SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Heraclitus taught that while rivers may appear to stay the same, the waters are always changing. For similar reasons I believe that historical events never repeat themselves. Yet, we must study history to learn what previous policies were beneficial and which led to disasters. This becomes evident when we consider that the most urgent questions of today are similar to those asked in 1945: “Can the east and west coexist in peace? Can Russia be trusted? Will there be another war? What will happen in the Middle East?”

This course will analyze the relations between the major international players. The themes covered will include the gradual deepening of ideological divisions between east and west at the end of the war against Hitler, the outbreak of the Korean War, and the death of Joseph Stalin. We will study the conflicts and the search for compromise in the Middle East, the brief thaw in US-Soviet relations in the middle of the fifties, followed by the construction of the Berlin Wall and the Cuban missile crisis, the roots of ethnic conflicts and causes of poverty in Africa, and the Vietnam war. The course will also analyze the growing inability of Moscow to deal with the crises in eastern Europe (1968-1989) and to find a response to the newly assertive West in the 1980s. The emergence of John Paul II, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the steady handling of US-Soviet relations will be credited for the peaceful end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Finally, we will look at the war on terror and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq as factors contributing to the global turmoil that characterizes the present political scene.

The lectures will emphasize that coincidences, errors, miscalculations, and plain misunderstandings have played a significant role in shaping the course of history from 1945 to the present.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


IMPORTANT DATES

First day of class: 23 January 2019
Last day to add a course: 4 February 2019
Last day to drop a course w/ out a W: 26 February 2019
MIDTERM: 4 March 2019
Analytical Paper Due: 3 April 2019
Last day of class: 1 May 2019

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

a. Lecture Attendance (obligatory)
   b. Participation in Weekly Discussion Section: 25 percent
   c. Midterm Examination: 25 percent
   d. Analytical Paper: 25 percent
   e. Final Examination: 25 percent

   The midterm and the final examinations will take place in the classroom with books and notes closed. Note that the final examination is scheduled by the Registrar, not by me, and I am unable to change the schedule for any reason.

   The midterm and final examinations will have two parts:

   PART ONE (30 percent)
   There will be a short analytical essay on one of three topics. The essay topics will hold students accountable for the material covered in lectures and in readings.

   PART TWO (70 percent)
   Identifications (IDs) are meant to be clear summaries of important individuals and events we will have covered in this course. They should contain the following information:

   1. Who or what is the subject of the ID? This needs to be correct. You also need to ensure that your ID contains all that is central. Providing anecdotes about a person’s private life but not his or her achievements misses the point.

   2. When did the ID take place? This does not always have to be a specific day. It can be a year. On rare occasions the date needs to be complete. For instance, World War II broke out on 1 September 1939 and ended on 8 May 1945. It is helpful to indicate when the ID took place by stating what events paved the way for it. For example, an ID on the Potsdam Conference must note that it took place after the defeat of the Third Reich.

   3. What is the historical significance of the ID? Make sure you have time to state the significance of the personality or event in question.
Analytical Essay

Using no more than two primary source documents, please write an analytical essay on a topic of your choice. Your job is to convince the reader that you have developed a central thesis and can support it with specific evidence.

Format: 2,000-3,000 words, Times New Roman, 12pt, double-spaced.

What is an analytical essay? (Excerpted from the History Department Writing Guide)

“The examination of a primary document … involves a movement from description (identification of a subject or argument) to analysis to critical judgment. You would normally begin the examination of a primary document by identifying just what the document is. Who wrote it and for what audience, and what is the basic content, or ‘story line,’ of the document? The second, or analytical, section of the essay attempts to dig beneath the surface of the document. Why was the document written? What is really going on here? Try to ‘decode’ the messages implicitly given by the document’s silences, as well as its words. Set the document into its historical context. What historical events or issues does it refer to, and what perspective does it offer on these events? Remember that information about the social status (race, class, gender, profession, etc.) of the author and/or intended audience for the document can also provide clues to meaning.”

After you have selected your documents and before you formulate your thesis, please consider the following:

• What was the reason for producing the document?
• Who was the document’s intended audience?
• Why is this document significant?
• What does it reveal about the time period and its author?
• Do you accept the document’s facts, logic, and findings?
• Did the document make any recommendations for the future? Were they accurate?

The thesis introduction

After considering these questions, you need to formulate an argument. The first paragraph of your paper should be your thesis paragraph. The function of this paragraph is to introduce the document, define the problem your paper addresses, define key words and concepts you will use, and present your argument in summary. The last sentence of this paragraph should be your thesis.

The body of the essay

In this section, you support your thesis. Think of body paragraphs as the building blocks of your essay. Good analytical essay paragraphs contain an
explanation of your ideas and evidence from your source base that supports those ideas.

The conclusion

Your concluding paragraph might restate the thesis in different words, summarize the main points you have made, or make a relevant comment about the source you have analyzed, but from a different perspective. Your conclusion should underline the importance and significance of what you have written.

Finishing touches

• Avoid clichés and empty generalizations.

• Once you have written your paper, read it aloud to yourself. This is the best way to eliminate awkward formulations.

Citations

Please follow the Chicago Manual of Style for your citations.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT CODE

All students are expected to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty and integrity. Please provide citations for all quotations, paraphrases, and ideas taken from any source. It is your responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the Academic Conduct Code; a copy can be obtained on the website of the CAS Dean’s Office.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Boston University provides accommodation to students with disabilities in conformance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students seeking accommodations should submit appropriate medical documentation.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, the students will have acquired a strong foundation for further study of modern history, with emphasis on diplomatic relations between the major powers. They will also become familiar with various challenges to world peace and stability that occurred during the Cold War, including, for instance, the Berlin Crisis, the Cuban missile crisis, and the crises in the eighties.
HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FROM 1945 TO THE PRESENT
Course Outline
Spring 2019

1. 23 January  Introduction
2. 28 January  Legacy of War: Great Expectations
3. 30 January  Lost Illusions: Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, NATO
4. 4 February  From the Korean War to Stalin's Death
5. 6 February  Neutral Austria, Uprisings in Poland & Hungary
6. 11 February  The Troublesome Middle East
7. 13 February  U-2 Flights and the End of Peaceful Coexistence
8. 19 February  The Cold War in Space: Soviet Triumphs
9. 20 February  The Bay of Pigs and the Kennedy-Khrushchev Summit
10. 25 February  The Berlin Wall and the Cuban Missile Crisis
11. 27 February  CIA v. KGB: GOLD, Penkovski, Golitsyn, Nosenko
12. 4 March  MIDTERM
13. 6 March  Africa: the Challenges of Independence
14. 18 March  The Vietnam War and the Prague Spring of 1968
15. 20 March  Troubles in Poland: From Christmas 1970 to Solidarity, 1980
16. 25 March  Colonel Kukliński and the United States Government
17. 27 March  The 1980s: RYaN, KAL 007, Able Archer
18. 1 April  Spy Wars: Tolkachev, Gordievsky, and Ames
19. 3 April  Sings of Trouble in the USSR: Gorbachev Takes Over
20. 8 April  The Grand Retreat: Perestroika, Glasnost’, Afghanistan
21. 10 April  The Polish Round Table and the Fall of the Berlin Wall
22. 17 April  The Velvet Revolutions in Eastern Europe
23. 22 April  The Yugoslav Tragedy
24. 24 April  From Yeltsin to Putin
25. 29 April  Ukraine: Is It Important?
26. 1 May  Global Turmoil in The New Century
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