

## American Studies 445

# The Cold War and American Culture

Dr. Adam Golub  
California State University, Fullerton

"With the source of the evil so elusive and so immune to risk-free retaliation, American culture was politicized. The values and perceptions, the forms of expression, the symbolic patterns, the beliefs and myths that enabled Americans to make sense of reality--these constituents of culture were contaminated by an unseemly political interest in their roots and consequences. The struggle against domestic Communism encouraged an interpenetration of the two enterprises of politics and culture, resulting in a philistine inspection of artistic works not for their content but for the *politique des auteurs*."

Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (1996)

"When you talk about being a member of the Communist party, I'm not so much concerned about whether they have a card in their pocket saying, 'I am a member of the party.' I'm concerned about those men who are doing the job that the Communists want them to do."

Sen. Joseph McCarthy, 1950

"I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions."

Lillian Hellman, 1952

"Patriotism is not the *fear* of something; it is the *love* of something."

Adlai Stevenson, 1952

"I killed more people tonight than I have fingers on my hands. I shot them in cold blood and enjoyed every minute of it... They were Commies... They were red sons-of-bitches who should have died long ago... They never thought that there were people like us in this country. They figured us all to be soft as horse manure and just as stupid."

Mike Hammer in Mickey Spillane's *One Lonely Night* (1951)

"Those who engage in overt acts of perversion lack the emotional stability of normal persons... One homosexual can pollute a Government office."

*Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*, U.S. Senate Report, 1950

"Dr. Kinsey and Senator McCarthy have one thing in common. They both claim to have uncovered a lot of domestic disloyalty."

Sen. Robert Kerr (D-OK), 1953

"America must move forward with the atomic bomb in one hand and the cross in the other."

Rep. Edward Martin (R-PA), 1950

"It must be apparent to a potential aggressor that an attack on the United States would be immediately followed by an immensely devastating air-atomic attack on him. The atomic weapon thus makes offensive and defensive air power in a state of immediate readiness the primary requisite of national survival."

General H.H. Arnold, 1945

"You that never done nothin' / But build to destroy / You play with my world / Like it's your little toy..."

Bob Dylan, "Masters of War" (1963)

"Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room."

President Merkin Muffley in *Dr. Strangelove* (1964)

**The Cold War and American Culture**

AMST 445-01, #16378

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Mondays 4:00-6:45 • EC-011

Instructor: Dr. Adam Golub

Email: agolub@fullerton.edu • Phone: (657) 278-5899 • Office: UH-423

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30-5:30, &amp; by appointment

**Course Description**

This course explores the impact of Cold War geopolitics on U.S. society and culture. Specifically, we will examine the ways in which nationalism, anticommunism, and the atom bomb shaped the cultural conversation surrounding science, technology, childhood, family, education, gender, race, and sexuality. In addition, we will consider how everyday Americans drew on Cold War rhetoric and symbolism to give meaning and purpose to their lives. Throughout the course, we will study how the Cold War influenced the thematic concerns and ideological content of literature, film, and other forms of popular culture. Class meetings will typically include a short lecture, an extended discussion, and an exercise in primary source analysis.

*Course Prerequisite:* Completion of General Education category II.B (new D.3), Historical and Cultural Foundations.

**Required Texts**BooksJohn Hersey, *Hiroshima*David Serlin, *Replaceable You: Engineering the Body in Postwar America*Julia Mickenberg, *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States*Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Cat's Cradle*Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*

All books are available for purchase at Little Professor bookstore, 725 N. Placentia Ave (near the corner of Nutwood and Placentia).

