I also expect you to have completed the readings before each class session, to contribute to the discussion, and to provide brief written comments on the drafts of 1 of your colleagues' papers. Your own paper cannot re-use what you have written for another class without my permission.

A 1-3 page paper proposal with some bibliography attached is due on February 17, although you can turn it in sooner. Students will briefly summarize their drafts during the last 2 weeks of the class, and a draft will therefore be due during that period. The final paper is due at my office at 5:00 on May 8.

The books listed under the readings marked with an * are required and can be purchased at Book Culture. More those who need a reminder of the basic history and arguments, I have asked the store to get copies of 2 books by John Lewis Gaddis, We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History, and The Cold War. Both are good. The former is more interpretative and the latter provides a good overview.

Class Schedule

September 9 and 16: What was the Cold War About?


Michael Sulick, “Intelligence in the Cold War,” The Intelligencer, vol. 21, Winter 2014-
15, pp. 47-52.

September 23 and 30: Beginnings


October 7 and 14: Nuclear Weapons and Berlin


October 21: The Cuban Missile Crisis


October 28 and November 4: Vietnam


November 11 and 18: The End of the Cold War

eds., History and Neorealism, ch. 13.


November 25-December 9: Presentations