

HIST 5473

Recent America: The United States Since 1945

Fall 2017

Instructor: Dr. Dan Williams

Office Hours: TLC 3207

T, Th, 9:30-10:30am

Wed., 10am-12pm, 2-5pm

(Additional office hours available by appointment)

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Class Location:

Pafford 208

T / Th, 2:00-3:15pm

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:

In this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

- 1) Conduct historical research (assessed through the research paper assignment);
- 2) Formulate and defend a historical argument in Standard English (assessed through the research paper assignment).

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 19, 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 5 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 15-20 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 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:

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

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.

Marjorie J. Spruill, *Divided We Stand: The Battle over Women's Rights and Family Values That Polarized American Politics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017). ISBN: 978-1632863140.

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

Angela Stuesse, *Scratching out a Living: Latinos, Race, and Work in the Deep South* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016). ISBN: 978-0520287211.

Class Schedule:

- 8/10 Introduction: Postwar America
- 8/15 Postwar American Liberalism
Graduate discussion: Articles on Truman and Postwar American Liberalism
 Harvard Sitkoff, "Harry Truman and the Election of 1948: The Coming of Age of Civil Rights in American Politics," *J. of Southern History*, 37 (1971): 597-616 (JSTOR).
 Robert A. Divine, "The Cold War and the Election of 1948," *J. of American History*, 59 (1972): 90-110 (JSTOR).
 Michael Henry, "Harry Truman and the Liberal Tradition: A Textbook Survey," *OAH Magazine of History* 11.4 (Summer 1997): 47-49 (Academic Search Complete).
- 8/17 The Cold War: Foreign Policy
- 8/22 The Cold War: Politics, Culture, and the Economy
Graduate discussion: Articles on the Politics of the Cold War
 Richard Gid Powers, "American Catholics and Catholic Americans: The Rise and Fall of Catholic Anticommunism," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 22.4 (Fall 2004): 17-35 (JSTOR).
 Kevin M. Schultz, "Protestant-Catholic-Jew, Then and Now," *First Things*, January 2006, 23-27 (Academic Search Complete).
 Elaine Tyler May, "Security against Democracy: The Legacy of the Cold War at Home," *Journal of American History* 97 (2011): 939-957 (JSTOR or Academic Search Complete).
 Daniel Disalvo, "The Politics of a Party Faction: The Liberal-Labor Alliance in the Democratic Party, 1948-1972," *Journal of Policy History* 22 (2010): 269-299 (Academic Search Complete).
- 8/24 Religion and Morality in the 1950s
- 8/29 Families in an Age of Affluence
Graduate discussion: Petigny, *The Permissive Society*
- 8/31 Youth Culture in the 1950s
 Undergraduate primary source presentations on the 1950s
- 9/5 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).
 Leon F. Litwack, "'Fight the Power!' The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement," *J. of Southern History* 75 (2009): 3-28 (JSTOR).

- 9/7 The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s
- 9/12 Poverty in Postwar America
Graduate discussion: Articles on the War on Poverty
 Carl M. Brauer, “Kennedy, Johnson, and the War on Poverty,” *Journal of American History* 69 (1982): 98-119 (JSTOR).
 Frances Fox Piven, “How We Once Came to Fight a War on Poverty,” *New Labor Forum*, September 2014, 20-25 (Academic Search Complete).
 Sarah D. Sparks, “Fifty Years Later, Verdicts Are Mixed on the Nation’s War on Poverty,” *Education Week*, January 22, 2014 (Academic Search Complete).
 Matthew McKee, “War on Poverty: A Limited Engagement,” *Irish Journal of American Studies* 9 (2000): 64-87 (JSTOR).
- 9/14 Sixties Liberalism: John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson
- 9/19 The Vietnam War
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).
- 9/21 No class (instructor speaking at University of Oklahoma)
- 9/26 The New Left, the Religious Left, and the Reaction against the Vietnam War
 No graduate discussion
- 9/28 Black Power and Backlash
- 10/3 Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement
Graduate discussion: Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*
- 10/5 No class (fall break)
- 10/10 Sixties Conservatism: Goldwater, Reagan, Buckley, and YAF
Graduate discussion: Articles on Conservatism in the 1950s and 1960s
 Kim Phillips-Fein, “‘If Business and the Country Will Be Run Right’: The Business Challenge to the Liberal Consensus, 1945-1964,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 72 (2007): 192-215 (Academic Search Complete).

- Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, "Origins of the Conservative Ascendancy: Barry Goldwater's Early Senate Career and the De-legitimization of Organized Labor," *J. of American History* 95 (2008): 678-709 (JSTOR).
- Patrick Allitt, "American Catholics and the New Conservatism of the 1950s," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 7 (Winter 1988): 15-37 (JSTOR).
- 10/12 Second-Wave Feminism
- 10/17 The Sexual Revolution, Rights Consciousness, Secularization, and Morality
Graduate discussion: Spruill, *Divided We Stand*
 Additional article to discuss: 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>).
- 10/19 Assessing the 1960s
 Undergraduate primary source presentations on the 1960s (graduate students not required to attend class)
- 10/24 Feminism of the 1970s and the Debate over Abortion and the ERA
 No graduate discussion
- 10/26 Undergraduate midterm exam (no class for graduate students)
- 10/28 Midterm exam essay due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**
- 10/31 An Era of Limits: Environmentalism, the Energy Crisis, and Stagflation
 No graduate discussion
- 11/2 The Culture Wars of the 1970s
- 11/4 **First draft of research paper due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**
- 11/7 From Nixon to Carter
 Undergraduate primary source presentations on the 1970s
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).
 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).
- 11/9 Reagan and the New Conservatism
- 11/14 Neoconservatism, Neoliberalism, and the Economics of the Reagan-Clinton Era
Graduate discussion: Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America*

11/16 Immigration and Globalization

11/21 & 11/23 No class (Thanksgiving break)

11/28 9/11, the Financial Crisis, and the Challenges of the 21st Century
Graduate discussion: Stuesse, *Scratching out a Living*

11/30 America in the Age of Obama and Trump

12/2 **Final version of research paper due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**

12/5 **Final exam essay due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**