Contemporary US History - 21:512:371 01 | Fall 2024

Instructor: Matthew Friedman
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Office: Conklin 337 | Office: Conklin Hall 337 • Office Hours: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Class Time and Location: Tuesday-Thursday 10:00 am – 11:20 am, CPS-104

Following the Second World War, the United States emerged as the world’s preeminent superpower. It was a period of unprecedented economic growth, affluence and technological innovation. But for all the material benefits enjoyed by Americans in the four decades after the Second World War, it was also a time of crisis and conflict, as the nation confronted unresolved issues of race and poverty and faced new challenges of changing gender roles, redefinitions of values and the America’s position in the world through the Cold War and beyond.

This course will explore how Americans met those challenges and how their society and culture were transformed in the process.

We will focus on several themes: Race, the family, gender and sexuality; class, economic growth and consumer capitalism; and, above all the negotiation of the idea of “America” in the spaces around social, conceptual and cultural frontiers.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will develop their analytical skills in the written assignments and the class discussions by identifying the course readings’ main theses, supporting arguments, evidence, assumptions, and rhetorical strategies. They will develop their critical reading skills and learn how to read primary sources, contextualize and historicize documents and images, write critically about both primary and secondary sources, find primary and secondary sources online and how to develop and defend an original argument.

READINGS


Other required readings are available on Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

*Attendance*: Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. Students may be excused for illness, family emergency and similar extreme situations, and religious observance. Absences for work, job interviews and similar events will not be excused. Unexcused absences will be penalized one (1) mark (out of ten) of the student’s attendance grade.

Six unexcused absences will result in an automatic failing grade. Students who miss eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course.

*Participation*: Everyone is both expected and required to participate in class discussions. The participation grade will reflect the quality and quantity of your in-class participation.

*Film Reviews*: Students will write 2-3-page film reviews of *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Easy Rider*. 
Response Papers: Students will write five 3-4-page response papers summarizing and contextualizing the readings for four classes from the second class onward. (Due at the beginning of the relevant class)

Critical Analysis Exercise: Students will write a short (1-page) critique of a source.

Critical Analysis Paper: Students will write a 3-4-page critical analysis of a history essay generated by artificial intelligence.

Final Exam: There will be a final exam during the exam period.

Students must submit the final exam in order to pass this course.

Attendance ................................................................. 10%
Class Participation .......................................................... 15%
Critical Analysis Exercise .............................................. 5%
Film Reviews ................................................................. 10%
Response Papers .......................................................... 25%
Critical Analysis Paper ................................................. 10%
Final exam .................................................................... 25%
TOTAL ........................................................................ 100%

There will be no deadline extensions except in the most extreme circumstances and with prior approval.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments (including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports) and other written assignments, using AI text generators to complete assignments, using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one’s own, and misappropriating the knowledge of others. The sources from which one derives one’s ideas, statements, terms, and data, including Internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form; failure to do so, intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism. Violations of academic integrity may result in a lower grade or failure in a course and in disciplinary actions with penalties such as suspension or dismissal from the College. The university's policy on academic integrity is available at https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every major assignment must include the following phrase: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination / assignment."

The unauthorized use of ChatGPT and similar AI tools in an assignment is an academic integrity violation, and will be reported to the Dean of Students office.
ACCOMMODATIONS

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site. For more information, please contact Kate Torres at (973)353-5375 or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

CLASS SCHEDULE

16 Jan – Class 1: The Second World War
  • Chafe, Chapter 1

18 Jan – Class 2: The Cold War I
  • Chafe, Chapter 2
  • George F. Kennan, The Long Telegram, 1946

23 Jan – Class 3: The Cold War II
  • Chafe, Chapter 3
  • Benjamin Fine, “Majority of College Presidents are Opposed to Keeping Communists on their Staffs,” New York Times, Jan 30, 1949
  • Joseph McCarthy, Wheeling, WV Speech, 9 February 1950
  • Whittaker Chambers Testimony before HUAC
  • Alger Hiss Testimony before HUAC

