

Contemporary United States History

21:512:371:01

Spring 2020

Professor Timothy Stewart-Winter, tims@rutgers.edu

Class meeting times: Monday/Wednesday 4:00-5:20PM

Class location: Hill Hall 104

Office Hours: 314 Conklin Hall, Mondays 1:30-3:30PM and by appointment

Course Description:

This course examines the transformations in American life from the end of World War II to the present. In analyzing those transformations, we will consider four broad, interrelated themes:

- The United States as world power in both peace and war
- Civil rights including women's and gay liberation movements
- Rise of new conservatism
- The politics of space and place

Course Goals:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify and understand the key events, themes, and trends in postwar American life
- Demonstrate proficiency in identifying and analyzing primary sources
- Demonstrate proficiency in historical analysis, including making evidence-based arguments through speaking, writing and other modes of expression

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

Reading Quizzes – 25%

Paper #1 – 15%

Paper #2 – 15%

Participation – 20%

Take-home Final Exam – 25% (Due Wed, May 13 at 6PM, essay format)

Assignments handed in late will be assessed a penalty of one letter grade per day late.

Reading Quizzes: There will be 4 scheduled reading quizzes during the semester. Each quiz may cover *all* assigned readings since the previous quiz (including readings assigned for that day). The goal of these quizzes is to test your ability to comprehend course readings and apply them to the content of the course. *I reserve the right to add scheduled or unscheduled quizzes (weighted equally with the 4 that are already scheduled) if too many students are not completing reading assignments on time.*

Papers: You will write two short papers of approximately 3 pages. In each paper, you will analyze a Hollywood movie from the era we are studying as a primary source document. For the first paper, you will choose the movie from a list provided by the instructor (you are responsible for obtaining access to the film; all films on the list will be available through the major commercial streaming services and/or the Rutgers library). The second movie is *All the President's Men* (1976).

Participation: Participation in the context of this course does not simply mean showing up to class. You are asked to be active in and engaged with class discussions. Participation will be assessed on the quality of contributions to class discussions. High-quality participation demonstrates the following:

- Understanding of the historical context as gleaned from lectures and readings
- Completion of each week's readings and other assignments
- A willingness to engage in critical assessment of course texts and lectures

Students are expected to attend class and to be punctual. Excessive absences or late arrivals will result in a significantly diminished class participation grade.

Take-Home Final Exam: There will be a take-home, essay-format final exam that will ask you to think integratively about the topics covered using the tools of historical analysis practiced over the course of the semester. The exam will be due via Blackboard on Wed, May 13 at 6PM.

Class Rules:

I expect students to behave in a manner that shows respect for the civic community: for others' needs and desire to learn. Any behavior that might be disruptive to other students, making it difficult for them to hear or distracting them from the lecture, or in any way intimidates them from participating in class, will be counted against the participation grade.

This means, in concrete terms:

- no talking in private conversations (even in whispers),
- no cell phone use or any other form of texting,
- no use of computers or laptops for any purpose except to take notes or review assigned readings under discussion,
- no working on other course homework.

Technology Rules:

Students may use laptops and tablets during class for class-related activities only. If I learn that students are using these devices for any other purpose, I may impose further restrictions. Students are also prohibited from listening to any other device in this class that has not received prior authorization. Further, do not keep headphones in your ears even if you are not listening to anything. In essence, you are in class approximately 3 hours a week. Please be present and prepared when you are here.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. *Excused vs. Unexcused absences:* The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate catalog (http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_current/pg576.html) states: "The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions."

I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. After three unexcused absences, your overall course grade will be lowered by a partial grade (from B+ to B, for example) for every further unexcused absence. Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will have missed more than a quarter of the class time and will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid an F.

If you arrive late, after I have taken attendance, I will give you half credit for being in class. This means that two late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence. I realize that delays are sometimes inevitable, and I would rather that you come to class late than not at all. To accommodate that, I will give you three free late passes – after the third late arrival, the late policy as stated above will kick in, with no exceptions. Leaving early without prior permission will count as an unexcused absence.

Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):

Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and an ethical offense. It violates both your own integrity and the ethics of group commitment: when you cut corners and cheat, you undermine those students who took the time to work on the assignment honestly. As a standard minimum penalty, students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Pending investigation, further penalties can include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

Generally speaking, it is a violation of the academic integrity code to:

- Use someone else’s words or ideas without attribution
- Copy content from someone else’s paper, quiz, or exam
- Have someone else complete course assignments

Names and Pronouns:

An important part of creating a respectful learning environment is knowing and using the name you use, which may differ from your legal name, as well as the gendered pronouns you use (for example, I go by he/him/his). Please feel free to let me know your name and/or the pronouns you use at any time.

Accommodations and Sources of Support:

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- **Students with Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.
- **Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations:** Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.
- **Counseling Services:** Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-5805 or <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/>.

