

History 4890: Cold War in Asia (Summer 2008)

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Textbooks:

Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake*

Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*

Tang, *Vietcong Memoir*

Varhola, *Fire & Ice: The Korean War, 1950-1953*

On Reserve:

Cowley, *The Cold War: A Military History*

Hess, *Vietnam and the United States*

Malkasion, *Korean War 1950-53*

Short, *Pol Pot: Anatomy of a Nightmare*

And more

Course Scope:

This course may not meet your original expectations. Last year, History 4890 covered the Korean, American-Vietnamese and Soviet-Afghan conflicts, within the context of the Cold War or Soviet-American rivalry. Subsequently, this course has now been divided into two courses, History 4890 and History 4891 (to be taught spring 2009). History 4890 will now focus on the Korean conflict and its many participants and ramifications. History 4891 will be entitled, Cold War: Vietnam, Afghanistan (covering the conflicts from 1965 to the present). Despite this division, I have included for this course two books dealing with the Vietnam conflict, for those expecting coverage of Vietnam (although Vietnam will be covered in class up to 1965, when the war was “Americanized” by Lyndon Johnson). This class will deal with the major countries involved with the Korean conflict—North and South Korea, Indochina (now Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos), Taiwan, Japan, USSR, China, US. The main textbook will be Oberdorfer’s *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*.

Course Rationale: The purpose for this course is to allow 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 and propaganda. Indeed, the fears, false assumptions, action-reaction cycle of the Cold War participants in the early 1950s offer insights for today’s participants in the War on Terror. While history does not repeat itself exactly (but rather rhymes—as the famous US writer, Mark Twain, supposedly said), it gives us information/knowledge which we can use to cope more fully with events in the present.

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 class-based assignments

--Students are expected to attend class and 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)

First Week: China, Sino-Soviet relations, Korea's wartime division and subsequent Cold War rivalry; Taiwan; Japan's occupation (US) (Oberdorfer, Varhola; electronic reserve material, class handouts)

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: Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China—domestic developments during the post-Korean War era

Fifth Week: The Indochina Factor: Introduction to Vietnam Conflict (read Tang's Viet Cong Memoir)

Sixth Week: Nixon's Détente; Sino-Soviet Conflict; Vietnam Reunification, 1975

Post-1975 East Asia: Laos, Cambodia, the Koreans, Unified Vietnam, Soviet-American-Chinese Relations

Seventh Week: 1980s-90s; Fall of USSR and impact for North Korea

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

Requirements:

1. **Six-eight page (typed) paper on the following option:**

a. **the impact of the Cold War conflict on an Asian society** (People's Republic of China, Republic of China on Taiwan, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, etc. (based on class, textbooks) (due last day of class—in lieu of final exam or Monday, Aug. 4)

b. Some aspect of the Korean conflict—the military struggle, the civilian impact, the superpower rivalry, the impact on Japan or Taiwan or French Indochina, etc. (utilizing textbooks) (due Monday, Aug. 4)

2. **Book response to Viet Cong Memoir** (4-5 pages, typed, single or double-spaced, due last day of class; note—book RESPONSE, not REVIEW) **OR another autobiography/biography of an Asian figure (Mao, Ho, Sukarno, Pol Pot, etc.)**

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

Nature of Textbooks:

Varhola's book provides encyclopedic information about the Koreans, China, the US, battles, etc.

Various reading assignments from the book will be provided in class each week

Oberdorfer's book provides a historical account of both the Korean military conflict and the subsequent development of relations among the Korean War participants until 2001.

Fitzgerald's book provides a historical account of the Vietnamese situation; Tang's book is self-explanatory: a “Viet Cong Memoir”

Read these books at your own pace. Read for the “broad picture” and not minute detail. Many other books may be of value (such as the biography of Pol Pot) on reserve in the Media

Collections department of the USU Library. Also, valuable articles are provided on course reserve.

Electronic Course Reserve Material:

Read two essays under “Background to the Cold War in Asia” during the first week

And class handouts

Read “The Cold War in Indochina 1947-49” and “NLF and Vietnam”

For those interested in Japanese-Americans relations, see on reserve, *The American Occupation of Japan* by Schaller

Also useful is Steven Hugh Lee’s *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam, and the Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949-1954* (on course reserve under Conover)

Another book on the Korean War, on reserve, is Hasting, *The Korean War*