COURSE DETAIL

THE COLD WAR
Country Hong Kong
Host Institution University of Hong Kong
Program(s) University of Hong Kong
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) History
UCEAP Course Number 120
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title THE COLD WAR
UCEAP Transcript Title THE COLD WAR
UCEAP Quarter Units 5.00
UCEAP Semester Units 3.30

Course Description

The Cold War is never dead. It’s not even the Cold War, to paraphrase Faulkner. We are told that we are about to enter Cold War 2.0, or that we might already be living in it. We are often confronted in the media with Cold War parallels: the language of liberty, rivalry and other Cold War neologisms are everywhere on the rise. Not least, Cold War historians themselves are among the most vocal in reminding the public of the contemporary relevance of their expertise. On the face of it, this makes the historical category of analysis we call “the Cold War” a rather flexible one. What is being analogized here? Why can we not see the present day as something new under the sun, and therefore call it something new? And ultimately, what politics is this historical thinking answering to? And of course, the very fact of that plasticity calls into question not just the current usage of the historical term in its second reincarnation, but in its first incarnation as well. What, ultimately, was the Cold War? Can it be both the old traditional era, as well as the new one at the same time? Should it demarcate the whole of the history of the second half of the 20th century? Or should it be used as a rather more discreet term delimited to the bilateral relationship between two nations, as the term was initially used?

This course will concern itself mostly with those analytical questions. In other words, rather than reviewing a history of crises and high political stakes we unquestioningly term the Cold War, the course, while delivering the bare bones of this history, will concern itself with the analytical category itself. Historians are a fractious bunch, but historians of the Cold War have been especially quarrelsome. What were their arguments with one another about? Can we read history politically? How about culturally? Does using the “Cold War” as the encompassing historical category it has become illuminate more than it obscures? And what ultimately was the Cold War?

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
HIST2053

Host Institution Course Title THE COLD WAR
Host Institution Course Details
Host Institution Campus
Host Institution Faculty
Host Institution Degree
Host Institution Department
Course Last Reviewed 2024-2025

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