

The Kennedy Assassination in Global Perspective

History 302, MWF 9:30-10:20, University Hall 301, Professor Michael G. Smith



This course offers a global and comparative perspective on one of the most controversial events of the twentieth century: the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on 22 November 1963. We will uncover the forensics of the crime. We will explore its implications for partisan politics, the executive presidency, and political culture. We will weigh the nature of the Kennedy “myth” and the variety of conspiracy theories arrayed against it. Our wider field of vision confronts how the assassination was part of the Cold-War challenge against the Soviet Union; and part of one of the fiercest battles of that war, the struggle for Cuba under Fidel Castro. We will also study the comparative dimensions of the crime. How was the assassination part of a culture of political violence in the modern era that has counted the murders of presidents, tsars, commissars, civil-rights leaders, and political candidates?