

History of the United States since 1945  
HIST 21:512:371:B5 ON-LINE COURSE  
Instructor: Christopher Adam Mitchell  
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### **Required textbook**

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*. Vintage Reissue: 1992.

Jennifer Brier, *Infectious Ideas: US Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis*, New Edition. University of North Carolina Press: 2011.

James S. Olson and Randy Roberts, editors. *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents*. Bedford/St. Martin's: 1998.

Natasha Zaretsky, et al., editors. *Major Problems in American History since 1945*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cengage: 2013

### **Course description**

How has the social, economic, political, intellectual, and military history of the United States been transformed since the end of the Second World War? How did New Deal era social welfare programs, conflict over racial segregation, gender, and sexuality reshape political alliances and ideologies in the post-war U.S.? Furthermore, how did the experience of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, as well as Cold War rivalries with the Soviet Union, Cuba, China and other communist and socialist countries, change these alliances and ideologies with conflicts over loyalty, national identity, and policy? How did U.S. economic success in the post-war era transform ideas about work, consumption, and the ideology of the "American Dream"? How did the African-American Civil Rights movement revolutionize ideas about citizenship and community, influencing not only desegregation as a national policy but also inspiring social activism within other communities, including but not limited to Chicana/os, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Filipina/os, as well as immigrants from outside of Europe? How did Civil Rights activism transform ideas about gender, sexuality, and class, inspiring activism among women and LGBTQIA people of all races as well as renewed conflicts over race, gender, and sexuality within the labor movement? How did New Deal and Great Society Era America, with their generous anti-poverty programs and putative commitments to civil rights, give way to an era of austerity and hostility to the civil rights of people of color, women of all races, and LGBTQIA people of all races after the election of Ronald Reagan? For that matter, how did the society that produced the counter-cultures and radical politics of the 1960s and 1970s become fertile ground for conservatism grounded in fundamentalist religious beliefs and organized around opposition to birth control, abortion, healthcare for people with AIDS, and even more general opposition to government supported healthcare, education, and social welfare programs? Finally, how did these changes reflect the United States position in an increasingly globalizing economic and political system that has given us the contradictions of the War on Terror,

the outwardly conciliatory presidency of Barack Obama, and the return to authoritarianism and nationalist xenophobia under the current administration?

In this course, we will take up these questions and their broader implications through close analysis of both classic and recent scholarship by professional historians, attending to their analyses and use of primary source evidence. We will also spend time with some of the key texts and artifacts that comprise the archive of this era, weighing key pieces of evidence against the scholarly and popular arguments about this contested period of U.S. and world history. The most important task of this course is to carefully critically engage the historical interpretations presented to you through readings and podcasts.

### **Learning objectives**

Students will learn to define and discuss critical issues from this historical field through a combination of podcasts, student-facilitated class discussion forums, short writing assignments, a mid-term examination, and a comprehensive final examination. Students will learn to identify and interpret primary source evidence, summarize and analyze the arguments and supporting points of secondary assessments by historians, and synthesize these basic elements in class discussion and historiographical writing. Through an analysis of primary sources and evaluation of historical writing, scholarship, and representation, we will explore some of the basic concepts in the history and historiography of the United States since 1945:

- Meanings of liberalism, conservatism, and communism in the context of American political ideology
- The centrality of race, class, gender, and sexuality to Americans' perceptions of citizenship and difference since World War II
- The ways in which the post-World War II economy transformed patterns of work and consumption
- Foreign policy, war, and military conflict framed by the Cold War, experiences of frustration and "failure" in Korea and Vietnam, and the escalation of War on Terror policies both domestically and internationally
- The impact of the AIDS pandemic

### **Disability 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' 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 at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219, by phone at 973-353-5375 or by email at [odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu).