- **Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.
- **Students Who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.
- **Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. To submit an incident report: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does **NOT** have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: (973) 353-1918 or run.vpva@rutgers.edu.

Required Readings:

All required readings will be posted on Blackboard under Course Documents. All readings should be completed *before* the date for which they are assigned.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Subject to change; all changes will be announced via Blackboard

Wed, Jan 22:

Course Expectations/Syllabus Review/What Is History?

Mon.: Jan 27: The Atomic Age

- The Atomic Bomb: George Weller Reports, September 1945

Wed, Jan 29: Jackie Robinson and Postwar America

- Branch Rickey, Speech to the “One Hundred Percent Wrong Club” (1956)
- “Let’s Take It in Stride” (1947)
- Screenplay, *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950)
- “Jackie Wouldn’t Have Gotten to First Base” (1950)

Mon, Feb 3: Origins of the Cold War

- U.S. Diplomat George F. Kennan Warns of an Implacable Enemy, 1946
- Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace Urges a Conciliatory Approach, 1946
- Soviet Ambassador Nikolai Novikov Sees a U.S. Drive for World Supremacy, 1946
- President Harry S. Truman Declares World Split Into Two Ways of Life, 1947

Wed, Feb 5: The Cold War at Home

- Senator Joseph McCarthy Charges the Democrats Are “Soft on Communism,” 1950
- The President’s Advisers Urge Military Expansion (NSC-68), April 1950
- Hollywood Screenwriter Lillian Hellman Defies Anticommunist Investigators, 1952

Mon, Feb 10: Mass Culture, Consumer Markets, and Identity in the 1950s

- U.S. Business Celebrates the “Miracle of America,” 1948
- *U.S. News and World Report* Assesses the Perils of Mass Culture and the Evils of Television, 1955
- 7-Up Appeals to the Teen Market, 1957
- Vance Packard Warns against the “Hidden Persuaders,” 1957
- E. Franklin Frazier Critiques the Black Bourgeoisie, 1957
- Advertisers Discover the African-American Urban Market, 1964

Wed, Feb 12: The Cold War Arms Race and the Cuban Missile Crisis

- White House Committee Urges Military Build-Up, 1957
- President Dwight D. Eisenhower Warns of a “Military-Industrial Complex,” 1961
- President John F. Kennedy Declares Sweeping Global Ambitions, 1961
- U.S. Leaders Debate Options during the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962
- *Reading Quiz #1*

Mon, Feb 17: The Black Freedom Struggle

- *New York Times* Reports on a Murder in Georgia, 1946
- The Supreme Court Rules on *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954
- Jo Ann Robinson Remembers the Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955
- Anne Moody Describes a Sit-In in Jackson, Mississippi, May 28, 1963
- Malcolm X Explores the Philosophy of Black Nationalism, 1964

Wed, Feb 19: The Civil Rights Revolution

- Listen to Backstory podcast, “Legislation Impossible: The Civil Rights Act of 1964” (<http://backstoryradio.org/shows/legislation-impossible-2/>)

Mon, Feb 24: The Great Society and the Politics of Liberal Reform

- Activist Rachel Carson Warns of Environmental Dangers, 1962
- President Lyndon B. Johnson Announces His Program for a “Great Society,” 1964
- Landmark Legislation Targets Poverty, 1964
- Governor Ronald Reagan Warns of the Dangers of the Welfare State, 1964
- “How New Immigration Law Was Pushed Through Congress,” 1965
- The Vietnam War Conflicts with the Great Society, 1967

Wed, Feb 26: The New Radicalism of the 1960s

- Students for a Democratic Society Calls for a Profound Reappraisal of American Society, 1962
- The Black Panther Party Explains Its Goals and Beliefs, 1966
- Timothy Leary Celebrates Drug Use, 1967
- Guy Strait, “What Is a Hippie?” 1967
- FBI Wages a Secret Campaign against the New Left, 1968-1971 (1976)

Mon, Mar 2: From the Feminine Mystique to Women's Liberation

- Betty Friedan Uncovers "The Problem That Has No Name," 1963
- NOW Issues Its Statement of Purpose, 1966
- Margaret Cerullo Remembers an Illegal Abortion, 1968
- Pauli Murray Argues that "Sex" Be Included in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, 1964
- Feminists Speak Out against the Miss America Pageant, 1968
- Radicalesbians Explore the Meaning of "The Woman-Identified Woman," 1970
- Black Feminists Speak Out, 1977

Wed, Mar 4: White Flight and Urban Crisis

- The *New York Times* reports on the Development of Levittown on Long Island, 1949
- Martin Luther King, Jr., Testifies on Urban Poverty and Economic Justice, 1966
- Readings on the Newark uprising, 1967 (TBA)
- *Reading Quiz #2*

