

History 4890: Cold War in Asia

Dr. Denise Conover

Main 321J ; Phone 797-0870

Office Hours: T,W 11-noon

email: conoverd@hass.usu.edu (preferred method of contact; office visits are always welcomed)

Textbooks:

Cowley, *The Cold War: A Military History*

Hess, *Vietnam and the United States*

Malkasion, *The Korean War 1950-53*

Tang, *Vietcong Memoir*

Course Rationale:

Today's students, facing a world of multi-decades "War on Terrorism," would be well-served by examining another multi-decade conflict based on fear, ideology, and cultural misunderstanding, as with the Cold War, especially in its Asian phase. From a limited clash between the United States and the Soviet Union over the fate of Germany after World War II to an unlimited, global clash involving the "willing" and the "unwilling," the Cold War conflict (roughly 1946-1991) offers important lessons to all participants, but especially the United States. When President Harry S Truman decided to intervene in the Korean civil war in 1950, his actions had enormous military, constitutional, political, diplomatic implications for the US and the world, not to mention the economic, political, psychological costs for the Koreans and the "Allied" soldiers. Likewise, the evolution of US policy in Vietnam would have enormous repercussions for Asia, the United States, and the rest of the world in terms of economic, military, social, political, diplomatic, and environmental costs. This course explores how these Cold War conflicts in Asia (Korea and Vietnam) impacted American relations with the world and how various Asian countries were affected (especially Vietnam, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Republic of China). Thus, this course allows history and non-history majors alike to acquire a more sophisticated understanding of international relations, cultural misunderstanding, and the impact of modern technology on warfare (for toward the end of the US conflict in Vietnam, the Americans started to develop the laser technology, precision bombing that would play such a transforming role in warfare in the latter part of the 20th century).

Course Goals/Requirements:

--Students will be exposed to diverse historical sources, including documentary films, memoirs, contemporary articles, government documents, maps, and works by professional historians.

--Students will learn how to analyze critically these types of sources

--Students will have a variety of assignments, including a historiographical essay (on Korean War or Vietnam War) and a take-home final essay. (More specific detail on first day of class)

--Students are expected to attend class

--Students are expected to behave as mature, responsible, interested adults

While there are no prerequisites for this class, students are advised to enroll in upper-division history classes after having completed two BHU courses and a BAI course. History 1500 (old Hist. 1020), History 11510, Hist. 1110 (old Hist. 1030 or 1050) fulfills the former, and HIST 2700/10 satisfies the latter.

Tentative Topic (subject to change) ; Reading Schedule will be given on first day

First Week: US-Soviet-Chinese Relations 1945-50; Truman-Stalin-Mao; US-Soviet occupation of Korea

Second Week: Onset of Korean War, China's Role, Japan's Gains

Third Week: Korean War's Impact on Vietnam, US and Cold War

Fourth Week: Kennedy-Johnson Presidencies and the Cold War in Asia: Americanization

Fifth Week: Nixon and "Vietnamization" of Vietnam War

Sixth Week: Vietnamese-Korean-Chinese Perspectives on Vietnam War

Seventh Week: South Asia and Cold War (Soviet-Afghan War and US Involvement)

Eighth Week: Assessment of Cold War's Impact on Asia

Requirements:

Class Attendance and Participation

Six-eight page (typed) paper on the impact of American involvement on Korean and Vietnamese society (based on class, textbooks) (due last day of class—in lieu of final exam)

Book response to Vietcong Memoir (due last day of class)

"In-class Responses" based on class-assigned readings, reaction to video clips, possible quizzes, possible group discussions, etc. (my "elastic clause")

Reading Assignments:

To be given on the first day of class (June 11)