Before you continue reading this syllabus, please understand the following:

1. **This syllabus is akin to a contract between student and instructor, and you need to read it carefully in order to understand the expectations of each role.** The student is responsible for attending to the coursework and maintaining the reading and assignment schedule listed in the syllabus, while the instructor is tasked with insuring that the class keeps up with the reading and assignments schedule. The instructor is responsible for providing assignments, podcasts, and supplementary materials with clear instructions, guidelines, and goals. If necessary, the instructor must also upload readings to Blackboard in a timely manner. Students must download, borrow, purchase or otherwise obtain all required readings listed on the syllabus. Additionally, students are responsible for following all written directions on prompts for assignments and supplementary materials. Students are also responsible for reviewing rubrics used to evaluate assignments. If the syllabus needs to be altered for any reason, the instructor will inform you specifically in writing. Otherwise, it is your responsibility to read the syllabus and stay on top of the calendar of readings and assignments.
2. **Make sure that you understand and participate in the digital components of class, especially Blackboard, especially if this is an on-line course.** Check your email on a regular basis so that announcements and messages from the instructor reach you in a timely manner. If you need to communicate with the instructor via email, please make sure that you state your full name, the class in which you are enrolled, and whatever question or issue you need the instructor to address. If you have a problem that cannot be addressed over email, then you need to come into the instructor's office hours.
3. **Please email me if you have questions about assignments, including requests to look over rough drafts and attempts to complete the coursework. However, do not email me coursework for this class and expect it to be accepted and evaluated as an official submission. All work must be posted to Blackboard. Your email will be deleted and you will not earn credit for that assignment.** Included in your coursework are quizzes, shorter assignments, papers, journals, and/or take-home exams, all of which must be submitted through Blackboard. Again, students will not earn credit if they email assignments or submit them in any way other than the instructions require. *Again, you may email me if you have questions about any assignment, but please do not expect to be graded for submissions sent to my inbox.*
4. **Unless directed by the instructor or the assignments, please do not use sources not listed on the syllabus or from outside of podcast material and podcast notes.** If you are required to do research, assignments will give you specific directives and the instructor will go over standard research methods. **If this is not a class with a**

**research paper or another assignment that asks you to look for outside sources, then please do not, under any circumstances, use sources from outside of the class.** The course materials were selected with great care, and the vast majority of undergraduate students (and even many graduate students) may not know how to select the best sources for papers, exams, and other assignments without extensive instruction. The purpose of the class is for you to critically read and respond to the readings, and if you are using outside sources you may be avoiding this foundational task. If this course has a research component, then only include sources from outside the class that are required by specific assignments. *The use of Wikipedia.com or any other on-line encyclopedia as well as Sparknotes, Shmoop, or any other study guide website as a source on an assignment will result in automatic failure of any assignment and a request to resubmit the work at a late penalty.*

5. **Grades are generally assessed according to a rubric, and students who attend to the prompt and demonstrate the greatest knowledge and analysis of the details in the readings and podcasts will obviously do better.** Please make sure that you read all assignments carefully, since the rubric will be generated from the questions and expectations stated on all assignments. The instructor may not always have time to comment extensively on essay assignments, so students should avail themselves of the rubric in order to understand how they earn and lose credit on assignments. The instructor will always be available for consultation about any evaluation in class for any reason, and rubrics are generally viewable via Blackboard and/or Turnitin.

### **Components of the Digital Classroom**

*E-management and organization.* Students must participate in all aspects of the course, including Blackboard assignments. Students must also regularly check their email to attend to any class- related business over the course of the session. The digital classroom requires continual electronic communication between instructor and student, and failure to communicate regularly via email will not count as an excuse for missed/late assignments or disorganization. *The instructor is not responsible for registering you for a username or gaining access to Blackboard, and students are responsible for any and all material and instructions posted on Blackboard.*

Students must have a working Rutgers username and password, as well as the coordination of e- mail and Blackboard usage.