25 Jan – Class 4: Postwar Society
  • Chafe, Chapter 4
  • Irving Howe, "This Age of Conformity"
  • Arthur Schlesinger, “The Crisis of American Masculinity”
  • Billy Graham, America's Hour of Decision (1951), excerpts
  • Critical Analysis Exercise

30 Jan – Class 5: Postwar Family
  • Chafe, Chapter 5
  • Henry A. Bowman, Marriage for Moderns, Chapter 1.
  • Harper's Magazine, "After Hours"

1 Feb – Class 6: Youth Culture
  • Film: Rebel Without a Cause
  • Arthur Miller, "The Bored and the Violent"
  • Richard A. Peterson, "Why 1955? Explaining the Advent of Rock Music"
  • Film Review #1 deadline
6 Feb – Class 7: Civil Rights
- Chafe, Chapter 6
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
- Malcolm X, “The Ballot of the Bullet”
- The Alcatraz Proclamation

8 Feb – Class 8: The Urban Crisis
- Russell Lynes, “The Erosion of Detroit”

13 Feb – Class 9: The Kennedy Years
- Chafe, Chapter 7
- John F. Kennedy, Speech of 12 September 1962, Rice University, Houston.
- Richard Slotkin, Gunfighter Nation, Chapter 15.

15 Feb – Class 10: The Johnson Years
- Chafe, Chapter 8
- Lyndon B. Johnson, Speech of 22 May 1964, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

20 Feb – Class 11: Vietnam I
- Chafe, Chapter 9
- Pentagon Papers: 83-103
- Lyndon B. Johnson, “Report on the Gulf of Tonkin Incident”
- The Tonkin Gulf Resolution

22 Feb – Class 12: Vietnam II
- Chafe, Chapter 10
- Film: Hearts and Minds
- William Shawcross, "The Secret Bombing of Cambodia"
- Henry Kissinger, "In Defense of the Nixon Policy"

27 Feb – Class 13: 1960s Counterculture
- Chafe, Chapter 11
- Jack Kerouac, "About the Beat Generation"
- "In Search of a Frame"
- Film: Easy Rider
- Film Review #2 Deadline

29 Feb – Class 14: 1960s Radicalism
- Chafe, Chapter 12
- C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite, Introduction
- Students for a Democratic Society, "The Port Huron Statement"
- Mike Klonsky, "Toward a Revolutionary Youth Movement"

5 Mar – Class 15: 1960s Conservatism
- Chafe, Chapter 13
- Richard M. Nixon, "Silent Majority Speech"
- Time Magazine, "Man and Woman of the Year: The Middle Americans"
7 Mar – Class 16: The 1970s II: Society and Culture
- Martha Shelley, “Gay is Good”
- “No More Miss America”
- Donald T. Critchlow, and Cynthia L Stachecki, “The Equal Rights Amendment Reconsidered: Politics, Policy and Mobilization in a Democracy”

MIDTERM BREAK

19 Mar – Class 17: The 1970s I: Economy
- Chafe, Chapter 14
- Daniel Yergin, "OPEC Imperium"
- Edward Teller, "The Energy Disease"

21 Mar – Class 18: The Iran Crisis
- Chafe, Chapter 15
- Thomas A. Sancton, William Droziak and Gregory Wierzynski,"An Answer For Tehran: The U.S. responds to Iran's hostage demands as a stalled war drags on"
- Nicholas Burnett, “Zahedi's Affairs”

26 Mar – Class 19: The Computer Revolution
- Vannevar Bush, "Science: The Endless Frontier"
- Time Magazine. "Machine of the Year: The Computer Moves In"
- Barry M. Leiner, Vinton G. Cerf, et. al., "A Brief History of the Internet"

28 Mar – Class 20: The Reagan Years
- Chafe, Chapter 16
- Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security"
- Congressional Report on Iran-Contra
- Film: Missing in Action

2 Apr – Class 21: The End of the Cold War
- George H.W. Bush, "Toward a New World Order"
- Douglas Little, American Orientalism, Chapter 7

4 Apr – Class 22: Culture Wars
- Chafe, Chapter 17
- Karen Finley, The Constant State of Desire

9 Apr – Class 23: Globalization
- North American Free Trade Agreement, Preamble and Part I
- George Katsificas, "Seattle Was Not the Beginning"
- Evelyn Hu-Duhart, "Globalization and its Discontents"

