The twentieth century has been an age of revolutions, violence, and upheavals that have radically transformed the lives of millions of men and women throughout the world. In the wake of the devastating terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent United States interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, Americans have become increasingly concerned to understand the nature, development, and significance of revolutionary movements by using both "inside" and "outside" perspectives.

This course will begin by showing a film depicting a classic revolutionary situation and will then discuss some of the most important theoretical perspectives about how and why revolutionary movements occur. The core of the course will focus on four key twentieth-century upheavals—the Russian Revolution of 1917; the Chinese Communist Revolution that achieved power in 1949; the Vietnam Wars as a revolutionary independence movement after World War II; and revolutionary or attempted revolutionary movements in Central America during the 1970s and 1980s, especially in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

In each case, we shall consider three primary questions: (1) What preconditions prepared the way for the particular revolution or upheaval? (2) How was power seized? (3) What trajectory did the revolutionary movement follow after seizing power? Special emphasis will be placed on a comparative analysis of the relationship that individual leadership and larger social forces have had upon the internal development of such upheavals, as well as on the policy issues that revolutions raise for the United States.

Many different approaches have been employed in studying revolutions and other profound social and political transformations. On the one hand, critics of revolutions have dismissed them as an aberration and as an inappropriate response to social disorder, and they have sought to prevent revolutions from happening or have tried to defeat them when they occur. On the other hand, supporters of revolution, especially various Marxists thinkers and groups, have waxed enthusiastic about the positive impact revolutions may have and have sought to instigate and direct revolutionary change based upon elaborate theories of historical development.

Our approach in this course will be much more modest than those of either the pro- or anti-revolutionary theorists. Following the lead of Crane Brinton in his classic study Anatomy of Revolution, we shall attempt to formulate some "tentative generalizations" about the process of change in four important revolutionary movements during the twentieth century and to explore the broader significance such movements may have in our modern world.
Evaluation in the course will be based on three mid-semester exams (indicated in the outline in this syllabus), on class participation, on an analytical book review, 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 four major revolutionary upheavals we shall be studying.

The required books for this course are:

Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*  

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 also will be expected to find a book on a topic that interests them relating to one of these or other revolutionary movements and then write a 6-to-10 page review of it. The book a student chooses to review must be approved in advance, in consultation with the professor. More detailed instructions about the book reviews will be provided in class.

Insights gained from the book reviews will allow each student to develop a more in-depth understanding of a particular revolution of interest to them and will encourage more lively and well-informed class discussion.

**Area E Approved Learning Outcome:**

Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.

**Explain how the course satisfies the learning outcome:**

This course focuses on providing a comparative analysis of the outbreak, course, and impact of major revolutionary movements, or attempts at revolution, during the twentieth century. Students will learn how political, social, and economic forces influence social behavior by focusing primarily on four influential upheavals—the Russian Revolution of 1917; the Chinese Communist Revolution that came to power in 1949; the Vietnam Wars as a revolutionary independence movement; and more recent revolutions or attempted revolutions in Central America, especially in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Students will demonstrate that they have met the Area E learning outcomes through four written examinations; several short papers; in-class discussions; and a 6-10 page analytical book review that integrate course concepts and materials from the readings.
Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the political, social, and economic characteristics used to define modern revolutionary movements since the great French Revolution of 1789—especially in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

2. Students will demonstrate the ability to describe, comparatively and cross-culturally, some of the major economic, political, and social "preconditions" for the outbreak of political revolutions and similar upheavals during the past century.

3. Students will demonstrate the ability to describe, comparatively and cross-culturally, the typical trajectory of major political revolutions after they seize power, including the tendency of such movements to pass sequentially through moderate and extremist phases before achieving a new stabilization.

4. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the major political, economic, and social distinctions between the classic political revolutions that rapidly overthrow pre-existing governments and more recent upheavals associated with longer-term "guerrilla" insurgencies and colonial independence movements which also may result in the eventual overthrow of an existing government.

5. Students will demonstrate the ability to compare and analyze the differences between the four important twentieth-century political, military, economic, and social upheavals upon which this course focuses, as well as upon the role the United States has played by either supporting or opposing such movements.

6. Students will demonstrate the ability to describe, comparatively and cross-culturally, the long-term political, economic, social, and intellectual changes that successful revolutionary movements may introduce into their societies.

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. Exceptions will be made for students who have to come from across campus._

_More than 6 unexcused absences from class (2 weeks of class) may 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._
OVERVIEW of CLASS SESSIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, and EXAMS:
(For specific reading assignments, consult the class-by-class reading assignment sheet.)

