

HIST 5310 – Seminar in History

Spring 2026

Mondays, 6:00-8:45PM – CAS 104

3 Credit Hours

Dr. Colin Snider

CAS 118

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Office Hours:

Mondays, 10:00-12:00

Tuesdays, 11:00-12:30

Or by appointment

Research and writing in selected areas of history. May be repeated for credit when content changes.

Description

This course is designed to allow you to develop and refine your research and writing skills at a level appropriate to graduate work. Using the Cold War as our lens, this semester will be split into two halves. In the first half, you will read a variety of primary and secondary sources, familiarizing yourself with ways to question and analyze primary historical materials, to construct arguments around them, and to situate your analysis and arguments within broader historiographical debates. The second half of the semester will allow you to research and write a scholarly paper appropriate to Master's-level work.

Objectives

Given its focus on research, analysis, and writing, in this course you will:

- Develop critical thinking skills that reflect an ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information while improving creative thinking, innovation, and inquiry.
- Develop written and oral communication skills that reflect your ability to develop, interpret, and express your own ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- Develop a sense of social responsibility that reflects intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in local, regional, national, and global communities.
- Develop a sense of personal responsibility that the ability to connect individual choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

More specifically, in accordance with the Student Learning Outcomes as they pertain to the material in this course, you will:

- Develop your ability to analyze primary sources and to compare them as you construct original arguments based on that analysis and comparison
- Develop your ability to evaluate scholarship and identify areas for innovation in research
- Develop your ability to interpret primary and secondary materials to synthesize a historical narrative and formulate an original argument
- Develop your ability to formulate your original arguments and their place within broader scholarship in both written and oral formats

Required Readings

Students are required to complete *all* of the readings for the course. As this is a graduate readings seminar, students are expected to complete an average of 250-400 pages of reading a week. Required readings are:

Alexievich, Svetlana. *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets*, Random House, 2017

Barney, Timothy. *Mapping the Cold War: Cartography and the Framing of America's International Power*. University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Cullather, Nick. *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954*. Stanford University Press, 2006.

Fleming, Ian. *From Russia With Love*. William Morrow Paperbacks, 2023.

Guevara, Ernesto Ch. *Congo Diary: Episodes of Revolutionary War in the Congo*. Seven Stories Press, 2021.

Sattamini, Lina Penna. *A Mother's Cry: A Memoir of Politics, Prison, and Torture under the Brazilian Military Dictatorship*. Duke University Press, 2010.

Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History*. Basic Books, 2019.

Suggested supplemental resources:

Students seeking general guidelines, aides, or pointers in the broader aspects of writing and analysis for this course are welcome to consult the following works for questions of style and format.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 18th Edition. University of Chicago Press, 2024.

Turabian, Kate L. A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers. Ninth Edition. University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Course Requirements:

I. Attendance and Participation – 10%

As we meet in class in the first half of the semester, students are expected to contribute through analyses of the readings, exchange of ideas, and otherwise engage in respectful and constructive academic discussions based on the readings. **Two unexcused absences will result in a Zero (0) for Attendance and Participation.**

II. Written assignments

1. Weekly Analyses – 35% (5% each week)

In the first half of the semester, students will actively engage with the readings through weekly analyses. These will take one of two forms: book reviews, and reflections based on the interpretation of primary materials.

- A. **Book reviews:** You will write an academic-level book review for Westad's *The Cold War* and Barney's *Mapping the Cold War*. These reviews should be 800 words in length and fulfill the basic duties of a scholarly book review. Guidelines on how to review a monograph will be made available on Canvas. With the exception of the first week, these will be due by **3:30PM on the assigned day** (see Course Schedule below).
- B. **Interpretive Reflections:** For our primary source readings (Alexievich's *Secondhand Time*, Cullather's *Secret History*, Fleming's *From Russia with Love*, Guevara's *Congo Diary*, and Sattamini's *A Mother's Cry*), you will write a 400-500 word reflection **each week** that considers how to approach that week's reading as a primary source and begins to interpret the reading. These reflections will include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - An original argument that you would build based on your analysis of the reading
 - Any secondary arguments you would build
 - How you would construct that argument, pointing to examples/texts from the reading
 - Questions you would be engaging with within the broader historiography
 - Identifying the type(s) of historical analysis (political, social, cultural, economic, etc.) your argument engages with
 - Identifying any conceptual framework(s) that your argument could employ, and articulating how you would employ it