11 Apr – Class 24: 9/11 and After
- Chafe, Chapter 18
- James Petras, "9/11: One Year of Empire-Building"
- Ivan Greenberg, "The FBI and the Making of the Terrorist Threat"
16 Apr – Class 25: Crises, Recovery, and Obama
- Chafe, Chapter 19
- The Economist, "Carping About the TARP: Congress Wrangles Over How Best to avoid Financial Armageddon"
- Naomi Klein, "Occupy Wall Street: The Most Important Thing in the World Now"
- Raina Kelley, "A Letter to my Son on Election Night"
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, "Fear of a Black President"

18 Apr – Class 27: The Rising Right
- Ruth Rosen, "The Tea Party and Angry White Women"
- Gary DeMar, Ruler of the Nations: Biblical Blueprints for Government (excerpt)
- Mark Pitcavage, “Surveying the Landscape of the American Far Right”
- Critical Analysis Deadline

23 Apr – Class 28: The Trump Years
- Christopher Browning, "A New Kind of Fascism"
- Michele Margolis, “Make America Great Again as White Political Theology”
- United States of America vs. Donald Trump (January 6 Indictment)
CITATION FAQ

What do you need to cite?

Any phrase, sentence or paragraph that you have taken from another source, even if it's a sentence fragment. For example, if you use the phrase "to be or not to be: that is the question," you must provide a citation to the relevant page in a published edition of William Shakespeare's play Hamlet. As a general rule, if you are using words that someone else wrote, you must cite. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism.

Any information that you found in another source (and isn't common knowledge), even if you paraphrase. For example, if you write something like "almost ten per cent of the adult males in the United States in 1924 were members of the Ku Klux Klan," you have to say where you got that information. If you don't, how do I know that you're not making it up?

As a general rule, you don't have to provide citations for information that we covered in class.

What happens if you don't cite?

It depends. A written assignment that does not reference any sources will receive an automatic zero grade. A written assignment that does reference sources, but does not cite them will receive an automatic 50% grade penalty.

If you don't know whether you should cite a passage, quote or information, err on the side of caution and cite it.

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What do you need?

As a general rule, you will need a bibliography page, and footnotes or parenthetical notes in text for all of your references. Please use either the University of Chicago/Turabian citation style or the simplified citation style on the next page.

SUBMISSION POLICY

All written assignments must be submitted to the appropriate link on Canvas by the beginning of class on the deadline date. No assignments will be accepted after the deadline, except with prior arrangement and in the most extreme circumstances. If you miss a class – and a deadline – due to illness or other excused absence, you must inform me, and submit the assignment to Canvas. Written assignments must be submitted to the appropriate Canvas link (that is, not to the assignment comments, etc.) to receive credit.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Historians refer to primary and secondary sources. A primary source is a document, speech, or other sort of evidence written, created or otherwise produced during the time under study, or by a participant. Primary sources offer an inside view of a particular event. Secondary sources provide interpretation and analysis of primary sources. Secondary sources are usually (though not always) written by professional historians and are one step removed from the original event.
CITATION BASICS

As a rule, historians cite sources according to the University of Chicago style. If you plan to pursue further studies in history, you will find it advisable to acquire A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Eighth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers by Kate L. Turabian. For the purposes of this course, you may use the simplified guide below.

Book

Bibliography:


Footnote First Reference:


Footnote Subsequent References:

Lears, 113.

Footnote Subsequent References (if you cite more than one work by this author):

Lears, Rebirth of a Nation, 113. (If you cite more than one work by this author.)

Parenthetical Reference: (Lears, 236)

Parenthetical Reference (if you use more than one source by this author): (Lears 2009, 236)

Periodical Article

Bibliography:


Note that you include the volume number of the journal or publication following the title.

Footnote First Reference:


Footnote Subsequent References:

Rosenfeld, 318.

Footnote Subsequent References (if you use more than one source by this author):

Rosenfeld, "On Being Heard," 320.

Parenthetical Reference: As with books.

In the case of class readings where you do not have the book or journal title or publication information, simply cite sources with the information that you do have. For example: