

**Syllabus**  
**EUH3931/EUS3930**  
**East Germany and the World**  
**Spring 2025**

Instructor: Lisa Krause, Doctoral Candidate (History)

Class meetings: MWF period 5 (11:45 – 12:35)

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Office hours: MW 1-2 pm, Keene Flint 222

**Course description:**

This course studies the foreign policy of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) during the Cold War with some of its closest allies as well as some of its most outspoken rivals. What were the pillars of East German foreign policy and what was its place in the international community? What were some of the GDR's most important allies within and without the Socialist bloc? What did these international links mean to East German citizens in a context of restricted mobility and constant surveillance through the notorious state security apparatus? Beginning with its founding in 1949, we will examine East Germany's foreign policy as new nation and as part of the Socialist Eastern bloc.

**Course objectives:**

- Develop a thorough understanding of the principles East German foreign policy during the Cold War and how internal and external events shaped the diplomatic decision-making as well as East German society
- Apply the knowledge of East German relations to identify various tools of international diplomacy, many of which are still in use today
- Learn and practice to analyze primary and secondary sources
- Practice to articulate and write clear, nuanced arguments

**Required textbooks:**

- Hoyer, Katja. 2023. *Beyond the Wall: A History of East Germany*. (New York: Basic Books, 2023).
- All other class material is available in the source Canvas site and/or through the UF Libraries.

**Assignments:**

- Participation (10%)
- Attendance (10%)
- Primary source analysis (10%)
- Film review (10%)
- 2 Quizzes (map quiz, some history events and figures) (10%)

- Midterm essay (25%)
- Final essay exam OR Creative project (student choice) (25%)

#### Attendance:

Students are expected to attend every class meeting. Excused absences follow the university policies and require appropriate documentation.

#### Participation:

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in class meetings. This includes:

- coming prepared to class, i.e. completing all assigned class material and assignments (see course schedule for details)
- actively listening to lectures
- taking notes
- engaging in class discussion and ideas workshops
  - discussions: the instructor will provide questions during class.
  - Ideas workshop: putting together accumulated lessons, thoughts and knowledge from assigned readings for that day and other materials such as an assigned film.

Students may miss 1 class meetings during the semester without having to notify or provide documentation. Students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor if health, personal emergencies or other unexpected events prevent them from attending class and submitting assignments on time to work together and accommodate the student's individual situation.

#### Primary Source Analysis:

Students will choose one primary source from a selection provided by the instructor, using their knowledge of the historical context and East German foreign policy. Complete assignment instructions can be found on the course Canvas page.

#### Film review:

Students will write a 2–3-page film review for one of the assigned films. Complete assignment instructions can be found on the course Canvas page.

#### Quizzes:

Students will take 2 short quizzes that consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answers, and IDs.

#### Midterm essay (take home):

Students will write a short 3–4-page essay on one of two essay prompts. This is a take home essay for which students will have one week. Complete assignment instructions can be found on the course Canvas page.

#### Final Essay **OR** creative project:

Student can decide whether they want to write a 3-4-page essay or submit a creative project for their final exam. The due date will be the same for either option. Students are highly encouraged to consult the instructor about their plans when choosing the creative project which could be a podcast, a (digital) museum exhibit, etc. Complete assignment instructions can be found on the course Canvas page.

**Grading scale:**

A = 100-94; A- = 93-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-84; B- = 83-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-74; C- = 73-70; D+ = 69-67; D = 66-64; D- = 63-60; F = 59-0

For information on current UF grading policies, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#gradestext>

## **Class schedule of topics and assignments**

### **Week 1: January 13,15,17**

The emergence of 2 German states: Between Struggles for Legitimacy and Ideological Dominance (1945-1950s)

January 13: Introduction to the course: Why study East Germany now?

