

CONNECTED HISTORIES OF THE USA, USSR AND RUSSIA SINCE 1945

Convenors, lecturers and supervisors:

Dr. Bill Foster (whf22), Dr. Mark B. Smith (mbs39)

Course description:

This new Specified Subject aims to bring you into the ‘inner history’ of the Cold War and its aftermath -- in all its social, cultural, political and transnational dimensions -- so that you can explain the course and outcome of Soviet-American hostility in ways that transcend conventional international history. Drawing on a growing comparative historiography, you will explore the similarities and differences in the societies and politics of the two superpowers between c.1945 and c.1991, ranging across such topics as nuclear weapons, urban life, the security state, and human rights. You will observe encounters between all kinds of American and Soviet people: collaborations in the cosmos, cultural exchanges, spy defections, military flashpoints and top-level summits. This will require you to analyse how the two superpowers constructed knowledge about each other, probing the limits and accuracy of the Soviet perception of America and the American perception of the Soviet Union. While the core analytical destination of the Paper is an explanation of the collapse of the USSR and the triumph of America, these journeys across the comparative and connected histories of the USA and USSR will go beyond the end of the Cold War. At the end of the Paper, you will apply your own new historical knowledge to explain the contemporary crisis in relations between the United States and Russia.

Teaching / supervision

- 16 lecture/classes of 1.5 hours each, Michaelmas and Lent Terms
- 6 supervisions, available in Michaelmas and Lent Terms
- 2 revisions classes and 2 revisions supervisions in Easter Term

Supervision capacity

25 (subject to confirmation and review)

Reading list

A complete reading list will be available later. Examples of vacation reading include:

- Kate Brown, ‘Gridded Lives: Why Kazakhstan and Montana are Nearly the Same Place’, *American Historical Review* 106:1 (2001): 17-48
- Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Taylor Downing, *1983: The World at the Brink* (Abacus, 2019)

- Mark Galeotti, *We Need To Talk About Putin: How the West Gets Him Wrong*, (Ebury Press, 2019)
- Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954*. (Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Andrew L. Jenks, *The Cosmonaut Who Couldn't Stop Smiling: The Life and Legend of Yuri Gagarin* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2012)
- Michael McFaul, *From Cold War to Hot Peace: The Inside Story of Russia and America* (Allen Lane, 2018).
- Mary Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890-2010* (Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Andrew Preston, 'The Faith of Harry Truman and the Theology of George Kennan', and 'High Priests of the Cold War' in Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith* (Knopf, 2012) 417-439; 440-464
- David Reynolds and Vladimir Pechatnov (eds), *The Kremlin Letters: Stalin's Wartime Correspondence with Churchill and Roosevelt* (Yale University Press, 2018)
- Sonja Schmidt, *Producing Power: The Pre-Chernobyl History of the Soviet Nuclear Industry* (MIT Press, 2015)
- Mark B. Smith, *The Russia Anxiety: And How History Can Resolve It* (Allen Lane, 2019)
- William Taubman, *Gorbachev: His Life and Times* (Simon and Schuster, 2017)
- Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (Allen Lane, 2017)

March 2021