

*LT 314 Global Cold War Literatures*

**Seminar Leader:** Prof. Dr. Kerry Bystrom

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**Office Hours:** by appointment

Course Description

The Cold War is often seen as a conflict between two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, with its quintessential genre the spy thriller. This course moves from the spy thriller to a broader vision. It looks at networks of political and cultural influence that developed between “First,” “Second” and “Third” worlds from the 1940s to the 1990s, and the different events, genres and specific novels, poems, and essays through which affiliation and solidarity were fashioned. We take Berlin as a touchpoint, first as a key site in the struggle for influence between East, West and South which played out through organizations like the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom in the wake of World War II, and then—building on Bard College Berlin's situation in former embassy buildings from Angola, Cuba and other countries in the Global South to East Germany—as a hub of activity around the Southern African theater of the Cold War. This included Angola, South Africa, and Namibia, and drew in the USSR, the United States, and Cuba and other Latin American nations like Chile, in addition to East Germany and other parts of Eastern Europe. Looking at canonized and less-known works through the lens of the Cold War's “competing imperialisms” (Popescu), we will explore the promises of and repression within “Socialist friendship” as well as the ideal of “liberty” and the violence wrought in its name by Western anti-Communism. We will think through different visions of the relation between writing and politics circulating during the Cold War, and locate literature within a wider field of cultural diplomacy. We will also ask what is at stake in remembering and representing the global Cold War today. Course authors include John Le Carré, George Orwell, Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, Milan Kundera, Alex La Guma, Wole Soyinka, Cristina Garcia and Ondjaki. Assignments will be three short essays and a creative or critical project focused on Cold War memory and contemporary cultural diplomacy in Berlin.

Required books

- Behr, Mark *The Smell of Apples*
- Garcia, Cristina *Dreaming in Cuban*
- 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 or Granma Nineteen and the Soviet's Secret* (TBC)
- Orwell, George *1984*

Personal copies of the listed books (hard copy or digital) should be purchased at a local bookstore or on-line. Copies of each required course text are also available on the Library Reserve Shelf.

Further required readings can be found as files in our Google Classroom (GC).

## 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 primary textual evidence and secondary scholarship
- 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
- Creative project and project presentation

## Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation. Additional absences may be excused with the permission of the instructor and pending agreed-upon make-up work or (when possible) remote participation. Bard College Berlin may not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

*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.

## 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. Please note that Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

### **Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

### **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 the Cold War in Today's Berlin" connected to our school buildings, the local Pankow neighborhood/community, or Berlin more widely. This could be a proposal for a short film or TV series; a podcast or video with interviews; a magazine or website with reviews of recent exhibitions, books or film; a map/walking tour description reflecting on the contemporary meanings of Cold War icons; etc. We will as a class generate a grading rubric for assessing individual contributions to the project(s).

### **Grade Breakdown**

Essay #1: 20%

Essay #2: 25%

Essay #3: 25%

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.

### Accessibility

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, ([accommodations@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:accommodations@berlin.bard.edu)) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for longer-term accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker ([j.harker@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:j.harker@berlin.bard.edu)) or Maria Anderson-Long ([m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu)).

### Schedule

*\*\*Please note that this schedule is provisional; dates may change and it is your responsibility to stay up to date\*\**

#### *Part One: Cultural Politics and the Global Cold War: First, Second and Third Worlds*

##### Week 1

**Wednesday Sept 4** Introduction to the Cultural Cold War: Visions of Germany

Readings:

- Kerry Bystrom, Monica Popescu and Katherine Zien, “Introduction: The Cultural Cold War and the Global South” (GC)
- *Deutschland 83*, episode 1 (UFA: Anna Winger and Jörg Winger, 2015) (in class)

**Friday September 6** Introduction to the Cultural Cold War: Visions of Germany cont'd

Readings:

- John Le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, Ch 1-12 (pp. 1-135)

*\*\*Required Berlin Weekend event: Tour of Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial/ Stasi Prison, Sunday September 8, 1:15-3:15\*\**

Week 2

**Wednesday September 11** Introduction to the Cultural Cold War: Visions of Germany cont'd

Readings:

- John Le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, Ch 13-26 (pp. 136-253)

**Friday September 13** US-American Cultural Diplomacy

Readings:

- Odd Arne Westad, “The Empire of Liberty” selection (GC)
- Frances Stoner Saunders, “Exquisite Corpse” (GC)
- Congress for Cultural Freedom, “Manifesto” (GC)
- TS Eliot, “The Wasteland” (GC)
- Recommended: Michael Warner, “Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom” (GC); Andrew Rubin, “Transnational Literary Spaces at War” (GC)

Week 3

**Wednesday September 18** Western Anti-communism and Dystopia

Readings:

- George Orwell, *1984* (Part One)

**Friday September 20** Western Anti-communism and Dystopia cont'd

Readings:

- George Orwell, *1984* (Part Two)

Week 4

**Wednesday September 25** Western Anti-communism and Dystopia cont'd

Readings:

- George Orwell, *1984* (Part Three)

**Friday September 27** The USSR and Socialist Realism(s)

Readings:

