

*This syllabus is tentative and subject to change.*

Spring 2015—21:512:371

**Contemporary America: The U.S. Since 1945**

Class meeting times: Mon 2:30-3:50, Wed 1-2:20

Class location: Engelhard 211

Professor Timothy Stewart-Winter

Office: 314 Conklin Hall

Office Hours: TBA

Email: timsww@andromeda.rutgers.edu

**Course Description:** This course examines the transformation of American politics and culture since 1945. The postwar era witnessed a vast series of significant changes in the structure of American life, including the emergence of the civil rights, women's, and gay liberation movements; the reconfiguration of work, consumption, and the American economy; the continued expansion of the state in both war and peacetime; the reorganization of space; and the birth of a new conservative movement in America. Within each of these broad themes, we will pay particularly close attention to the everyday experience of these changes and to the intersection of social difference and politics. Students will explore how individuals, groups, and institutions shaped the development of American society at the end of the 20th century, while deepening their understanding of the craft of history and sharpening their critical reading, writing, and analytical skills.

**Specific Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will acquire an understanding of key developments in the history of the United States since 1945.
- Students will develop the ability to read and analyze primary documents, situate them in historical context, and develop critical interpretations of their significance.
- Students will learn to compare and contrast specific historical periods, social movements, and political ideologies of the post-1945 period.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Attendance and Punctuality.** Attendance is mandatory. This means attending every class from start to finish. Please only take this class if your schedule allows you to meet this obligation. Your overall course grade may be lowered by one half letter for each unexcused absence beginning with the fourth one; eight unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. Only documented emergencies and medical occasions, or officially school-sanctioned activities, will qualify as excused absences.

**Grading:** You must complete all assignments in order to pass this class. Grading will be as follows:

Attendance and Participation – 20%

Reading Worksheets – 15%

Class Presentation – 10%

Paper 1 – 15%

Paper 2 – 15%

Final Exam – 25% (Monday, May 11, 3-6PM, short answer and essay)

**Reading Worksheets:** You will be responsible for printing and turning in a reading worksheet once a week (Monday or Wednesday) according to the group I assign you at the beginning of the semester, beginning with the third class meeting (Wednesday, January 29), and continuing through DATE TBD. Worksheets completed in good faith will receive full credit.

**Class presentation.** You will present for 5 minutes in pairs on the background of an organization, institution, or individual who either composed one of the primary sources we read for class, or is closely related to the themes of that day's class. The purpose of this assignment is to connect your organization or individual's experiences to the larger social forces we will discuss in class. Sign up on the second day of class for the group or individual you want to present on.

**Papers:** You are required to write two papers of approximately 5 pages each. Detailed instructions will be provided for each. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date.

**Course Ethics:**

- No phone usage in class; laptops must be used for course-related work only. If your phone rings in class, silence it immediately. Answering a phone call in class will be considered a serious breach of course ethics.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any use of the ideas or words of another person without proper acknowledgment of credit, or cheating on an exam, will result in serious penalties up to and including a failing course grade.
- Students are required to review and accept the Plagiarism Agreement accessible through the course Blackboard site under "Academic Integrity" before any written work will be accepted.
- All students *must* maintain an active, functioning email account *linked to the course Blackboard site*, and are responsible for keeping up-to-date with emails from the instructor sent via Blackboard.
- Remain respectful *at all times* of one another and of the opinions of those with whom you may disagree. Repeated violations will result in a lowered course grade and/or removal from the classroom.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, requiring assistance and/or accommodation should contact the Office of Disability Services and discuss its recommendations with me as soon as possible. Information can be found at <http://roberson.rutgers.edu/studentlife/disability.html>.

**Office Hours.** If you have questions about the syllabus or any aspect of this class, please feel free to email me or come to my office hours. My office hours are for you; stop by with any questions you have about assignments, readings, classroom discussions, other pertinent topics, or just to say hello. If you need to cover material from a missed class, however, please consult a

classmate instead. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, we can set up an appointment at a mutually agreeable time.