Mon, Mar 9: Vietnam and the Limits of American Power

- The Vietnamese Declare Their Independence, 1945
- President Dwight D. Eisenhower Explains the Domino Theory, 1954
- The Geneva Agreement Divides Vietnam into North and South, 1954
- A South Vietnamese Peasant Explains Why He Joined the Vietcong, 1961 (1986)
- President Lyndon Johnson's Advisers Debate Expanding the War, 1965
- A Soldier Remembers His Ordeal, 1967-1968

Wed, Mar 11: Catch-Up/Review/Taking Stock

- *Paper #1 Due*

SPRING BREAK

Mon, Mar 23: The Age of Watergate

- Watch the movie *All the President's Men* (1976) before class, available through Rutgers libraries: <https://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/rutgers313400/watch?token=1A48EEFF5649B9E9>

Wed, Mar 25: A New Age of Limits: America and the World in the 1970s

- Biologist Paul Ehrlich Describes the Coming Population Explosion, 1968
- Activist Carl Wittman Issues a "Gay Manifesto," 1970
- Journalist Tom Wolfe Explores the "Me Decade," 1976
- Phyllis Schlafly Explains What's Wrong with Equal Rights for Women, 1972
- Evangelical Reverend Jerry Falwell Calls on Americans to Return to Biblical Morality, 1980

Mon, Mar 30: The Nixon Presidency and the Watergate Scandal

- President Nixon Addresses the Nation on Energy Shortages, 1973
- Time Magazine Editors Urge President Nixon to Resign, 1973
- The Smoking Gun, 1972

Wed, Apr 1: NO CLASS

- *Paper #2 Due*

Mon, Apr 6: The Politics and Popular Culture of the 1980s

- Americans Respond to the Iranian Hostage Crisis, 1980
- Presidential Candidate Ronald Reagan Calls for New Economic Policies, 1980
- President Reagan Proclaims America's "Spiritual Awakening," 1983
- Apple Introduces the First Macintosh Computer, 1984
- A Gay Rights Activist Responds to the AIDS Crisis, 1988
- *Reading Quiz #3*

Wed, Apr 8: Late Capitalism and the Rise of Globalization

- New Democrats Hail the New Economy, 1998
- Social Critic Barbara Ehrenreich Describes Working at Walmart, 2001
- Americans for Democratic Action Reports Growing Poverty and Inequality, 2004
- An Immigrant Garment Worker Describes the Contemporary Sweatshop, 2001
- Nobel Winning Economist Paul Krugman Explores the Origins of the 2008 Financial Crisis, 2009

Mon, Apr 13: The 1990s and the Search for Post-Cold War Priorities

- Political Theorist Francis Fukuyama Declares the "End of History," 1989
- President George H. W. Bush Calls for a New World Order, 1990
- Political Scientist Samuel Huntington Predicts Turmoil and War, 1993
- Republicans Propose a "Contract with America," 1994
- President Clinton Ends "Welfare as We Know It," 1996
- American Voters Split by Income, Education, Race, 2000

Wed, Apr 15: The Rise of Mass Incarceration

- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, Chapter 3: "The Prison Fix"

Mon, Apr 20: The Changing Politics of Migration

- Immigrants Come to America, 1900-2010
- Proposition 187: Californians Seek to Close the Door to Undocumented Immigrants, 1994
- A Pakistani Immigrant Becomes a Suspect after 9/11, 2005
- A Survivor Recalls Hurricane Katrina, 2005

Wed, Apr 22: A Post-Racial America or a New Jim Crow?

- Congressman Gary Miller Calls for Stricter Immigration Legislation, 2006
- Senator Barack Obama Calls for a More Perfect Union, 2008
- A Cartoonist Satirizes Anti-Obama Stereotypes, 2008
- Eighteen-Year-Old Ola Kaso Provides Testimony on the Dream Act, June 28, 2011
- The Movement for Black Lives Outlines Six Policy Demands, 2016: <https://policy.m4bl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/20160726-m4bl-half-sheet-5.5x8.5-1.pdf>

Mon, Apr 27: 9/11 and After

- Osama bin Laden Declares Jihad against America, 1998
- President George W. Bush Examines Sources of Anti-Americanism, 2001
- The Bush Administration Declares a New National Security Strategy, 2002
- Senator Robert C. Byrd Charges “The Emperor Has No Clothes,” 2003

Wed, Apr 29: The U.S. in the World since 9/11

- An Army Officer Ponders the Fight for Hearts and Minds in Iraq, 2004
- U.S. Department of Justice Authorizes CIA to Use Harsh Interrogation Methods, 2005
- Americans Face Competing Priorities at Home and Abroad, 2010
- Defense Department Foresees New National Security Threats, 2010
- *Reading Quiz #4*

Mon, May 4: Exam Review/Big Takeaways/Course Evaluations

Wed, May 13: Take-home Final Exam Due 6PM