LT 314 Global Cold War Literatures

Seminar Leader: Kerry Bystrom
Course Times: Monday 13:30-15:00; Wednesday 15:15-16:45
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Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00-12:00

Course Description
The Cold War is often remembered as a conflict between two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, with its quintessential genre the spy thriller. This course explores the literature of the Cold War from a broader perspective. It looks at networks of political and cultural influence that developed between “First,” “Second” and “Third” worlds, and the different genres (socialist realist and postmodern novels, struggle poetry, etc) and specific novels, poems, essays and films through which links of solidarity were fashioned. Building on Bard College Berlin’s situation in former embassy buildings from Angola, Cuba and other countries in the Global South to East Germany, we will focus on the Southern African theater of the Cold War, which included Angola, South Africa, Namibia, and the Congo, and drew in the USSR, the United States, and Cuba and other Latin American nations like Argentina and Chile, in addition to East Germany and other parts of Eastern Europe. We will explore the promises of and repression within “socialist friendship,” as well as the outlines of and the violence wrought by Western anti-Communist "national security doctrine." We will also explore the contemporary legacy of the global Cold War, thinking about how this history continues to shape the present and about how cultural objects and theories outlive the moment of their production. Authors to be considered include John Le Carré, Pablo Neruda, Che Guevara, Milan Kundera, Alicia Partnoy, Roberto Bolaño, and Ondjaki.

Required books:

- Behr, Mark *The Smell of Apples*
- Bolaño, Roberto *Distant Star*
- Kundera, Milan *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*
- La Guma, Alex *In the Fog of the Season’s End*
- Le Carré, John *The Spy who came in from the Cold*
- Ondjaki, Good Morning *Comrades*
- Partnoy, Alicia *The Little School*

Personal copies of books should be purchased at a local bookstore or on-line. There are two-three copies of each required course text in the library on the Reserve Shelf.

Further required readings can be found in the Course Reader (CR) and Reserves Direct (RD).
Learning Objectives

In addition to the Learning Objectives listed in the Module Handbook, this course aims to help you:

- Develop a deeper and multi-polar understanding of the historical Cold War and its continuing impacts on the present
- Recognize and analyze relationships between “form” and “politics” or between “culture” and “power”; for instance the way in which writers, cultural events, literary objects and artistic styles or movements are mobilized towards specific political ends ("cultural diplomacy") as well as the way writers and artists try to shape political realities through their use of both theme and form
- Hone skills in making written arguments that are persuasive, well-structured, and based on textual evidence
- Bridge between problems and questions discussed in class and engagement with our local environment, and convey these connections in effective and creative ways

Requirements

- Active and informed participation in all class sessions and excursions
- Three written essays
- Group project and project presentation

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect your grade for this course.

*Please note: This class is a seminar and is therefore dependent not only on you actually being in class but on the quality of thought and energy you bring. Class sessions often include brainstorming and writing periods, in which you may work alone or with a partner. You will also be asked to select passages, circulate discussion questions or prepare mini-presentations in advance of the class. You are expected to engage in all of these activities. It is crucial that you prepare adequately for each class and bring hard copies of the text(s) we will be discussing with you to the seminar meeting. Please note further that cell phones, laptops, and tablets should be switched off during class sessions.*

Writing Assignments

This course has three written essay assignments. The first is 3pp or 750-1000 words, and the second and third are 5-6pp or 1500-2000 words each. You will receive more detailed instruction sheets and grading rubrics in advance of each essay.
Academic Integrity
In this course, we aim to conduct ourselves as a community of scholars, recognizing that academic study is both an intellectual and ethical enterprise. You are encouraged to build on the ideas and texts of others; that is a vital part of academic life. However, you are also obligated to document every occasion when you use another’s ideas, language, or syntax. When you use another’s ideas or language—whether through direct quotation, summary, or paraphrase—you must formally acknowledge that debt by signaling it in the MLA parenthetical format (http://www.mla.org/style). Please come to see me if you have any questions about when and how to cite. Further note that even one occasion of academic dishonesty, large or small, on any assignment, large or small, will result in reporting of the offense to the Exam Board and may result in failure for the entire course.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers
Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. If I agree to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Group Project
The class will work together throughout the semester to create a group project or projects (depending on student numbers and interests) on the topic of “Remembering Socialist ‘Friendship’” or “Cold War Legacies” connected to our school buildings, the local Pankow neighborhood/community, or Berlin more widely. This could be a website, a short film or radio show, a walking tour for students and neighbors, a temporary exhibition to add to our History Corner, etc. We will as a class generate a grading rubric for assessing individual contributions to the group project(s).

Grade Breakdown
Essay #1: 20%
Essay #2: 25%
Essay #3: 25%
Group Project: 10%
Participation (including informal assignments): 20%

Around the time of Fall Break you will receive a mid-term grade via email. Your final grades will be released in January.

