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 pre-requisite. 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 October 4, 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 December 16.

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 6 and 13: What was the Cold War About?


Michael Sulick, “Intelligence in the Cold War,” The Intelligencer, vol. 21, Winter 2014-
September 20 and 27: Beginnings

*Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks.*


October 4 and 11: Nuclear Weapons and Berlin

*Campbell Craig, *Destroying the Village.*


“Memorandum of Conference with the President,” December 1, 1960 (DNSA Nuclear History: NH 00290).

October 18: The Cuban Missile Crisis


October 25 and November 1: Vietnam

*George Herring, America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975.*

Students who are familiar with the basic history may want to read Jeffrey Kimball, *The Vietnam War Files: Uncovering the Secret History of the Nixon-Era Strategy.*


November 15: The End of the Cold War

*Don Oberdorfer, From the Cold War to a New Era: The US and the Soviet Union, 1983-


November 22-December 6: Presentations