LITERATURE

An Introduction to the Literature of the Cold War

I. CRITICAL READING 15%
A. Purpose and Main Idea
B. Structure
C. Restatement of Information
D. Genres and their Characteristics
E. Language and Tone
F. Grammar and Syntax
G. Vocabulary in Context
H. Diction

II. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW 10%
A. The Origins of the Cold War
B. The Atomic Bomb
C. Kennan’s “Long Telegram” and the Truman Doctrine
D. Confrontations in Germany and Korea
E. The Turbulent Fifties
F. Khrushchev and Kennedy
G. Treaties and Troubles
H. Détente
I. The Second Cold War
J. The End of the Cold War
K. The Cold War’s Legacy

III. CAT’S CRADLE (1963) BY KURT VONNEGUT, JR. 30%
A. Themes
   1. Criticism of Amoral Science and Scientists
   2. Cold War Attitudes toward the “Third World”
   3. Ice-Nine and Nuclear Weapons
   4. Bokononism, Truth, and Lies
   5. Damaged Parent-Child Relationships
B. Characters
C. Plot Summary
D. Context: Vonnegut’s Early Novels
   1. Player Piano
   2. The Sirens of Titan
   3. Mother Night
E. Context: Apocalyptic Fiction
   1. Nevil Shute’s On the Beach (1957)
   2. Walter M. Miller’s A Canticle for Leibovitz (1959)
   3. Mordecai Roshwald’s Level 7 (1959)
   4. Pat Frank’s Alas, Babylon (1960)
Context: “Black humor” as a Response to Atomic Anxiety

2. Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964)
3. The Comic-Satirical Songs of Tom Lehrer

IV. SHORTER WORKS 45%

A. Short Stories

1. Selected Work: “There Will Come Soft Rains” (1950) by Ray Bradbury
   a. Introduction to Ray Bradbury
   b. “There Will Come Soft Rains”: Summary
   c. Analysis: Technology Displaces Humanity
2. Selected Work: “The Terminal Beach” (1964) by J. G. Ballard
   a. Introduction to J. G. Ballard
   b. “The Terminal Beach”: Summary
   c. Analysis: The Cold War’s Intertwined Physical and Psychological Damage
   a. Introduction to Doris Lessing
   b. “Report on the Threatened City”: Summary
   c. Analysis: How and Why Humanity is Threatened by the Cold War

B. Poems and Songs

1. Selected Work: “Advice to a Prophet” (1959) by Richard Wilbur
   a. Introduction to Richard Wilbur
   b. “Advice to a Prophet”: Summary and Analysis
   a. Introduction to Bob Dylan
   b. “Talkin’ World War III Blues”: Summary and Analysis
   a. Introduction to Adrienne Rich
   b. “For Ethel Rosenberg”: Summary and Analysis

C. Speeches

   a. Introduction to Jawaharlal Nehru
   b. Nehru’s Speech at the Bandung Conference: Summary and Analysis
   a. Introduction to John F. Kennedy
   b. Kennedy’s “Sword of Damocles” Speech: Summary and Analysis
3. Selected Work: Address by Mikhail Gorbachev at the United Nations General Assembly Session (Excerpts), December 7, 1988
   a. Introduction to Mikhail Gorbachev
   b. Gorbachev’s Address at the UN General Assembly: Summary and Analysis