*Podcasts.* The instructor will use Blackboard to post podcasts and slides from podcasts, both of which are materials that students need to be familiar with in order to participate in classroom discussions and to complete quizzes, assignments, and examinations. The instructor will frequently send e-mail reminders and assign material on Blackboard. **Students are responsible for keeping up with and contributing to any on-line components of the class, and students should expect to listen to podcasts as they are posted each week.**

*Student conduct in on-line forums.* Please be respectful of your peers, your instructor, the classroom community, and the university setting. Our classroom community will not tolerate ad hominem attacks on other students or the instructor, including attacks couched in racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, discrimination based on ability, and religious intolerance. Students who are severely disruptive may be asked to leave the forum; such students will be marked absent for the day and may lose credit in more substantive ways.

*Late policy.* All non-documented late work will immediately be assessed a 5% (five-point) penalty. After the first twenty-four hours, late submissions will be assessed a 10% (10-point penalty) for each rounded 24-hour period. Students who fail to submit their work after five days/120 hours will be assessed a 50-point penalty, but they may submit their work at any time before the conclusion of the semester for partial credit.

*Course readings.* Students must complete the readings before each class meeting, prepared to bring questions and comments for class. Students must purchase or otherwise obtain copies of the required texts. All other texts will be available on the course blackboard page. **Students are required to bring the readings to class in order to reference page numbers and other references to the readings in podcasts.** This is an intensive summer course of study, and students will read an average of 40-50 pages per class meeting. Although on a handful of days we will exceed that limit, many days will consist of only 20-25 pages of readings. Some students may find the amount of reading difficult, and such students should make plans to dedicate extra hours in order to successfully complete the course readings. Again, this is a summer course, and the amount of reading we will cover in six weeks is ordinarily covered in about three months during a regular semester, so please plan your time accordingly. **The University and the instructor suggest that students schedule or otherwise dedicate 5-10 class hours per week reading and studying for this course. The instructor expects students to complete all the assigned readings *before* the date they appear on the calendar, and students should expect the instructor to call on them and ask questions about the readings at any time. In addition to the readings listed on the course calendar, students are responsible for reading all supplemental materials, including the syllabus, the writing guide, and all prompts found on Blackboard.**

*On-line Forums (30%)* This on-line course will require students to participate in a virtual classroom setting via the course Blackboard page, which will occur no fewer than once and no more than twice in a week. Students will submit comments, questions, and critiques about the readings in the discussion forum. The instructor will write a prompt or set of leading questions and students will be assessed based on their responses. Students are also encouraged to use the discussion forum to raise questions and issues with the readings. On several days in the session, students will download a series of podcasts and slides to contextualize and explain the readings.

*Short written assignments (25%).* Students will complete about an assignment per week for this course in order to develop writing skills that focus on “close reading” or analysis of

one or two texts, synthesis of multiple texts and ideas, and evaluations of how authors use primary sources and secondary arguments to develop their ideas.

*Mid-term Examination (15%).* Students will complete a mid-term examination conducted on-line and due by no later than 11:59 p.m. on June 17.

*Final Examination (30%).* Students will complete a comprehensive final examination conducted on-line and due by no later than 11:59 p.m. on July 3.

### **Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

Any student who commits plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be asked to withdraw from the course. Violations will be reported to the appropriate university authorities and may result in further disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments and, of course, cheating on in-class assignments.

All work submitted for grading must include the University's honor pledge and the student's signature.

*"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment."*

*From the University's Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students*

"Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc. need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.

In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member."

