

I.B. History SL, year 2: *The Cold War through the Decline of Communism in China and the Soviet Union*

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**2014-15**

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### **Introduction**

#### **Purpose of the Course**

*"We need to develop respect for our history, despite all of its flaws, and love for the Fatherland. We need to pay the utmost attention to our common moral values and consolidate Russian society on this basis. I think that this is an absolute priority."*

**-- Vladimir Putin, current prime minister of Russia**

I am often asked the question as to why I teach history. Why bother studying the past because it cannot be changed? True, however, it still needs to be understood. As demonstrated in the above quote by Putin, Russia is not willing to forget its past just as the United States will not forget hers. Today Russia, China and Germany are allies of the United States, yet there are major disagreements among the nations. Many of these differences are a result of their respective

histories. For this reason alone it is important that U.S. citizens (yes, you) have an understanding of the 20th century historical developments in each of these countries. For instance, currently the United States is vehemently opposed to Iran having a nuclear reactor, yet Russia is supporting the Iranians in developing their program. By the end of this course the reasoning behind Russia's support will be better understood, but only because you will have a better grasp of its history and relationship with the United States.

China is a rising nation that is on pace to surpass the United States as a world power within the next fifty years. While it employs democratic-like economic policies to fuel its ambitions, it is still a communist country that suppresses its citizenry. China cannot be ignored because the U.S. is heavily economically dependent on her. Russia is a 19-year-old democracy that is struggling to define itself. Its current prime minister, Vladimir Putin, a former Soviet Union official, continues to consolidate power toward the executive arm of the government and reduce freedoms among the people. These two countries will play very important roles in the lives of 2015 graduates, which is why it is important to study their histories and think critically about their actions and motivations.

## My Beliefs about Teaching History

In order to appreciate the historian's craft and the necessary skills to create a narrative of past events, I believe:

- There is no one "correct" version of historical events. With this in mind...
- There are several "correct" interpretations of past events. The viewpoint depends upon the recorder's background and position in society. (*Your textbooks are one interpretation.*)
- Not all historical sources are equally acceptable.
- Not all history is known as it has been lost to the past.
- Historical "facts" is a loaded term: Historians construct accounts of history not from "facts" but what people in the past considered important, selected, interpreted and given from their particular perspective.
- Despite the popular maxim of why it is necessary to learn history, the U.S. and other countries do repeat past mistakes because leaders misjudge current events as being different from past events. (Loss of historical context.)
- That students (yes, you) should **NOT** believe everything I say. (Challenge me if you have a different opinion, but support it with evidence.)

## History-specific Theory of Knowledge Questions

- How do you know what is the "best" version of an historical account?
- What is unknown about an event and how may this affect the version(s) of it?
- Why do historical accounts seem to focus on conflict so much?
- How does the context within which historians live affect historical knowledge? To what extent might the position of historians within their own epoch and culture undermine the value of their interpretation, and to what extent might it increase its value in making it relevant to a contemporary audience?

## Essential Questions Raised in this Course

Here are a sampling of questions that we'll discuss throughout the next year:

- To what extent can dictators in authoritarian states be studied and written about objectively?
- To what extent are historical events in Russia and China relevant to the present? Or, to what extent are they irrelevant?
- If all historical accounts about the Cold War are subjective - especially those written by Americans - to what extent are any historical accounts reliable?
- Are value judgments a fault in the writing of history? Should value-laden terms, such as atrocity, regime, hero or freedom, always be avoided, or does exclusion of value judgments deprive history of meaning?

## **Assurance of Feedback Freshness**

I pledge to provide timely feedback on all of your assignments so that you can more accurately assess your learning in the course.. This means for quizzes you can expect to know your grade and any of my comments within 3 school days. For tests you can expect feedback within 7 school days. On general homework assignments expect feedback within 1 to 2 school days.

## **Course Objectives**

The second year of this course will be a thorough investigation of the Cold War and its impact throughout Europe, the Soviet Union and China. The topics under study promise to be provocative, disturbing, enlightening, joyful and tragic. Students will prepare to sit for two IB exams in May 2015 by covering two topics in the 20th century and mastering skills for analyzing historical documents and writing effective essays.

The aim of history in the Diploma Program is to explain trends and developments, continuity and change through time and through individual events. The course is concerned with individuals and societies in the widest context: political, social, economic, religious, technological and cultural. You will be able to:

- Use historical data to support an argument or position
- Explain how a cause and effect relationship is different from a sequence or correlation of events.
- Distinguish between long-term and short-term cause and effect relationships.
- Show connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
- Interpret the past within its historical context rather than in terms of present-day norms and values.
- Distinguish historical fact from opinion.
- Research and write a major historical investigation.
- Demonstrate having acquired the preparation necessary for the International Baccalaureate program.

