

# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



*The Great Powers and the Division of Europe, 1944-1949.* History Courseware Consortium.

Reviewed by Sean Martin

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## Teaching the Cold War with New Technology

Drs. Aldous and Ball have prepared a CD-ROM for use as a tutorial in undergraduate classes. The tutorial consists of two parts: an overview of the history of the Cold War from the perspectives of the governments of the United States, Britain, and the USSR and select primary documents students can use to explore the foreign policy aims of each nation. The text is concise and well-written, presenting the complex history of the last years of World War II and the growing conflict between East and West in a very readable manner. Pictures appear throughout the text, and two links to maps (of the formation of Poland and the division of Germany) are provided as well. The title of the CD-ROM indicates its narrow focus, and the text confirms it. While this makes the CD-ROM useful for beginning students of international history, it does not present the wider European context that might make it more useful in the classroom. This context includes the establishment of the Communist governments in East Central European countries and later consequences of the Cold War such as the nuclear arms race. The documents presented for review are divided into two levels, Worksheet One and Worksheet Two. Both include private and public documents, but Worksheet Two includes documents produced for governments' own internal use and additional questions for students to address. The documents are taken equally from American, British, and Soviet sources and include memoirs as well as government documents. The overview of the Cold War given in what the tutorial refers to as the "core document" is sufficient for the beginning student, but it does not provide an adequate

background to each of the documents. Brief introductions to the authors and historical background of the documents would have been an additional help. While the presentation of the material and the range of documents selected is very thorough, *The Great Powers* is not the most useful instructional tool for introductory courses on Western Civilization. Unfortunately, instructors who must teach their students about the Reformation as well as about the fall of Communism simply do not have the time to include on their syllabus materials so specific in nature. *The Great Powers* would work well in an upper level undergraduate course focusing on European or diplomatic history, but it does not contain many features which would make it useful for survey courses. The instructor of "Western Civ" may turn to *The Great Powers* for help in locating a specific document or photo, but, ultimately, more comprehensive databases are available for the instructor in need of additional primary sources or visual materials. Guides to the material and to the other CD-ROMS that make up the History Courseware Consortium, indicate that the tutorial is perhaps best used by an instructor able to place the CD-ROM on a larger network. Instructors who have set up home pages or websites for their classes would be in a position to do this most easily. In this way, students could simply access the website and begin the tutorial. Tutorial is perhaps the most adequate word to describe *The Great Powers*. It would be best used individually by students assigned to examine primary documents and prepare their own analyses of foreign policy.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-w-civ>

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