

HTS 3067A -- REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS  
IN THE MODERN WORLD

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Spring 2005  
M, W, F, 10:00 a.m.

The twentieth century has been an age of revolutions, terrorism, and upheavals that have radically transformed the lives of millions of men and women. In the wake of the devastating terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, Americans have become increasingly concerned to understand the nature, development, and significance of such movements.

This course will begin by presenting a film depicting a classic revolutionary situation and by discussing some of the major theories of how and why revolutionary movements occur. Then we shall focus on four key twentieth-century upheavals--the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Chinese Communist Revolution, the Vietnam War, and the recent revolutionary movements in Central America (especially Nicaragua and El Salvador). In each case, we shall consider three primary questions: (1) What were the preconditions for the revolution or upheaval? (2) How was power seized? (3) What pattern of development did the movement take after the seizure of power? We shall place special emphasis on the relationship between individual leadership and larger social forces in these movements, as well as on the policy questions that these upheavals raise for the United States.

Many different approaches have been taken toward the study of revolutions and other profound social and political transformations. On the one hand, critics of revolutions have dismissed them as an aberration and an inappropriate response to social disorder, and have sought to keep revolutions from happening or to defeat them when they occur. On the other hand, supporters of revolution, most notably the Marxists, have waxed enthusiastic about revolutions and have tried to instigate and direct revolutionary change based on elaborate theories of historical development. Our approach in this course will be somewhat more modest than either the pro- or anti-revolutionary theorists. Following the lead of Crane Brinton in his Anatomy of Revolution, we shall attempt to formulate some tentative generalizations about the process of change in four twentieth-century revolutionary movements and to suggest the broader significance of such movements in the modern world.

Evaluation in the course will be based on three mid-semester exams (indicated in the outline on the next page), on class participation, on a book review or research paper, and on a final comprehensive exam. The exams will be based both on the required readings and on the lecture-discussions.

The required books provide introductions to the different revolutionary movements we are studying:

Jack A. Goldstone, ed., Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies, 2d ed. (Library reserve)  
 Shiela Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 2d ed.  
 Edwin E. Moise, Modern China: A History, 2d ed.  
 Marilyn B. Young, The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990  
 Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America, 2d ed., rev. and enl.

The class sessions will combine lecture and discussion, as well as films and possible outside speakers. Since the required readings provide only a taste of the extensive literature about these movements, each student will be expected, in addition, to write either a book review or research paper on one of these revolutions or a related movement. The book review or research paper should be between 6 to 10 pages in length. More detailed instructions will be given in class. This special work will allow each student to gain greater understanding of a particular revolution and will encourage more lively and well-informed class discussions.

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**PLEASE TAKE CAREFUL NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

*Students are expected to ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY, come ON TIME at the scheduled beginning of class (NO LATER THAN 10:05 a.m.), and be ready to PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS on the assigned readings.*

*More than 6 unexcused absences from class (2 weeks of class) will be grounds for reduction in the student's overall course grade by as much as one full level (10 points).*

*Throughout this course, all students are expected to follow the Georgia Tech Honor Code.*

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**OUTLINE OF CLASS SESSIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS:**

*I. Introduction to the Study of Revolutions*

January 10, 12, 14, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28, 31

Film: "The Battle of Algiers"

Readings:

Crane Brinton, Anatomy of Revolution, pp. 3-26, 237-271

James C. Davies, "Toward A Theory of Revolutions"

Jack A. Goldstone, ed., Revolutions, 2d ed. (selections)

NO CLASS: Monday, January 17--Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Holiday

*II. The Russian Revolution of 1917*

February 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 14

Film on the Soviet Union

Readings:

T. H. Von Laue, "The Setting: The West and the World"

Shiela Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 2d ed. (entire)

EXAM #1 on Topics I and II: Wednesday, February 16

*III. The Chinese Communist Revolution*

February 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 28; March 2, 4, 7, 9

Films on China and Mao Zedong

Reading: Edwin E. Moise, Modern China: A History, 2d ed. (entire)

SPRING BREAK -- March 21-25--No Class--WORK ON BOOK REVIEWS!

EXAM #2 on Topic III: Friday, March 11

*IV. The Vietnam War(s)*

March 14, 16, 18, 28, 30; April 1, 4, 6, 8

Films on Vietnam

Reading: Marilyn B. Young, The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990 (entire)

BOOK REVIEW due--Wednesday, April 6

EXAM #3 on Topic IV-- Wednesday, April 13

*V. Central American Revolutionary Movements*

April 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27

Films on Central American Revolutions

Reading: Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (entire)

*VI. Final Discussion/Summation:*

How can/should the United States Respond to Revolutionary Movements?

April 29

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 6, 2:50 p.m.