January 15: Lecture: From Nazi Germany to 2 separate German states

January 17: Discussion. Read:

- *Beyond the Wall*, chapter 2

### **Week 2: January 22,24 (no class Monday, 20)**

The consolidation of 2 German states: Between Struggles for Legitimacy and Ideological Dominance (1950s-1960s)

January 22: Lecture: Building a socialist society under pressure: 1953 uprising, the Hallstein Doctrine and the Berlin Wall I

January 24: Mini-Lecture: Building a socialist society under pressure: 1953 uprising, the Hallstein Doctrine and the Berlin Wall II and Discussion. Read:

- *Beyond the Wall*, chapter 4, 5

### **Week 3: January 27,29,31**

Rapprochement between East Germany and West Germany (1970s)

January 27: Lecture: A new era under Erich Honecker?

January 29: Lecture: State Security: Surveilling citizens and toppling a West German Government

January 31: Ideas workshop. Prepare:

- *Beyond the Wall*, chapter 6, 7
- *The Lives of Others* (2014)
- Quiz 1 in class 1/31

#### **Week 4: February 3,5,7**

Wind of Change: A Political Crisis leads to Demands for Reform (1980s)

February 3: Lecture: Crisis, increased repression and demands for change

February 5: Lecture: The Peaceful Revolution of 1989

February 7: Discussion. Read:

- *Beyond the Wall*, chapter 8, 9

#### **Week 5: February 10,12,14**

Socialist Brotherhood: East Germany and Soviet Union, Part I

February 10: Lecture: East Germany and the Soviet Union during the 1950s

February 12: Lecture: East Germany, the Soviet Union and the Construction of the Berlin Wall

February 14: Discussion. Read:

- Wilfried Loth. *Stalin's Unwanted Child: The Soviet Union, the German Question and the Founding of the GDR*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998). (chapters 5, 6)

#### **Week 6: February 17,19,21**

Socialist Brotherhood: East Germany and Soviet Union, Part II

February 17: Lecture: East Germany and the Soviet Union during the 1970s

February 19: Lecture: East Germany and Gorbachev's Soviet Union

February 21: Discussion. Read:

- Martin McCauley, "The German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union" in *Honecker's Germany*, edited by David Childs. (London: Routledge: 1985).
- David Childs, *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally*. (London: Routledge: 2014). (chapter 3)
- Primary Source analysis due 2/21

#### **Week 7: February 24,26,28**

Junior Partners in Socialism: East Germany & Eastern bloc

February 24: Lecture: East Germany and Poland

February 26: Lecture: East Germany and socialist tourism

February 28: Discussion. Read:

- Jens Boysen, “Not Quite “Brothers in Arms”: East Germany and People’s Poland between Mutual Dependency and Mutual Distrust, 1975–1990” in *Trust, but Verify: The Politics of Uncertainty and the Transformation of the Cold War Order, 1969-1991*, edited by Martin Klimke, Reinhild Kreis and Christian F. Ostermann. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).
- José Luis Aguilar López-Barajas, “‘The Black Sea Is Our Mallorca’: The Making of the Tourist Experience in the German Democratic Republic,” *German History*, Volume 40, Issue 3, September 2022, Pages 405–424.

### **Week 8: March 3,5,7**

Socialist Solidarity in Latin America: East Germany and Cuba, Part I

March 3: Lecture: A new ally in the western hemisphere

March 5: Lecture: East German-Cuban relations: A mutually beneficial friendship

March 7: Ideas Workshop. Prepare:

- *Cubans at the Edge of the Berlin Wall* (2015)
- George Bodie, “‘It is a Shame We Are Not Neighbours’: GDR Tourist Cruises to Cuba, 1961–89,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 55, 2, 2019

### **Week 9: March 10,12,14**

Socialist Solidarity in Latin America: East Germany and Chile, Part II

March 10: Lecture: Chile between 2 German states

March 12: Lecture: Honecker’s personal connection to Chile

March 14: Discussion. Read:

- Georg J. Dufner, “Chile as a Litmus Test: East and West German Foreign Policy and Cold War Rivalry in Latin America,” in *German Yearbook of Contemporary History: West Germany, the Global South and the Cold War, Vol. 2*, edited by Agnes Bresselau von Bressensdorf, Christian Ostermann and Elke Seefried (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg: 2017).
- Charlotta Sophie Sippel and Lisa Weber, “Chilean experiences of exile in the “socialist brotherhood” negotiating solidarity, belonging and change in the German Democratic Republic,” *Culture and Psychology* 30 (4), 2024.
- [Midterm due 3/14](#)

### **Week 10: Spring Break**

### **Week 11: March 24,26,28**

Socialist Solidarity in the Far East: East Germany, China and Vietnam

March 24: Lecture: East Germany's relationships in the Far East

March 26: East Germany and Vietnam

March 28: Discussion. Read:

- Bernd Schaefer, "Socialist Modernization in Vietnam: The East German Approach, 1976–89" in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, edited by Quinn Slobodian. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Christina Schwenkel, "Affective Solidarities and East German Reconstruction of Postwar Vietnam" in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, edited by Quinn Slobodian. New York: Berghahn Books.

## **Week 12: March 31, April 2,4**

Socialist Solidarity in an Emerging Postcolonial World, Part I: East Germany, North Africa and the Middle East

March 31: Lecture: Finding allies in the Middle East and Northern Africa

April 2: Lecture: East German and West German foreign policy in the Middle East and Northern Africa

April 4: Discussion. Read:

- Angelika Timm, "The Burdened Relationship between the GDR and the State of Israel." *Israel Studies* Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), pp. 22-49.
- Jeffrey Herf, "'At War with Israel': East Germany's Key Role in Soviet Policy in the Middle East," *Journal of Cold War Studies* (2014) 16 (3): 129–163.
- [Quiz 2 in class, 4/4](#)

## **Week 13: April 7,9,11**

Socialist Solidarity in an Emerging Postcolonial World, Part II: East Germany and Africa

April 7: Lecture: East Germany in Africa

April 9: Lecture: Africans in East Germany

April 11: Discussion. Prepare:

- Ibraimo Alberto and Marcia C. Schenck, "Paths Are Made by Walking: Memories of Being a Mozambican Contract Worker in the GDR" in *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, edited by Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, Immanuel Harisch, and Marcia Schenck. Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.
- Paul Sprute, "Diaries of Solidarity in the Global Cold War: The East German Friendship Brigades and their Experience in 'Modernizing' Angola" in *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, edited by Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, Immanuel Harisch, and Marcia Schenck. Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.

- Sara Pugach, “African Students and the Politics of Race and Gender in the German Democratic Republic” in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, edited by Quinn Slobodian. New York: Berghahn Books.

### **Week 14: April 14,16,18**

New Frontiers of Influence: East Germany & international sports

April 14: International sports as soft power

April 16: International recognition through sports but at what cost?

April 18: Ideas workshop. Prepare:

- *Doping for Gold* (2008)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jR9CUGBVH-Q>
- Udo Merkel, “Sport as a foreign policy and diplomatic tool” in *Routledge Handbook of Sport and Politics*, edited by Alan Bairner, John Kelly and Jung Woo Lee. (London: Routledge, 2016).

### **Week 15: April 21,23**

Legacies of East German in the World

April 21: German reunification and its implications

April 23: Ideas workshop. Prepare:

- Jude Howell, “The End of an Era: the Rise and Fall of G.D.R. Aid,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Volume 32, Issue 2, June 1994, pp. 305 – 328.
- *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003)

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students should notify the instructor early in the semester if they have a disability and require special accommodations. Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/Links to an external site..>

### **Academic Honesty:**

Students are welcome to study and discuss topics together with classmates. Any submitted work **must** be their own. Plagiarism, using AI programs to write assignments and other forms of cheating are a violation of the Student Honor Code and are subject to disciplinary action and a 0 in the course and will be referred to the UF Dean of Students academic dishonesty review.

### **GatorEvals:**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> . Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> . Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> .