

Course title:	The Cold War
Instructor:	Dr. Robert Teigrob
Email address:	robert.teigrob@torontomu.ca
Track:	B-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS credits:	6
Prerequisites:	Students should be able to speak and read English at the upper intermediate level (B2) or higher.

Course description

Over the course of the Cold War, the city of Berlin was frequently at the centre of global tensions and a potential front line should the superpower rivalry descend into actual war. This course utilizes the city of Berlin as a laboratory in which to examine the origins, nature, and conclusion of the Cold War that defined international relations between 1945 and 1991. We analyze the Allied occupation of the city following the Nazi defeat, the Berlin blockade and airlift that helped solidify the divisions between East and West. Next, we will examine the workers' uprising of 1953 that provoked a Soviet military response. The following sessions will deal with the emigration crisis of the late 1950s that led the Soviets to first threaten a military takeover of the city and eventually to construct the Berlin Wall. Finally, we will look at the fall of the wall and the subsequent reunification of Berlin and Germany.

Field trips to important Cold War sites will permit students to gain a deeper appreciation of how the Cold War changed Berlin, and how events in Berlin influenced the wider international struggle. In order to place the interests and goals of the superpowers in context, we will also discuss the ways in which the Cold War rivalry affected Europe as a whole, as well as Asia and Latin America. Attention will be given to the role of international organizations such as the United Nations in world affairs, and the changes brought about by the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In this way, we will examine the roots of contemporary crises. Students will gain an understanding of the recent past, which will help equip them to evaluate the current and emerging international order.

Student profile

Everyone is welcome to this course. It is ideal for students who have background in modern international relations history and supplements courses on the world wars or global politics/history. However, the course is designed for those without such training who have an interest in international relations. Students planning careers in diplomacy, journalism, or academia will find this course especially beneficial.

Course requirements

This course uses a lecture format with seminars, as well as field trips around Berlin. There is much to cover in a short period of time. Regular attendance will be essential to keep up with the volume of material and pace of the course. As participatory seminars make up a sizeable

portion of the overall grade you will be expected to have completed all the readings, integrate them with lectures, and come ready to discuss the topics.

Required language skills

The language of instruction is English. Language proficiency on an advanced intermediate level (B2) is a prerequisite for participation. For orientation purposes, you can assess your language skills here (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>)

Grading

Active participation: 30%
One short essay: 30%
Final exam: 40%

Readings

A digital reader will be provided. Scholarly readings are an essential component of any course and this will be no different. All the seminars will involve journal articles by a renowned academic in the field. They will also entail the reading of primary documents on various events in the Cold War put together in an edited text. This will provide students an opportunity to be “closer” to some of the dramatic events covered in the course and be exposed to the true craft of historians.

Course schedule

Date	Program*
Tuesday, July 29, 2025	<p>Introduction and Origins of the Cold War (ideological, historical, geo-strategic roots of the conflict)</p> <p>Cold War 1940s (end of WWII, institutionalization phase, atomic diplomacy, spies, crises in Berlin, Eastern Europe, China etc.)</p> <p>Cold War 1950s (Korean War, Eisenhower and the New Look, military-industrial complex, McCarthyism etc.)</p> <p>Field Trip 1 (German-Russian Museum)</p>
Friday, August 1, 2025	<p>Cold War 1950s (transition from Stalin to Khrushchev, Sino-Soviet split, detente, regional conflicts, "missile gap" etc.)</p> <p>Field Trip 2 (Allied Museum)</p>
Tuesday, August 5, 2025	<p>Seminar 1 on assigned readings</p> <p>Cold War 1950s (revolutionary conflicts in Asia, Africa etc., problems within the Blocs, non-alignment, emergence of China, politics of the Cold War in the USA, Berlin Crisis 1958-1961, U2 affair etc.)</p>

	Field Trip 3 (Berlin Wall Memorial)
Friday, August 8, 2025	Cold War Latin America, Cold War 1960s (Kennedy, Cuba, Sino-Soviet split, emergence of the European Economic Community, Berlin Wall etc.) Field Trip 4 (Marienfelde Refugee Center)
Tuesday, August 12, 2025	Seminar 2 on assigned readings Cold War 1960s (detente, Vietnam, Johnson and the Great Society, Brezhnev, Prague Spring, Cultural Revolution etc.) Cold War 1970s (Watergate, Nixon to China, Basic Treaties, Carter era foreign policy, Middle East conflict etc.) Field Trip 5 (Stasi Prison)
Friday, August 15, 2025	Cold War 1970s (Middle East conflicts, arms race escalations, wars and revolution in Africa and Indochina etc.) Field Trip 6 (Karl Marx Allee)
Tuesday, August 19, 2025	Seminar 3 on assigned readings Cold War 1980s (Reagan, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Gorbachev, the end of communism, the Berlin Wall falls etc.) Field Trip 7 (Tränenpalast, Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof)
Friday, August 22, 2025	Final Exam and essay due FUBiS Farewell Ceremony

*Field trips are subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days, class hours may be adjusted.