Historiography thrives on debate. Established interpretations of central events, decisions, and processes are constantly being challenged on the basis of new evidence or alternative perspectives. History-writing always offers an interpretation of the past. Interpretations can be wrong, even the most authoritative ones; and even when they are not wrong per se, they can still be contestable and are often enough actively contested. The interpretation of the Cold War provokes numerous debates among historians. For this assignment, you will contest the ‘established’ account of a certain aspect of Cold War history on the basis of new evidence or a revised perspective. We will make a selection of ‘older’ articles, from which you choose one to engage with on the basis of more recent historiography. As our selection of ‘older’ scholarship will date from the 1970s and 1980s, it will not be too hard to find newer research. To be clear: it will be your job to search and find this newer research.

Make sure to draw on decent scholarly literature. These can be either books published by scholarly publishers (monographs or edited volumes, not textbooks) or they can be academic articles published in academic journals. These works are preferably from the field of history, as this is a history course. If well-performed, you will do more than point out how others have given a different account of this or that fact (event, decision, process) than the original article does. Although pointing out those differences is the central objective to this assignment, you will need to properly conclude with both a summary of your findings and a critical reflection on the broader theoretical and/or political biases that inform the different accounts.

Mind you, this is not an easy endeavor, but a necessary one for you to develop your analytical acumen (and general writing skills). Your text should be approximately 1.500 words long. It must draw on literature, not on primary sources. The text must be properly referenced. References must include page numbers. My expectations are simple: I don’t care which system of referencing you use (APA, Harvard Style or Chicago Style), but I do expect your implementation of it to be impeccable. Quotations must be properly treated as quotations. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any instance, however small and however unintended, will cause you to fail the paper