I. Introduction to the Study of Revolutions
   January 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 22, 24
   Film: "The Battle of Algiers"
   Readings:
   Crane Brinton, Anatomy of Revolution, pp. 3-26, 237-271
   James C. Davies, "Toward A Theory of Revolutions"
   Stephen Walt, "Revolution and War"
   Jack A. Goldstone, ed., Revolutions (selections)

   NO CLASS: Monday, January 20--Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday celebrated

II. The Russian Revolution of 1917
   January 27, 29, 31; February 3, 5, 7, 10, 12
   Film on the Soviet Union
   Readings:
   R. R. Palmer & Joel Colton, "The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union"
   Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, Second edition (entire)
   Abraham Ascher, "Reform, Stagnation, Collapse"

   EXAM #1 on Topics I and II: Friday, February 14

III. The Chinese Communist Revolution
   February 17, 19, 23, 24, 26, 28; March 3, 5, 7
   Films on China and Mao Zedong
   Reading: Edwin E. Moise, Modern China: A History, Third edition (entire)

   EXAM #2 on Topic III: Monday, March 10

IV. The Vietnam War(s)
   March 12, 14, 24, 26, 28, 31; April 2, 4, 7, 9
   Films on Vietnam
   Reading: Marilyn B. Young, The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990 (entire)

   NO CLASSES: March 17-21--Spring Break

   BOOK REVIEW due--Monday, March 31

   EXAM #3 on Topic IV--Friday, April 11
V. Central American Revolutionary Movements
   April 14, 16, 18, 21, 23
   Films on Central American Revolutions
   Reading: Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America, Second edition (entire)

VI. Final Discussion/Summation:
   Why and how are Revolutionary Movements significant?
   April 25

   FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, April 30, 11:30 a.m.
Week 1

January 10--begin James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolutions"

Week 2

January 15--begin "Classic Approaches to Revolution," in Goldstone, pp. 21-36
January 17--begin Stephen Walt, "Revolution and War," in Goldstone, pp. 252-262

*Begin work on book review*

Week 3

NO CLASS--January 20: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday celebrated


Week 4

January 29--begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 2 (pp. 40--67)
January 31--begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 3 (pp. 68-92)

Week 5

February 3--begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 4 (pp. 93-119)
February 5--begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 5 (pp. 120-148)
February 7--begin Fitzpatrick, chapter 6 (pp. 149-172)
Week 6

February 12-Review for EXAM #1

EXAM #1--Friday, February 14

Week 7

February 17--begin Moise, Modern China: A History, Third edition, introduction and chapter 1 (pp. 1-28)
February 19--begin Moise, chapter 2 (pp. 29-53)
February 21--begin Moise, chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 54-91)

Week 8

February 24--begin Moise, chapter 5 (pp. 92--121)
February 26--begin Moise, chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 122-164)
February 28--begin Moise, chapter 8 (pp. 165-196)

Week 9

March 3--begin Moise, chapter 9 and 10 (pp. 197-240)
March 5--begin Moise, chapter 11 (pp. 241-286)
March 7--Review for EXAM #2

Week 10

EXAM #2--Monday, March 10

*March 10--begin Marilyn B. Young, The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990, chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-36)
March 12--begin Young, chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 37-88)
March 14--begin Young, chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 89-123)

Week 11

NO CLASS: March 17-21--Spring Break--I recommend reading the book you will be reviewing!
Week 12

March 24--begin Young, chapters 7 and 8 (pp. 124-171)
March 26--begin Young, chapters 9 and 10 (pp. 172-209)
March 28--work on Book Review

Week 13

March 31--BOOK REVIEWS due

*March 31--begin Young, chapter 11 (pp. 210-231)

April 2--begin Young, chapter 12 (pp. 232-253)
April 4--begin Young, chapters 13 and 14 (pp. 254-299)

Week 14

April 7--begin Young, chapter 15 (pp. 300-329)
April 9--review for EXAM #3

EXAM #3--Friday, April 11

*April 11--begin Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America, introduction (pp. 1-18)

Week 15

April 14--begin LaFeber, chapter 1 (pp. 19-85)
April 16--begin LaFeber, chapter 2 (pp. 87-146)
April 18--begin LaFeber, chapter 4 (pp. 197-270)

Week 16

April 21--begin LaFeber, chapter 5 (pp. 271-324)
April 23--begin LaFeber, chapter 6 (pp. 325-368)
April 25--Review for FINAL EXAM

FINAL EXAM--Wednesday, April 30, 11:30 a.m.