

Contemporary US History: The United States Since 1945

21:512:371:01

Spring 2022

Professor Timothy Stewart-Winter, timsw@rutgers.edu

Class meeting times: Monday 2:30-3:50PM/Wednesday 1-2:20PM

Class location: 48 New Street, Room 214A

Office hours (Zoom): Tuesdays 2:30-3:30PM & by appointment ([use this link](#))

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 and social 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:

Class Participation – 20%

5 Reading Quizzes – 30%

Paper (3 pages) – 25% (Due Fri, Mar 11 at 6PM)

Take-home Final Exam – 25% (Due Wed, May 8 at 6PM, essay format)

Reading Quizzes: There will be 5 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 5 that are already scheduled) if too many students are not completing reading assignments on time.*

Papers: You will write one short paper of approximately 3 pages. This paper will be due on Friday, March 11.

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.

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.

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.

Readings

There are no required books. All readings will be available either on Canvas or through the Rutgers University Libraries (<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>).

Take-Home Final Exam: There will be a take-home, essay-format final exam that will cover all readings.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1

Wed, Jan 19

First day of class

Week 2

Mon, Jan 24 – The Atomic Age

- George Weller, reports from Nagasaki on the atomic bomb, September 1945

Wed, Jan 26 - Postwar?

- Michael Sherry, "War as a Way of Life," *Modern American History* 1, no. 1 (March 2018): 93–96

Week 3

Mon, Jan 31 - An Affluent Society

- Elaine Tyler May, *Fortress America: How We Embraced Fear and Abandoned Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2017)—chapter 1, "Gimme Shelter: Security in the Atomic Age"

Wed, Feb 2 - Dissent

- Allen Ginsberg, *Howl* (1955)

Week 4

Mon, Feb 7 – The Lavender Scare

- Judith Adkins, "'These People Are Frightened to Death': Congressional Investigations and the Lavender Scare," *Prologue* 48, no. 2 (Summer 2016): <http://archives.gov/publications/prologue/2016/summer/lavender.html>

Wed, Feb 9 – The Cold War Abroad

- “How Two Brothers Waged a ‘Secret World War’ in the 1950s,” *All Things Considered*, WBUR (Boston), September 29, 2013, <https://www.wbur.org/npr/226578486/how-two-brothers-waged-a-secret-world-war-in-the-1950s>

Week 5

Mon, Feb 14 – Black Liberation

- Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York: Knopf, 2010)—Prologue

Wed, Feb 16 – Confronting the White Moderate

- Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” (1966)

Week 6

Mon, Feb 21 – Black Power

- Black Panther Party, “Ten-Point Program” (1966)

Wed, Feb 23 – Newark ‘67

- 1) Nathan Wright, Jr., *Ready to Riot* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968)—“Introduction: A City in Rebellion”
- 2) Mary Rizzo and Whitney Strub, “The Newark History Missing from ‘Many Saints,’” *Washington Post* Made By History blog, October 11, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/10/11/newark-history-missing-many-saints/>

Week 7

Mon, Feb 28 – Roots of the Vietnam War II

- The Fog of War (2003), <https://video-alexanderstreet.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/watch/the-fog-of-war-eleven-lessons-from-the-life-of-robert-s-mcnamara>

Wed, Mar 2 – Roots of the Vietnam War II

- Ho Chi Minh, “Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam,” September 2, 1945, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5139/>

Week 8

Mon, Mar 7 – An Age of Limits

- Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968–1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007)—chapter 2, “Getting the House in Order: The Oil Embargo, Consumption, and the Limits of American Power”

Wed, Mar 9

- Review

Fri, Mar 11 - Paper Due at 6PM (3 page)

SPRING BREAK

Week 9

Mon, Mar 21 – Gates and Walls

- Minian, Ana Raquel, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration* (Harvard University Press, 2018)—“Introduction: From Neither Here nor There”

Wed, Mar 23 – Roe v. Wade

- Margaret Cerullo, “Hidden History: An Illegal Abortion in 1968,” excerpt

Week 10

Mon, Mar 28 – Mass Incarceration

- Heather Ann Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History,” *Journal of American History* 97:3 (December 2010): 703–58