Additional Readings

(available as PDF file and/or web link under "Course Documents" on class Blackboard site)

--"The Bomb" from Yoshiteru Kosakai, *A-Bomb: A City Tells Its Story* (1972)

--"An Overview of the Atomic Bombing," from Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, *Eyewitness Testimonies: Appeals from the A-Bomb Survivors* (2003)

--President Harry S. Truman, "Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey," March 12, 1947 (a.k.a., The Truman Doctrine)

--excerpts from *NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, April 14, 1950

--James F. O'Neil, "How You Can Fight Communism," *American Legion Magazine*, August 1948

--Testimony of J. Edgar Hoover before House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), March 26, 1947

--"100 Things You Should Know about Communism and Education," HUAC, 1948

--Ray Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" (from *The Martian Chronicles*, 1950)

--Betty Friedan, "The Way We Were--1949" (from *It Changed My Life*, 1976)

### Required Films

*Them!* (dir. Gordon Douglas, 1954)

*The Manchurian Candidate* (dir. John Frankenheimer, 1962)

*Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1964)

*Failsafe* (dir. Sidney Lumet, 1964)

*Rocky IV* (dir. Sylvester Stallone, 1985)

You are required to view these films in advance of our scheduled discussions [see course schedule]. They are available on reserve in the library, or you may acquire them on your own through DVD-rental services. You will be expected to discuss these films in your written assignments.

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## Learning Goals

- Students will analyze and evaluate a variety of primary and secondary sources, and synthesize these sources in meaningful ways
- Students will imaginatively and critically forge connections among diverse cultural and historical themes and problems
- Students will develop an interdisciplinary interpretive framework for studying American cultural production in a geopolitical context
- Students will independently apply this interpretive framework to complicated cultural problems and issues from both historical and contemporary perspectives
- Students will develop skills in oral and written communication

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## Course Assignments

### Assignment #1: Atomic Culture

Describe and analyze the impact of the atom bomb on American culture and society in the early years of the Cold War. Your paper must integrate material from *Hiroshima*, *Replaceable You*, "There Will Come Soft Rains," and the film *Them!*. You may include other course material as relevant.

Length: Undergraduate Students: 6 pages • Graduate Students: 8-10 pages

### Assignment #2: Cold War Critiques

Analyze selected works of literature and film that offered a critique of the dominant Cold War paradigm. Your paper must integrate *Learning From the Left* (mention children's literature); at least one of these novels: *Fahrenheit 451*, *Cat's Cradle*; and at least one of these films: *Failsafe*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *The Manchurian Candidate*. Your paper should 1) describe the critique that was offered, 2) explain what dominant beliefs were being questioned or challenged, and 3) evaluate the extent to which you think these texts succeeded in subverting or parodying the Cold War paradigm. You may include other course material as relevant. I strongly recommend you reference some of the material from the source packet (Week 2) in discussing the "dominant" cold war paradigm that these texts are critiquing.

Length: Undergraduate Students: 6 pages • Graduate Students: 8-10 pages

### Assignment #3: Reading Rocky

Analyze the Cold War depiction of "Us vs. Them" in two arenas: 1) popular film and 2) the political rhetoric and ideology of the conservative movement. Your goal is to describe and analyze the image of "Americans" and the image of "communists" as deployed in film (you must use *Rocky IV*) and in conservative political discourse (you must reference *Suburban Warriors*). Your over-arching goal is to write a paper in which you examine the ways in which anticommunism was articulated in the popular culture and political culture of the middle to late Cold War (1960s to 1980s). You may include other course material as relevant [for example, you may want to integrate material from *The Manchurian Candidate* or *Failsafe*].

Length: Undergraduate Students: 6 pages • Graduate Students: 8-10 pages

### Participation

Attendance and class participation make up 10% of your final grade. Upper-division seminars work best when students are actively engaged with the classroom community, concepts, and coursework. Please come to every class prepared to 1) describe the central argument or theme of the assigned reading and/or film; 2) assess the reading/film for its relative strengths and limitations; 3) raise questions about the reading/film; 4) connect the readings/films to one another; 5) connect the readings/films to your broader understanding of contemporary and historical issues in American culture; 6) relate the readings/films to your own experience and/or areas of expertise.

Attendance is required at every class meeting.

### Additional assignment for graduate students

M.A. students are required to read one additional book for the course, selected in consultation with the instructor, and write a 4-5-page response paper that 1) analyzes the author's main argument and methodology and 2) ties the book into larger themes examined in the course.

