

History 5473

Recent America: The United States Since 1945

Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. Dan Williams
Office Hours: TLC 3207
MWF, 12-1pm
Wed., 3:30-5pm
Thurs., 10am-5pm
(and by appointment)
Email: dkw@westga.edu
Phone: 678-839-6034

Class Location:
Pafford 208
MW, 2:00-3:20pm

Description:

This course will offer you an opportunity to analyze important societal trends in the United States from 1945 to the early twenty-first century, and will equip you to assess the central influences that have shaped recent American history.

Classes will consist mainly of interactive lectures and discussions. In addition, graduate students will participate in weekly, one-hour, small discussion sessions that examine current monographs and articles on postwar American history.

Learning Outcomes:

Through the papers and exams in this course, students will demonstrate critical thinking skills and the ability to analyze diverse perspectives, as well as the ability to evaluate American societal trends in their historical context. Students will also learn writing, research, and communication skills, which the assignments in this course will assess.

Assessment:

Students' final grades will be determined as follows:

Midterm exam	25%
Research paper	30%
Class participation	20%
Final exam	25%

There will be no opportunity for extra-credit assignments in this course.

Grading Methodology: This university does not use a plus / minus grading system, but during the course of the semester, I will use plus / minus grades, as well as split-letter grades (e.g., an A- / B+), in order to evaluate students' written work with precision. In computing final course grades, I convert all grades into numeric scores according to the following system:

A = 95

A/A- = 94

A- = 92

A-/B+ = 90

B+ = 88

B+/B = 87

B = 85

B/B- = 84

B- = 82

B-/C+ = 80

(A similar pattern is used for grades in the C-range).

In computing final course grades, a grade average of 89.5 or higher converts to a course grade of A, a grade average between 79.5 and 89.49 converts to a course grade of B, and a grade average between 69.5 and 79.49 converts to a course grade of C.

A-range grades, including the grade of A-/B+, are reserved for work that is of exceptional quality. In order to receive an A-range grade on an essay assignment, a student's essay must show evidence of original thinking and the ability to synthesize information from a wide variety of sources, as well as an accurate understanding of the material and good writing technique. Papers that receive a grade of 90 or above must be cogent and persuasive in their argumentation, and they must be well written and tightly organized around a strong thesis. In short, a paper that receives an A-range grade not only meets the basic requirements for the assignment, but also demonstrates that a student has mastered the interpretative, analytical, and writing skills expected for a course at this level.

B-range grades are given to essays that demonstrate a student's accurate understanding of the material, adequate use of the assigned documents, and competence in writing. They rarely contain the sophisticated analysis required for an A-range essay, but they meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

C-range grades are given to essays that contain factual inaccuracies, errors in interpretation, inadequate use of the assigned documents, or poor writing technique, even though they usually meet most of the basic requirements for the assignment.

Failing grades are assigned to work that does not meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

Exams: Graduate students will take two take-home exams in this course. You will receive the midterm exam essay question on October 21, and you will have until 11:59pm on October 28 to submit an 8-10 page essay in response to that question.

The take-home final exam will also require you to respond to an essay question. I will give you the essay question on November 30, and you will have until 11:59pm on December 7 to write 8-10 pages in response. The midterm and final exams will test your ability to analyze the concepts covered in class readings, discussions, and lectures. The questions for both exams will be based heavily on the information covered in the assigned graduate readings.

Research paper: The research paper is a major component of this course. The research paper may cover any topic of your choice from 1945 to 2001. If you are a graduate student pursuing an M.A. in history, your research paper should be approximately 15-18 pages long. If you are a graduate student pursuing an M.Ed., MAT, MBA, M.A. in a non-historical field, or any degree other than an M.A. in history, you may submit a research paper that is only 8-12 pages in length. Consult the online guidelines for research papers for more information about this assignment.

Papers that are turned in after the assigned date will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are overdue.

It should go without saying that all papers that you write must be your own work, and that any students who are caught plagiarizing another student's work, a paper from a web site, a textbook, or any other source will automatically fail this course and may be subject to further disciplinary action. Plagiarism is a serious offense that will not be tolerated.

All of your written work for this class must be original; you are not allowed to submit essays that you have written for other courses or that you have completed prior to this semester.

Class participation: Classes will consist of interactive lectures, which will give you a chance to ask questions and discuss the ideas presented in the readings. I will also expect you to attend weekly discussion sessions that I will hold for the graduate students. Most of your class participation grade will be based on your participation in these weekly meetings. At these sessions, we will discuss historiographical questions and the readings in greater depth, and will also discuss some of the graduate readings that do not appear on the undergraduate syllabus.

Class communication: I may send out periodic email communiqués to students in this course, so please check your UWG email account regularly. The university administration has stipulated that all email communication between faculty and students should take place on UWG email accounts, so please use your UWG email account for all electronic communications that you send me.

To protect students' privacy rights, I will not return graded papers or exams to any third party (e.g., a student's friend or relative who asks to pick up a student's work on that person's behalf) unless a student gives me permission in writing (e.g., an email) to do so. There are occasions when I must disclose a student's grade to university administrators or other history department faculty (e.g., the department chair, students' advisors, or the graduate studies coordinator), but in all other cases, I will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of students' grades.

I would like to do whatever I can to help you succeed in this course. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a question about any subject pertaining to this class. I make it a priority

to respond promptly to emails from students, and I am happy to talk with students during my office hours, so please feel free to stop by my office anytime that you want to discuss your concerns about this course. I believe that this will be an excellent semester, and I'm pleased to welcome you to this class.

Required readings:

Graduate students in this course will follow a reading list that differs from that of the undergraduates who are taking HIST 4473. The following books are required for graduate student discussions, and can be ordered online or at the university library through GIL Express:

Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). ISBN: 978-0195392401.

Alan Petigny, *The Permissive Society: America, 1941-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). ISBN: 978-0521757225.

Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). ISBN: 978-0812220896.

Leigh Ann Wheeler, *How Sex Became a Civil Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). ISBN: 978-0190206529.

Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). The 1st (1996), 2nd (2005), and 3rd (2014) editions of this book are equally acceptable, so you are welcome to get whichever edition is most readily available.

Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012). ISBN: 978-0691157917.

Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). ISBN: 978-0226254500.

Helen Marrow, *New Destination Dreaming: Immigration, Race, and Legal Status in the Rural South* (San Jose, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011). ISBN: 978-0804773089.

Class Schedule:

- 8/24 Introduction: Postwar America
- 8/26 Postwar American Liberalism
- 8/31 The Cold War
Graduate discussion: Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”*
- 9/2 Religion and Morality in the 1950s
Research paper topic due
- 9/7 No class (Labor Day)
- 9/9 Families in an Age of Affluence
Research paper source list due
- 9/14 Youth Culture in the 1950s
Graduate student discussion: Alan Petigny, *The Permissive Society*
- 9/16 Undergraduate class discussion: Was the 1950s a liberal or conservative decade?
Undergraduate student primary source presentations on the 1950s
(Graduate students not required to attend)
- 9/21 The Quest for Civil Rights in the 1940s and 1950s
Graduate discussion: Articles on the Civil Rights Movement
Mary L. Dudziak, “Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative,” *Stanford Law Review* 41 (1988): 61-120 (JSTOR).
David L. Chappell, “Religious Revivalism in the Civil Rights Movement,” *African American Review* 36 (2002): 581-595 (JSTOR).
Kevin Gaines, “The Civil Rights Movement in World Perspective,” *OAH Magazine of History*, January 2007, 57-64 (JSTOR).
- 9/23 The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s: A Discussion and Evaluation
- 9/28 Poverty in Postwar America
Graduate discussion: Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights*
Leon F. Litwack, “‘Fight the Power!’ The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement,” *J. of Southern History* 75 (2009): 3-28 (JSTOR).
- 9/30 The Vietnam War, the New Left, and the Antiwar Movement
- 10/5 Youth Rebellion and the Counterculture
Graduate discussion: Articles on the 1960s and the Vietnam War

Rick Perlstein, "Who Owns the Sixties? The Opening of a Scholarly Generation Gap," *Lingua Franca*, May / June 1996

[<http://linguafranca.mirror.theinfo.org/9605/sixties.html>].

Christopher C. Lovett, "A Walk in the Sun: Reflections on Teaching the Vietnam War," *The History Teacher* 31 (November 1997): 77-92 (JSTOR).

George C. Herring, "American Strategy in Vietnam: The Postwar Debate," *Military Affairs* 46 (April 1982): 57-63 (JSTOR).

Kendrick Oliver, "Towards a New Moral History of the Vietnam War?" *Historical Journal* 47 (2004): 757-774 (JSTOR).

10/7 The Sexual Revolution, Rights Consciousness, Secularization, and Morality

10/12 The Feminist Movement, Gay Liberation, and New Attitudes toward Sexuality
Graduate discussion: Leigh Ann Wheeler, *How Sex Became a Civil Liberty*

Week of 10/12: Individual meetings with students to discuss research papers

10/14 The Feminist Movement and Debates over Abortion and Gender Roles

10/19 Black Power, *Bakke*, and Backlash
Graduate discussion: Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*

10/21 Sixties Liberalism and American Politics, 1960-1980: From JFK to Carter

10/26: Assessing the 1960s: An undergraduate class discussion and debate
Undergraduate primary source presentations on the 1960s
(Graduate students not required to attend)
No graduate student discussion

10/28 Undergraduate midterm exam (no class for graduate students)
Graduate exam essay due by 11:59pm via CourseDen

11/2 An Era of Limits: Environmentalism, the Energy Crisis, and Stagflation
Graduate discussion: Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s*

11/4 The Religious Revival of the 1970s
Undergraduate primary source presentations on the 1970s
First draft of research paper due

11/9 A New Conservatism
Graduate discussion: Articles on the New Right
Julian E. Zelizer, "Rethinking the History of American Conservatism," *Reviews in American History* 38 (2010): 367-392 (Project MUSE).
Robert O. Self, "The Heat Is On: Cold War Conservatism," *Reviews in American History* 42 (2014): 513-518 (Project MUSE).

Darren Dochuk, "Tea Party America and the Born-Again Politics of the Populist Right," *New Labor Forum* 21 (Winter 2012): 14-21 (Project MUSE).

Daniel K. Williams, "Jerry Falwell's Sunbelt Politics: The Regional Origins of the Moral Majority," *J. of Policy History* 22 (2010): 125-147 (Project MUSE).

Daniel K. Williams, "The Partisan Trajectory of the American Pro-Life Movement: How a Liberal Catholic Campaign Became a Conservative Evangelical Cause," *Religions* 6 (2015): 451-475 (<http://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/6/2/451/htm>).

11/11 Race, Crime, and Drugs

11/16 The Economics of the Reagan Era

Graduate discussion: Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America*

11/18 Cultural Conflict and the Politics of the Family

11/23-11/27 No classes (Thanksgiving break)

11/30 Immigration and Globalization

Graduate discussion: Helen Marrow, *New Destination Dreaming*

12/2 American Politics and Society in the Twenty-First Century

Final version of research paper due

12/7 **Final exam essay due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**