### **Calendar of readings**

#### **Week 1: Postwar America: Economic Prosperity and Social Conflict in an Age of Foreign and Domestic Anxiety**

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| May 28 | † 1) Baldwin, "The Harlem Ghetto;" † 2) Mailer, "The Paper House;" † 3) Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery;" † 4) Mario Suarez, "El Hoyo" |
| May 29 | Zaretsky, Chapter 1: 2-49  |
| May 30 | Zaretsky, Chapter 2: 50-85   |
| May 31 | Zaretsky, Chapter 3: 86-125  |

## **Week 2: Race and Civil Rights: Fighting White Supremacy**

- June 3 Zaretsky, Chapter 4: 127-162  
Film (view via Kanopy): Eyes on the Prize: Awakenings (dir. Judith Vechhione)
- June 4 Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (all)
- June 5 Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (all)
- June 6 Zaretsky, Chapter 5: 163-206  
Film (view via Kanopy): Eyes on the Prize: Mississippi: Is this America? (dir. Orlando Bagwell)
- June 7 † 1) Ysidro Ramón Macias, “The Evolution of the Mind;” 2) Cherrie Moraga, “La Güera,” 3) Luis Valdez, “Las Dos Caras del Patroncito”

## **Week 2: Civil Rights and Citizenship: Race, Gender, Sexuality and Identity in post-Civil Rights America**

- June 10 † Gabriel Chin, “Were the Immigration and Nationality Acts of 1965 Antiracist?”
- June 11 † William Wei, *The Asian American Movement* (excerpt)
- June 12 † 1) Documents from the Young Lords Party; 2) † Vine Deloria, Jr., “The Red and the Black”
- June 13 1) Zaretsky, Chapter 7: 247-288; † 2) Merle Woo, “Letter to Ma;” 3) Martha Shelley, “Gay is Good;” 4) Marsha P. Johnson, “Rapping with a Street Transvestite Action Revolutionary”
- June 14 Olson and Roberts, Introduction and Chapters 1-2: 1-43

## **Week 4: Vietnam: The Politics of War, Shame, and Reaction in the 1970s**

- June 17 **Mid-term Examination**  
Film (view via Kanopy): American Experience: The My Lai Massacre (dir. Barak Goodman)
- June 18 Olson and Roberts, Chapters 3-6: 56-145
- June 19 Olson and Roberts, Chapters 7-8: 146-199
- June 20 Zaretsky, Chapter 9: 325-367  
Film (view via Kanopy): “Born in Flames” (dir. Lizzie Borden)
- June 21 † 1) James Morton Turner, “‘The Specter of Environmentalism’: Wilderness, Environmental Politics, and the Evolution of the New Right,” *JAH* 96:1 (2009): 123-147; † 2) Trudie Olson, “The Sagebrush Rebellion,” *Rangelands* 2:5 (1980): 195-199; † 3) Matthew Lassiter, “Inventing Family Values”

## **Week 5: The Conservative Counter-Revolution and the Politics of Death and Survival**

- June 24 † 1) Zaretsky, Chapter 10: 368-395; 2) Brier, Prologue: 1-10
- June 25 Brier, Chapter 1: 11-44
- June 26 Brier, Chapters 2: 45-78  
Film (view via Kanopy): “We Were Here” (dir. David Weissman)
- June 27 Brier, Chapters 3-4: 78-155
- June 28 Brier, Chapter 5 and Epilogue: 156-201  
Film (view via Kanopy): “How to Survive a Plague (dir. David France)

**Week 6: Post-Cold War Neoliberalism: Consensus and Conflict**

- July 1            1) Zaretsky, Chapter 11-13 (excerpted, to be announced); † 2) Monica Lewinsky, "Emerging from the House of Gaslight in the Age of #METOO," *Vanity Fair* (2018)
- July 2            † 1) Eric K. Arnold, "The BLM Effect: Hashtags, History, and Race," *Race, Poverty, and the Environment* 21:2 (2017): 8-15; † 2) Ashwini Tambe, "Reckoning with the Silences of #METOO," *Feminist Studies* 44:1 (2018): 197-203; 3) Cass Sunstein, "On the Divergent American Reactions to Terrorism and Climate Change," *Columbia Law Review* 107:2 (2007): 503-557 (excerpted)
- July 3**            ***Final Examination due no later than 11:59 p.m.***