- Potential original contributions of your argument and limitations of your argument or approach to your sources

These reflections are due by **3:30PM on the assigned day** (see Course Schedule below).

2. Original Research Paper – 45%

Even as we meet in the first half of the semester, you will begin to design an original research topic. You will spend the semester conducting research and writing an original research paper of **6500-7000 words (not including footnotes)** in length. The paper will be assessed on originality of research, depth of research, clarity of expression, nuanced historical analysis, and clarity of argument and its place in broader historiography.

III. Oral Presentations – 10%

At the end of the semester, you will provide a conference-style presentation of your original research. This is **not** a reading of your research paper, but rather an adaptation of the fuller paper into a more presentable, more concise version. You will present your research for 15 minutes. This assignment will help you learn to translate your thorough research into a form appropriate to public presentation and will prepare you for presenting at conferences, to public groups, or in other public settings. The oral presentation will be assessed based on clarity, concision, and professionalism, and is worth 10% of your final grade.

Grades

Based on the assignments outlined above, students' grades will be determined on the traditional grading scale (A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 60-69%; F: 0-59%) and will break down as follows:

Attendance and Participation	10%
Weekly Analyses (5% each)	35%
Research Paper (6500-7000 words)	45%
Oral Presentation	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Academic Integrity

In line with university policies and procedures, **any and all cases of plagiarism or collusion will result in an automatic 0 (zero) for the assignment**. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit. Collusion includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. For the full description of policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty at UT Tyler, see <https://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8-student-conduct-discipline-final.pdf>.

Course Policies on Artificial Intelligence

While AI has utility in some types of work, for the purposes of the types of analytical work we will be engaging in and the need for you to process and develop your own ideas and writing skills, **AI is not permitted in this course at all**. I expect all work you submit for this course to be your own. The purpose of these assignments is to provide your own original analysis while engaging with the process of producing knowledge through your own analysis. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence

assistance, is best for your efforts in engaging with the human past and in developing skills that machines cannot replicate. For this course, **the use of any generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools – INCLUDING GRAMMARLY – for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming, is expressly prohibited.** Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values and will result in an automatic 0 (zero) for the assignment with no chance for resubmission and with referral to Student Affairs for academic dishonesty.

Course Schedule

Readings listed under each week must be completed in time for class that week.

Week 1 (1/12)

Reading: Westad, *The Cold War*; Book Review due by 8:00AM Saturday, January 17

Week 2 (1/19) – Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No Class

Week 3 (1/26)

Reading: Cullather, *Secret History*; Weekly Analysis due by 3:30PM on Monday

Week 4 (2/2)

Reading: Fleming, *From Russia with Love*; Weekly Analysis due by 3:30PM on Monday

Week 5 (2/9)

Reading: Barney, *Mapping the Cold War*; Book Review due by 3:30 PM on Monday

Week 6 (2/16)

Reading: Guevara, *Congo Diary*; Weekly Analysis due by 3:30PM on Monday

Week 7 (2/23)

Readings: Sattamini, *A Mother's Cry*; Weekly Analysis due by 3:30PM on Monday

Week 8 (3/2)

Reading: Alexievich, *Secondhand Time*; Weekly Analysis due by 3:30PM on Monday

Weeks 9-14 – Research & Writing; Class does not meet

Week 15 (4/20) – Oral Presentations

Finals Week (4/27) – Oral Presentations (Continued)

Final Paper due by 6:00PM Monday, April 27