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## Grading Standards

	<u>Undergraduates</u>	<u>Graduates</u>
Assignment #1, Atomic Culture	30%	20%
Assignment #2, Cold War Critiques	30%	30%
Assignment #3, Reading Rocky	30%	30%
Participation	10%	10%
Book Review (Graduate Students)	N/A	10%

For this course, +/- grading will be used. No extra credit will be offered. Keep all graded work so that any discrepancies can be easily and fairly straightened out. An assignment is considered late if it is not turned in at the beginning of the class session in which it is due. Late assignments will be lowered one mark **per day** (NOT per class meeting) after the due date (for example, C to C-). Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis for legitimate reasons and only when a student asks for an extension at least 24 hours before an assignment is due.

A+ 97-99; A 94-96; A-90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 60-63; F 0-59

## A Note to Graduate Students

In keeping with university-wide requirements for graduate study, graduate students enrolled in this 400-level course will be expected to demonstrate, in both written and oral performance, quality higher than that expected of an undergraduate. Graduate students should demonstrate an advanced level of competence in interdisciplinary cultural analysis and synthesis.

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## Student Accommodations

CSUF complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing a process for disclosing disabilities and arranging for reasonable accommodations. On the CSUF campus, the Office of Disabled Student Services has been delegated the authority to certify disabilities and to prescribe specific accommodations for students with documented disabilities. DSS provides support services for students with mobility limitations, learning disabilities, hearing or visual impairments, and other disabilities. Counselors are available to help students plan a CSUF experience to meet their individual needs. Prior to receiving this assistance, documentation from a qualified professional source must be submitted to DSS. For more information, please contact DSS in UH 101; phone 657-278-3117.

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## Academic Integrity

Integrity is an essential component of all students' academic experience. Students who violate university standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions, including failure in the course and suspension from the university. Since dishonesty in any form harms the individual, other students, and the university, policies on academic integrity are strictly enforced. I expect that you will familiarize yourself with the academic integrity guidelines found in the current student handbook. [<http://www.fullerton.edu/handbook/>]

Cheating is defined as obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent, or unauthorized means, or helping someone commit an act of academic dishonesty. (UPS 300.021). Examples include, but are not limited to:

*Unacceptable examination behavior:* communicating with fellow students, copying material from another student's exam or allowing another student to copy from an exam, possessing or using unauthorized materials, or any behavior that defeats the intent of an exam.

*Plagiarism:* taking the work of another and offering it as one's own without giving credit to that source, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.

*Unauthorized collaboration* on a project, homework or other assignment where an instructor expressly forbids such collaboration.

*Documentary falsification*, including forgery, altering of campus documents or records, tampering with grading procedures, fabricating lab assignments, or altering medical excuses.

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**Course Schedule (subject to revision)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Due</b>
M, Aug. 24	<p><b>Introduction to Course</b></p> <p><u>Discussion</u>: The Scorpion and the Tarantula</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film screening: <i>The Atomic Cafe</i> (1982)</li> </ul>	
M, Aug. 31	<p><b>Security and Insecurity in the Postwar Era</b></p> <p><u>Lecture</u>: Origins of the Cold War: A Long History  <u>Discussion and Primary Source Analysis</u>: Source Packet</p>	<p><u>Read</u>: Source Packet from the early Cold War (Blackboard)</p>
M, Sept. 7	<b>NO CLASS: Labor Day</b>	
M, Sept. 14	<p><b>Atomic Culture</b></p> <p><u>Lecture</u>: Atomic Spaces, Atomic Anxiety, and Atomic Espionage  <u>Discussion and Primary Source Analysis</u>: <i>Hiroshima, Them!</i>, "There Will Come Soft Rains"</p>	<p><u>Read</u>: <i>Hiroshima</i>, Chapters 1-4</p> <p><u>Read</u>: Ray Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" (1950) (Blackboard)</p> <p><u>View</u>: <i>Them!</i></p>
M, Sept. 21	<p><b>Manliness and the Cold War</b></p> <p><u>Discussion</u>: <i>Replaceable You</i>  <u>Primary Source Analysis</u>: "Raise Your Boy to Be a Soldier" (1952), "How Fit Are Our Youth"? (1959), "Cultural Lag and Masculinity" (1962)</p>	<p><u>Read</u>: <i>Replaceable You</i>, Introduction and Chapter 1</p>
M, Sept. 28	<p><b>The Politics of Gender and Sexuality</b></p> <p><u>Lecture</u>: Countersubversion and Counterperversion  <u>Discussion</u>: <i>Replaceable You</i></p>	<p><u>Read</u>: <i>Replaceable You</i>, Chapters 2, 3, and 4</p>
M, Oct. 5	<p><b>Childhood and Family in the Cold War</b></p> <p><u>Lecture</u>: Domestic Containment  <u>Discussion</u>: <i>Learning from the Left</i> and Friedan  <u>Primary Source Analysis</u>: "The Children of Conformity" (1957); William H. Whyte, "The New Illiteracy" (1953)</p>	<p><u>Read</u>: <i>Learning From the Left</i>, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2</p> <p><u>Read</u>: Betty Friedan, "The Way We Were--1949" (Blackboard)</p>