You will be required to apply the effort necessary to act as an historian and develop the ability to analyze historical evidence to determine its validity and relevance, identify point of view and the nature of bias, and recognize the necessity of objectivity and substantiation. This course will develop and strengthen skills such as critical thinking, geographical knowledge, statistical analysis, understanding the basis for political thought, and use of diverse resources to realize there are multiple sides to every story. You will also understand the cause and effect of current events and draw the connection to historical events. Development of these skills will be done through questioning, extensive use of several primary sources, such as newspaper articles, personal diaries, and photographs, and time lines to provide chronological sequencing. The study of maps offers you the opportunity to strengthen your geographic comprehension of the world.

### **Content to be studied includes: (2014 - 2015)**

- I. Communism in its Historical Context
- II. Origins: Rebuilding Europe after World War II, 1945-1950
- III. Origins: The Korean War, 1950-1953
- IV. Development: Global Spread from Europe, 1955-1970
- V. Development: Arms Race, 1955-1970
- VI. Development: Superpower Diplomacy, 1955-1972
- VII. Development: The Vietnam War (1965-1975)
- VIII. Failure of Detente and Communism in Crisis, 1970-1991

IX. Communism in Crisis, 1976-1991: Breakdown of Soviet Control in Central and Eastern Europe and breakup of the USSR

X. Communism in Crisis in China, 1976-1989

## **Resources for Learning**

You are expected to actively and energetically participate in class discussions. You will both teach and learn from one another as you gather in cooperative learning groups. Graphic organizers such as bar graphs, timelines, and t-bars, along with photographs, maps, and drawings will help provide a multitude of visual information quickly. You can apply what you have learned by writing short essays, creating artwork, and developing timelines. Video clips and PowerPoint presentations will help to reinforce ideas (visual & auditory) about specific subjects as well as important people. Factsheets and worksheets will help to emphasize the main readings within the text and lectures, as well as to assist in completion of essays and projects.

Resources at your disposal include Mr. Hyer, the class website, your online and paperback textbooks, the library, primary documents, the internet, maps, photographs, and videos and DVDs. A few of the textbooks are:

- Mastering Modern World History, Norman Lowe
- Communist Russia Under Lenin and Stalin, Chris Corin and Terry Fiehn
- The People's Republic of China 1949 - 76, Michael Lynch
- Europe and the Cold War, 1945 - 91, David Williamson

## **Technology Policy**

As colleges (and the work world) rapidly expand the reliance on technology for communication it is vital for high school students to learn how best to utilize technology in an educational setting. As such, the majority of resources for my class rely on the use of internet technologies. Students will learn how to use Google Documents as a method of keeping class notes and organizing their learning resources, use an online version of the textbook, create and maintain a blog for homework assignments, and of course, e-mail.

With this technology come new expectations for the submission of assignments. Students are given an ample timeframe in which to submit the homework, therefore excuses such as “my printer is broken” or “the internet wasn’t working at my house last night” are not acceptable. Students have access to the internet and printers at school prior to the start of the day, lunchtime, study halls, and after school.

Assignment due dates are given a day and a time. Usually these assignments are shared with me via the student’s blog or a Google Document. These usually are to be shared with me by 8:20 a.m. or 12:25 p.m., which means students must plan ahead, especially if they don’t have my class until the end of the day.

Also, if students are absent from school for the full day or are dismissed early and miss my class, the expectations for keeping up with the homework or in-class assignments have changed. Students (and parents) have 24/7 access to all assignments, notes, readings, due dates, and now, even the textbook. While the school’s absence policy on makeup work still applies (3 days plus the number of days absent), I encourage students to keep up with the class to the best of their ability because of these new technologies.

If parents or students have concerns about the lack of internet access at home, please discuss this with me as there are alternatives.

## **Assessment**

Quarterly and final grade assessment is based on a variety of assignments given throughout the year, balancing your opportunity to perform well in the class. You are required to maintain an online course notebook (Using Google