**Required Texts:** There are two required books for this class, which you may purchase from the Rutgers Bookstore on the first floor of Bradley Hall, or from elsewhere online:

- 1) Robert P. Ingalls & David K. Johnson, eds., *The United States Since 1945: A Documentary Reader* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), ISBN 9781405167147
- 2) Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (Vintage Books, 1958/2014), ISBN 9780679755333

Copies of each book will be placed on reserve at Dana Library. *All other course readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site.* It is your responsibility to make sure you have access to, and complete, all course readings.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

*There may be changes to the following schedule, which will be announced in class and/or via email.*

Wed, Jan 21: **Introductions**

#### **1. World War II**

Mon, Jan 26:

*In class: Sign up for presentations*

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 1-16

Wed, Jan 28

**First reading worksheets due**

- Jackie Robinson documents

#### **2. Reconversion, the GI Bill, and the Baby Boom**

Mon, Feb 2:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 43-61
- “You Can’t Have a Career and Be a Good Wife,” *Ladies’ Home Journal* (January 1944)

Wed, Feb 4:

- Schmidt, “The Foreign Language of “Mad Men,” *Atlantic Monthly* (March 2012)

#### **3. The Cold War**

Mon, Feb 9:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 17-23, 35-40, 108

Wed, Feb 11:

- Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, **pages TBA**

#### **4. Race in the South**

Mon, Feb 16:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 62-80

Wed, Feb 18:

- TBA

## **5. Race in the North**

Mon, Feb 23:

### **Paper #1 due**

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 80-87
- Norris Vitcheck as told to Alfred Balk, “Confessions of a Blockbuster,” *Saturday Evening Post*, July 14-21, 1962

Wed, Feb 25:

- Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title II (1964)
- “First Negro President in 25 Years?” *Chicago Daily News*, December 23, 1964

## **6. Vietnam and Its Aftermath**

Mon, Mar 2:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 88-106

Wed, Mar 4:

- TBA

## **7. The Great Society, Radicalization, and Urban Uprising**

Mon, Mar 9:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 110-130
- Smith, *Twilight*, 28-31 (Mike Davis), 41-48 (Cornel West), 159-169 (Maxine Waters)

Wed, Mar 11:

*In class:* excerpts from *Revolution '67* (2007)

- Maurice Carroll, “Newark’s Mayor Calls in Guard as Riots Spread,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1967
- Whitney M. Young, Jr., “The Lesson in Newark’s Triumph,” *Chicago Defender*, July 4, 1970

## **SPRING BREAK**

## **8. Immigration Reform**

Mon, Mar 23:

- Reed Ueda, “The Changing Face of Post-1965 Immigration”

Wed, Mar 25:

- TBA

## **9. Feminism and Sexual Liberation**

Mon, Mar 30:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 135-148

Wed, Apr 1:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 148-166

## **10. The Political and Economic Crises of the 1970s**

Mon, Apr 6:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 167-173
- Kenneth Cmiel, “Triumph of the Left: Sixties Revolution and the Revolution in Manners”
- Dan T. Carter, “Triumph of the Right: George Wallace, Richard Nixon, and the Critique of Federal Activism”

Wed, Apr 8:

- TBA

## **11. The Rise of the New Right**

Mon, Apr 13:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 173-197

Wed, Apr 15:

- TBA

## **12. AIDS, Poverty, and the War on Drugs**

Mon, Apr 20:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 198-205, 216-217
- Christopher Capozzola, “A Very American Epidemic: Memory Politics and Identity Politics in the AIDS Memorial Quilt, 1985-1993”

Wed, Apr 22:

- Eric Schlosser, “The Prison-Industrial Complex,” *Atlantic Monthly* (December 1998)

## **13. 9/11 and After**

Mon, Apr 27:

### **Paper #2 due**

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 211-215, 218-228
- Jennifer L. Bryan, “Constructing ‘the True Islam’ in Hostile Times: The Impact of 9/11 on Arab Muslims in Jersey City”

Wed, Apr 29:

### ***No worksheet due***

- TBA

Mon, May 4: Wrap-Up & Review

**Mon, May 11, 3-6PM: FINAL EXAM** (short answer and essay)