- Odd Arne Westad, “The Empire of Justice” selection (GC)
- A.A. Zhdanov, “Soviet Literature” (GC)
- Maxim Gorky *Mother* selection (GC)
- Bertolt Brecht poetry (GC)
- Recommended: Rossen Djagalov, “Introduction: Between Internationalism and Postcolonialism” (GC); “The Zone of Freedom?” (GC)

Week 5

**Wednesday October 2** “Third World” Cultural Politics

Readings:

- Christopher J. Lee and Anne Garland Mahler, “The Bandung Era, Non-alignment and the Third Way Literary Imagination” (GC)
- Frantz Fanon, “On National Culture” (GC)
- Ernesto Che Guevara, “Socialism and Man in Cuba” (GC)
- Pablo Neruda, Canto General selection (GC)

**Friday October 4** NO CLASS (make-up for Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial field trip)

**Essay 1 due Sunday October 6 at 23:59**

Part Two: Socialist Friendship?

Week 6

**Wednesday October 9** South African Socialist Realism?

Readings:

- Alex La Guma *In the Fog of the Season's End*, Prologue-Chapter 8 (pp. 1-96)

**Friday October 11** South African Socialist Realism? cont'd

Readings:

- Alex La Guma *In the Fog of the Season's End*, Ch 9-18 (pp. 97-181)

Week 7

**Wednesday October 16** Debating “The Writer” in Cold War Africa

Readings:

- Wole Soyinka “The Writer in a Modern African State” (pp. 14-21) plus responses by Alex la Guma, John Nagenda, James Ngugi and Lewis Nkosi (pp. 21-27) and Dennis Brutus (33-34), from the 1967 African-Scandinavian Writers Conference Proceedings, *The Writer in Modern Africa* (GC)
- Monica Popescu, “Pens and Guns: Literary Autonomy, Artistic Commitment and Secret Sponsorships” (GC)

**Friday October 18** Third-World Socialist Internationalism: Cuba and Angola

Readings:

- Gabriel García Márquez, “Operation Carlotta” (GC)
- Cuban and Angolan Resistance Poetry (GC)
- *Cuba: An African Odyssey* (dir. Jihan El-Tahri, 2007) Part II (in class)

FALL BREAK

Week 8

**Wednesday October 30** Communist Terror and Forms of Resistance

Readings:

- Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Parts 1-3 (pp. 1-106)

**Friday November 1** Communist Terror and Forms of Resistance cont'd

Readings:

- Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Parts 4-5 (pp. 107-212)

Week 9

**Wednesday November 6** Communist Terror and Forms of Resistance cont'd

Readings:

- Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Parts 6-7 (pp. 213-312)

**Friday November 8** GDR Cultural Diplomacy + Pankow History Walk

Readings:

- Dennis Brutus, “The View from Berlin,” Berlin International Literature Days (GC)
- Boaventure Ndikung, “Echoes der Brüderlander” pp. 22-23 (GC)
- Brigitte H. Schultz, “The Politics of East-South Relations: The GDR in Southern Africa” (GC)
- Quinn Slobodian, “Socialist Chromatism: Race, Racism and the Racial Rainbow in East Germany” (GC)

**Part Three: Remembering the Cold War**

Week 10

**Wednesday Nov 13** Cold War Memory in Berlin Today: The Wall Revisited

Readings:

- Anna Funder, *Stasiland* Chapter 2 (GC)
- Julia Franck, “Family Friend” (GC)

**Friday November 15** Cold War Memory in Berlin Today: Project Work Day

**Essay 2 due at 23:59 on Sunday November 17**

Week 11

**Wednesday November 20** Memory, Violence and Anti-Communist Ideology

Readings:

- Mark Behr, *The Smell of Apples* (pp. 1-100)

**Friday November 22** Memory, Violence and Anti-Communist Ideology cont'd

Readings:

- Mark Behr, *The Smell of Apples* (pp. 101-200)

Week 12

**Wednesday November 27** Revolution's Intergenerational Impacts

Readings:

- Cristina Garcia, *Dreaming in Cuban*, Ordinary Seductions (pp. 1-104)

**Friday November 29** Revolution's Intergenerational Impacts cont'd

Readings:

- Cristina Garcia, *Dreaming in Cuban*, Imagining Winter (pp. 105-209) and The Languages Lost (210-245)

Week 13

**Wednesday December 4** Socialist Nostalgia?

Reading:

- South African poetry selection (GC)
- Ondjaki, *Good Morning Comrades*, Part I (pp. 1-76) or *Granma Nineteen and the Soviet's Secret* (pp. 9-91)

**Friday December 6** Socialist Nostalgia? cont'd

Readings:

- Ondjaki, *Good Morning Comrades*, Part II (pp. 77-111) or *Granma Nineteen and the Soviet's Secret* (pp. 92-167)

Week 14

**Wednesday December 11** Cold War Memory in Berlin Today: Project Work Day

**Friday December 13** Conclusion + Cold War Memory in Berlin Today Presentation Day

Week 15 (Completion Week)

Wednesday December 18 hold in case of rescheduling

**Essay 3 due at 23:59 on Wednesday December 18**

Friday December 20 hold in case of rescheduling



