Approaching Cold War History

1. Importance of Cold War history
   Importance of the September 11 tragedy and Cold War history

2. Explaining the course

3. Approaches to Cold War History
   a. Gallen and William Harvey
   b. Superpower confrontation
   c. Nuclear dimension

4. Emphasis in this course:
   a. the role of ideology
      How did the Marxist ideology shape and determine Soviet foreign policy? Is it true that US foreign policy lacked a coherent ideology? If US policy is also motivated by an ideology, what kind of ideology was it?
   b. Perceptions/misperceptions
      How did the United States and the Soviet Union perceived each other? How accurate were their perceptions? If there were misperceptions, what consequences did they have in the course of events? What caused these misperceptions?
   c. the role of leadership
      How important were the leaders who crafted foreign policies? Did personalities (Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush) play an important role?
   d. the role of the third parties:
      What role did the third party (Mao, Castro, Ulbricht, Ho Chi Minh and others) play in shaping the events of the Cold War?
   e. counterfactual suppositions:
      Did what happened have to happen? Were there any alternatives? Why were these alternatives not taken? Had these alternatives taken, what might have been the consequences?

5. Important factors not covered by this course
   a. Cold War culture and domestic implications of the Cold War
   b. Linkage with economic factors
   c. Role of intelligence