



## Six Key Decisions in Designing the Cold War Hybrid Course

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Note: this material corresponds with the sample syllabus and class schedule for the hybrid course: Cold War History

### **Q1. Who is likely to be enrolled in the course, and what does this enrollment imply?**

A. The course is for undergraduates who may or may not have completed a courses in world history and who may or may not be majoring in history. This means that the course design should allow time for reflection and reviews of material and that the pace of the course should be slow to moderate.

### **Q2. What is the purpose of the course?**

A. The cardinal purpose of the course is to introduce students to the Cold War and to improve their understanding of how tensions between the United States and Soviet Union influenced the development of modern nations, created the arms race, and impacted civil liberties and rights across the globe. The secondary purpose of the course is to improve students' understanding of historiography and critical reading of historical narratives.

### **Q3. Given the likely enrollment and purpose of the course, what is the appropriate scope and depth of the curriculum?**

A. The scope of the course is organically defined as the period between 1945 and 1991; it is further narrowed by the intention to introduce the Cold War and its impact on global events. This means that although a global perspective is taken, topics in the course will be confined to the immediate concerns of Cold War agendas, for example: although the Vietnam War could engage students in the exploration of American counter-culture, student demands for revisions of liberal arts education, and post-traumatic stress in veteran populations, the inquiry will be confined to information germane to understanding causes, effects, and the role of the war in Cold War diplomacy and foreign relations.

The desire to improve students' understanding of historiography and critical reading of historical narratives necessitates that exercises specifically cultivating and forming these skills should be insinuated into the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

### **Q4. How can course materials be designed to help student stay organized and be successful?**

A. The syllabus, the course schedule, and all learning materials should be posted on-line in an accessible manner. The course schedule should provide clear directions on assignments, a suggested time commitment for each assignment, test days, and deadlines for submitting work. A statement in the

syllabus about the students' responsibility to contribute to the on-line forums, check e-mails, and independently complete on-line learning activities may be helpful.

**Q5. What kind of course materials will help students learn in a hybrid format?**

A. In this particular case, the instructor found it useful to provide students with the following materials that could be accessed on-line, in an iLearn format:

- A glossary of key vocabulary and important people
- List of academic journals carrying articles on cold War
- Description of writing assignments with grading rubric
- Map file
- PDF file
- PowerPoint file
- Video file
- On-line syllabus with class schedule

**Q6. What is the best way to assess the quality of student participation in on-line discussions?**

A. Remember, the presence of the instructor in the on-line forum reinforces the students' sense that the instructor is committed to student learning and interested in students' thoughts. The best way to assess the quality of student participation in on-line discussions is to monitor the discussions at least twice a week and to consider the following:

- Did students meet the minimum requirements for posting responses?
- Did students exceed the minimum requirements for posting responses?
- Did the responses reflect sufficient or exemplary critical thinking?
- Did the responses reflect respect for others who had different perspectives?
- Did I provide prompt feedback on student postings that recognizes important insights, redirects muddled thinking, and guides students to materials they may have overlooked?
- Should I make an appointment with any individual students to provide additional guidance on how to effectively participate in the forum?