Schedule

**Please note that this schedule is subject to change and it is your responsibility to keep up with the latest assignments and deadlines. Please also note that classes may be rescheduled for Completion Week so you must plan to stay on campus until December 18, 2015**
Part One: Cold War Genres and Cultural Politics

Week 1
Monday August 31 CLASS CANCELLED (rescheduled for completion week)

Wednesday September 2 Introduction

**Required Berlin Weekend event: “Pankow, Politics and Power” walking tour, Saturday September 5 from 10:30-12:30**

Week 2
Monday September 7 Spy Thrillers
Readings ➔ John Le Carré, The Spy Who Came in From the Cold, Ch 1-12 (pp. 1-135)

Wednesday September 9 Spy Thrillers cont’d
Readings ➔ Le Carré, The Spy Who Came in From the Cold, Ch. 13-26 (pp. 136-253)

Week 3
Monday September 14 US-American Cultural Diplomacy
Readings ➔ Odd Arne Westad, “The Empire of Liberty” selection (CR); Saunders, The Cultural Cold War “Introduction” (RD) and “Exquisite Corpse” (CR); Joyce Ulysses selection (CR); Arthur Koestler Darkness at Noon selection (RD)

Wednesday September 16 The USSR and Socialist Realism(s)
Readings ➔ Westad, “The Empire of Justice” selection (CR); A.A. Zdhanov, “Soviet Literature” (CR); Maxim Gorky Mother selection (CR); Bertolt Brecht poetry (RD)
Recommended: Georg Lukás “Realism in the Balance” (RD) and Brecht “Against Georg Lukás” (RD)

Week 4
Monday September 21 “Third World” Cultural Politics
Readings ➔ Westad “The revolutionaries” selection (RD); Frantz Fanon, “National Culture” (CR); Ernesto Che Guevara, “Guerrilla Warfare: A Method” and “Socialism and Man in Cuba” (CR); Pablo Neruda, Canto General selections (CR)

Wednesday September 23 NO CLASS (make-up for Hohenschönhausen Prison field trip)

Essay 1 due Sunday September 27 at 23:59
Part II: Socialist Friendship?

Week 5
Monday September 28 Third-World Socialist Internationalism  
Readings → Gabriel García Márquez, “Operation Carlotta” (CR)  
Film: Cuba, An African Odyssey

Wednesday September 30 Third-World Socialist Internationalism cont’d  
Readings → Cuban and Angolan Resistance Poetry: Agostinho Neto (CR), Waldo Leyva (CR), Antonio Conte Telléz (RD)

Week 6
Monday October 5 South African Socialist Realism?  
Readings → Alex La Guma In the Fog of the Season’s End, Prologue-Chapter 8 (pp. 1-96)  
Recommended: Booker and Juraga, “The Reds and the Blacks” (RD)

Wednesday October 7 South African Socialist Realism? cont’d  
Readings → La Guma In the Fog of the Season’s End, Ch 9-18 (pp. 97-181)

Week 7
Monday October 12 National Security Doctrine and South Atlantic Terror  
Readings → Alicia Partnoy The Little School, “Introduction”-“A Conversation Under the Rain” (pp. 11-76)

Wednesday October 14 National Security Doctrine and South Atlantic Terror cont’d  
Readings → Partnoy The Little School, “A puzzle”-“Appendix: Descriptions of the Guests at the Little School” (pp. 77-136)

Initial Suggestions for Group Projects (one paragraph) due in class

Mon Oct 19-Fri Oct 23 FALL BREAK

Week 8
Monday October 26 Communist Terror and Forms of Resistance  
Readings → Milan Kundera, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, Parts 1-3 (pp. 1-106)

Wednesday October 28 Communist Terror and Forms of Resistance cont’d  
Readings → Kundera, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, Parts 4-5 (pp. 107-212)

**Friday Oct 30 15:15-18:30pm special excursion to Hohenschönhausen Stasi Prison Memorial**

Week 9
Monday November 2 Communist Terror and Forms of Resistance cont’d  
Readings → Kundera, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, Parts 6-7 (pp. 213-312)
Wednesday November 4 The GDR: The Wall and Spy Thrillers Revisited
Readings → Anna Funder, *Stasiland* selection (CR); Julia Franck, “Family Friend” (CR)

**Week 10**
Monday November 9 GDR Cultural Diplomacy

**Part III: Remembering the Cold War**
Wednesday November 11 Remembering Socialist “Friendship”/Cold War Memory in Pankow Today (Group Project work day)

**Essay 2 due at 23:59 on Friday November 13**

**Week 11**
Monday November 16 Poetry and Complicity
Readings → Roberto Bolaño, *Distant Star*, Ch. 1-5 (pp. 1-76)

Wednesday November 18 Poetry and Complicity cont’d
Readings → Bolaño, *Distant Star*, Ch. 6-10 (pp. 77-149)

**Week 12**
Monday November 23 Memory, Violence and Anti-Communist Ideology
Readings → Mark Behr, *The Smell of Apples* (pp. 1-100)

Wednesday November 25 Memory, Violence and Anti-Communist Ideology cont’d
Readings → Behr, *The Smell of Apples* (pp. 101-200)
Recommended: Popescu, “On the margins of the Black Atlantic” (RD)

**Week 13**
Monday November 30 Socialist Nostalgia?
Readings → Ondjaki, *Good Morning Comrades*, Part I (pp. 1-76)

Wednesday December 2 Socialist Nostalgia? cont’d
Readings → Ondjaki, *Good Morning Comrades*, Part II (pp. 77-111)

**Week 14**
Monday December 7 The Ruins of War (and Revolution)
Readings → contemporary South African Poetry (RD)
Film: *O Heroi*
Wednesday December 9 Remembering Socialist “Friendship”/Cold War Memory in Pankow Today (Group Project Work/Presentation Day)

**Week 15 (Completion Week)**  
Monday December 14 NO CLASS (Kerry at ICI conference)

Tuesday December 15 13:30-15:00 Conclusion

**Essay 3 due at 23:59 on Wednesday December 16**

Please note: Group Projects may need to be presented during Completion Week!