M, Oct. 12	<p><b>Anticommunism in Popular Culture</b></p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> McCarthyism  <u>Discussion and Primary Source Analysis:</u> <i>The Manchurian Candidate</i> and excerpts from Mickey Spillane's writing</p>	<p><u>Due:</u> <b>Assignment #1: Atomic Culture</b></p> <p><u>View:</u> <i>The Manchurian Candidate</i></p>
M, Oct. 19	<p><b>Education and the Cold War</b></p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Schooled in the Cold War  <u>Discussion:</u> <i>Learning from the Left</i>  <u>Primary Source Analysis:</u> "Teach the Concepts of Democracy" (1950); "Schoolboys Point Up U.S. Weakness" (1958); "The Soviet Union: A Nation Committed to Education" (1959)</p>	<p><u>Read:</u> <i>Learning from the Left</i>, Chapters 3, 4, 6</p>
M, Oct. 26	<p><b>Culture as Weapon: Propaganda, Censorship, and Cultural Diplomacy</b></p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Coca-Colonization and the Mass Culture Debates  <u>Discussion and Primary Source Analysis:</u> <i>Fahrenheit 451</i></p>	<p><u>Read:</u> <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (all)</p>
M, Nov. 2	<p><b>Cold War, Hot War, Black Humor</b></p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> The Cold War in the Sixties  <u>Discussion and Primary Source Analysis:</u> <i>Cat's Cradle</i>, <i>Dr. Strangelove</i></p>	<p><u>Read:</u> <i>Cat's Cradle</i> (Chs. 1-66)</p> <p><u>View:</u> <i>Dr. Strangelove</i></p>
M, Nov. 9	<p><b>Subverting Cold War Culture</b></p> <p><u>Discussion and Primary Source Analysis:</u> <i>Cat's Cradle</i>, <i>Dr. Strangelove</i>, <i>Failsafe</i></p>	<p><u>Read:</u> <i>Cat's Cradle</i> (Chs. 67-127)</p> <p><u>View:</u> <i>Failsafe</i></p>
M, Nov. 16	<p><b>The Rise of Conservatism</b></p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Postwar Political and Religious Culture  <u>Discussion:</u> <i>Suburban Warriors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film screening: excerpts from <i>Mr. Conservative: Goldwater on Goldwater</i> (2006)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Due:</u> <b>Assignment #2: Cold War Critiques</b></p> <p><u>Read:</u> <i>Suburban Warriors</i>, Introduction and Chapter 1</p>
M, Nov. 23	<b>NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break</b>	

M, Nov. 30	<p><b>Rocky, Reagan, and the Reds</b></p> <p><u>Lecture</u>: Reagan and the Cold War  <u>Discussion</u>: <i>Suburban Warriors</i>  <u>Primary Source Analysis</u>: <i>Rocky IV</i></p>	<p><u>Read</u>: <i>Suburban Warriors</i>, Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, Epilogue   <u>View</u>: <i>Rocky IV</i></p>
M, Dec. 7	<p><b>The Cold War in Popular Memory and Contemporary Political Discourse</b></p> <p><u>Discussion</u>: Legacies of the Cold War</p>	
F, Dec. 11		<p><u>Due</u>: <b>Assignment #3: Reading Rocky</b>, in American Studies office, UH-313, by 4 PM.</p>