Documents) containing notes taken in class, homework assignments, and tests and quizzes.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Description</b>
32%	<b>Quizzes:</b> Expect a five- to ten-minute quiz about twice a week, with an occasional “pop” quiz thrown in to keep you on your toes. Each quiz may contain one or a combination of the following question styles: matching, short answer, rapid answer, and geography questions. The quiz questions will be based on the current week’s content and readings.
36%	<b>Tests:</b> A full-period test consisting of either a Paper 1 or Paper 2 exam. Expect a test about once every six weeks. (Probably one per quarter, so these tests need to be taken very seriously.)
22%	<b>In-Class Work and Peer-to-Peer Effort:</b> In addition to homework, I consider your active participation in my class important to your comprehension of history. Participation in class is more than a physical presence. It means making a meaningful contribution to discussions and course activities. Satisfactory class participation and cooperation defined as being present with all required class materials, answering questions, offering constructive opinions, and generally cooperating with me and other students in the class. <b>To practice reflective thinking, you must take the risk of sharing your views and interpretations and receive feedback from others regarding the soundness of those views and interpretations.</b> We construct knowledge and learn from each other, and if you don’t speak, others don’t learn from you (and vice versa). The evaluation of your class participation is based on what can be demonstrated and observed in the classroom—you need to show what you know. However, this doesn’t mean you have to contribute your ideas in every discussion, but your active listening is required everyday.
10%	<b>Homework:</b> Homework is frequently assigned and I consider this assessment category extremely important to your overall success in this class, therefore I grade these based on the amount of effort you put forth. (The quiz questions will be directly tied in from the homework assignments)

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10% **Mid-term exam** (January): This is a two-hour major test that will cover material from all units covered during the preceding six semesters of the course. There will be one Paper 1 and one Paper 2 to complete.

10% **Final exam / Mock I.B. Exam** (April): This is a two and a half-hour major test that will cover material from all units covered during the entire course. This is the mock I.B. exam. The exam will consist of a Paper 1 and Paper 2.

**Remember my late assignment policy:** Homework is due on the day and time designated for a chance at full credit. I’ll deduct 50 percent off the assignment if it is not shared with me at the designated date and time. After that, you’ll receive a zero. (It is your responsibility to show me the late work because I won’t ask!) If you are absent (excused or unexcused) the assignment is due three days plus the number of days absent.

## **Supplies**

- **1-inch three-ring binder:** this is **required** as your “working notebook” while at school. Make sure you keep blank loose-leaf notebook paper in the back of it for notes.
- **Highlighters** are useful tools to mark significant passages when analyzing written primary documents in class.
- **Flash disk / thumb drive:** at least 1mb. While not required, a thumb drive is extremely useful for storing and transporting computer data for the research papers and other class assignments.

# Expectations Regarding Behavior and Responsibilities

## Introduction

### Respect

History is an exciting and challenging academic discipline that I'm looking forward to sharing with you throughout the coming year. If we all work together to create a fun and comfortable learning environment, history can be fun.

Regarding student behavior and class responsibilities, I believe in one simple word: **RESPECT**. In order to foster a positive, dynamic learning environment my students and myself will respect each other at all times. If this simple rule is followed, a positive learning environment develops, which you will look forward to being a part of every day. Learning becomes fun.

Respect means being to class on time, following through with your responsibilities with group work, listening to others' opinions and realizing that two people can disagree but both be right, and challenging yourself to achieve your highest academic potential. **Always demonstrate this respect for you, your classmates, and me.**

Please see "Rules for Everyone to Live By" on page 13 in your student handbook. Respect for self and others runs through these 11 rules.

## Make-Up Work & Extra Credit Policy

- If you are absent (excused or unexcused), missed work must be turned in within three days plus the number of days you were absent. i.e., if you missed two days, you have five school days to submit work. If you know you are going to be absent, please see me to make arrangements regarding your homework, etc. I will do what I can to assist you.
- Tests and quizzes are to be made up after school on the day you miss class (if tardy) or the next day if absent. You will take a different version of the test or quiz.
- Homework is due on the day and time designated for a chance at full credit. I will deduct 50 percent off the assignment if it is late. (If it is due at 8:20 a.m. and isn't shared with me until 10:30 a.m., it is considered late. After that, you'll receive a zero.)
- Projects and papers are also due on the designated day. For every day late beyond the due date, a letter grade is lost. (DON'T BE LATE!) See me if you need help.
- I do not offer opportunities for extra credit so do not allow yourself to fall behind or fail to study for a major test.

## Submitted Work

- Please follow all instructions for any work submitted in writing or shared online.
- Plagiarism of a phrase or an entire paper is unacceptable. You plagiarize, you fail the assignment. Please refer to page 30 of your student handbook on academic integrity for more information.

## Extra Help

- I'm eager for your success in my class and I'm willing to provide any additional help necessary to make this a reality. As such, I'm available for extra help after school and many times before classes. I usually arrive at school by 7:47 a.m. and don't leave until 3:30 p.m. Please see me to make an appointment. However, if you need extra help, you must have specific questions for me and be prepared to work.

**I reserve the right to amend any expectation and policy listed on this document, within the bounds of common decency. However, you will be given ample warning and written notification of any changes.**

*8/25/14 v.13*