

## Reading Guide – Legacies of the Cold War and the Unfolding Nuclear Age

This week marks the end of the semester and our exploration of the political, economic, technological, social, and cultural history of the Nuclear Age during Session 23 we will examine the legacies of the Cold War and its continuing impacts on American life, as well as the future of our still unfolding nuclear age.

### Assigned Materials for Session 23.

- Elaine Tyler May, "Security Against Democracy: The Legacy of the Cold War at Home," *The Journal of American History* (March 2011) 939-957.
- Paul Rogers, "A Century on the Edge: From Cold War to Hot World, 1945-2045," *International Affairs* 90:1 (2014) 93-106.
- [SKIM] Colin Waters, et al. "Can Nuclear Weapons Fallout Mark the Beginning of the Anthropocene Epoch?" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 71:3 (2015) 46-57.
- [OPTIONAL] Rens van Munster and Casper Sylvest, "Pro-Nuclear Environmentalism: Should we Learn to Stop Worrying and Love Nuclear Energy?" *Technology and Culture* 56:4 (October 2015) 789-811.

### Questions to Consider

Elaine Tyler May is a familiar figure from earlier units. In her essay, "Security Against Democracy," she describes the lasting repercussions of Cold War culture on American life in the twenty-first century. Why does May pit "security" against "democracy"? Do you agree with her assessment of the legacy of the Cold War at home?

Paul Rogers is a professor of Peace Studies who teaches in the United Kingdom. His research focuses on the relationships between international conflict, socio-economic divisions, and environmental constraints. In his essay assigned this week he examines the century spanning from 1945-2045. Do you find his approach to this period compelling? Do you agree that this century has been a pivotal one for humankind? What is the relationship between the Cold War and what Rogers calls the "Hot World"?

We've read a few articles over the course of the semester from the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, a journal that has been published since 1945 by scientists concerned about the threat nuclear power poses to global security. In the recent article assigned this week, author Colin Waters describes efforts to use nuclear fallout as a periodizing marker for the onset of the "Anthropocene," the term now embraced by many scientists for the new geological era we find ourselves living in. Is nuclear fallout a good marker for this age? Are the others that are more compelling? What, more generally, are your thoughts on the notion of "The Anthropocene"?

NOTE: There is no assigned reading for Session 24. Please come to class prepared to speak for roughly 5 minutes about your final paper and the findings therein. Please also come to class with a laptop or other device you can use to fill out a course evaluation.

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