Wed, Mar 30 – The Watergate Scandal

- “To Our Readers: An Editorial: The President Should Resign,” *Time*, November 12, 1973

Week 11

Mon, Apr 4 - Feminism

- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, ed., *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017)—introduction and “The Combahee River Collective Statement”

Wed, Apr 6 - Antifeminism

- Jerry Falwell, *Listen America!* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), excerpt

Week 12

Mon, Apr 11 – The Age of Reagan

- Ronald Reagan, speech to the International Business Council, Chicago, September 9, 1980 (excerpts)
- Ronald Reagan, remarks at the National Association of Evangelicals annual convention, Orlando, March 8, 1983 (excerpts)

Wed, Apr 13 – The Age of AIDS

- People With AIDS, “The Denver Principles” (1983)
- William F. Buckley Jr., “Crucial Steps in Combating the AIDS Epidemic; Identify All the Carriers,” *New York Times*, March 18, 1986,

<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/07/16/specials/buckley-aids.html>

Week 13

Mon, Apr 18 – 9/11

- Jim O'Brien, "The Contested Meaning of 9/11," *Radical History Review* 111 (Fall 2011), 5-27

Wed, Apr 20 – Obama

- Timothy Stewart-Winter, "The Gay Rights President," in *The Presidency of Barack Obama: A First Historical Assessment*, ed. Julian E. Zelizer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018): 95-110

Week 14

Mon, Apr 25 – Trump

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The First White President," <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/10/the-first-white-president-ta-nehisi-coates/537909/>

Wed, Apr 27 – Say Their Names

- Jelani Cobb, "An American Spring of Reckoning," *New Yorker*, June 22, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/06/22/an-american-spring-of-reckoning>

Week 15

Mon, May 2

- Review

Take-Home Exam Due May 8 at 6PM

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Citizenship and Community

We will be reading and discussing material on which we may not all agree; some of the themes and imagery we encounter in the sources may seem offensive or otherwise controversial. In this context especially, it is crucial for us to combine the free expression of ideas with respect for each other. This is your community and your class; each one of you has a responsibility to that community.

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 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.

Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism)

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found online at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

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.

Please learn to resist the urge to cut and paste, either literally or figuratively, by using other people's ideas. If I find that you have used other people's ideas (e.g., Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book jacket descriptions, etc.), I will not accept the assignment because I will not be able to consider it your own work. You will get a failing grade for that assignment and will not be able to make it up.

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."

Intellectual Property and Privacy:

Lectures and materials utilized in this course, including but not limited to videocasts, podcasts, visual presentations, assessments, and assignments, are protected by United States copyright laws as well as Rutgers University policy. As the instructor of this course, I possess sole

copyright ownership. You are permitted to take notes for personal use or to provide to a classmate also currently enrolled in this course. Under no other circumstances is distribution of recorded or written materials associated with this course permitted to any internet site or similar information-sharing platform without my express written consent. Doing so is a violation of the university's Academic Integrity Policy.

Similarly, these copyright protections extend to original papers you produce for this course. In the event that I seek to share your work further, I will first obtain your written consent to do so. Finally, as the instructor for this course, I have the responsibility to protect students' right to privacy. Classroom recordings of students will therefore be treated as educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the U.S. federal law that governs access to educational information and records. Instructors and students must provide notification if any part of online sessions are to be recorded, and such recordings cannot be circulated outside the course.

Accommodation and Support Statement

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

Covid-related Resources: These two links provide a comprehensive list of available resources: <https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/covid-19-operating-status#SupportingOurStudents>; and <https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/covid19>.

For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link:

<https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University's Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at <http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/>.

Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to *report information* about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak with a staff member who is confidential and does not have this reporting responsibility, you may contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at (973) 353-1918, or at run.vpva@rutgers.edu. Learn more about the office here: <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/vpva>

For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a **confidential resource** and does **not** have an obligation to report information to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out *TAO at Rutgers-Newark* for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: <https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO>.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.