

Contemporary United States History

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Fall 2019

Professor Timothy Stewart-Winter, timsww@rutgers.edu

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

Class location: Smith Hall 245

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 and secondary 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, Dec 18 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 will 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 5 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 list of movies and all other details including a grading rubric will be available via an assignment sheet on Blackboard. 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 Wednesday, December 18 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. There will be no make-up opportunities for missed classes.

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:

There is one required book to be purchased:

- Robert P. Ingalls & David K. Johnson, eds., *The United States Since 1945: A Documentary Reader* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), ISBN 9781405167147

The book can be purchased from on-line sellers and at the RU-N bookstore. Two copies are on 2-hour reserve in Dana Library. All other required readings are 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 on Blackboard

Week 1: Introductions

Wed, Sep 4: Course Expectations/Syllabus Review/What Is History?

Week 2: The Atomic Age

Mon, Sep 9:

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

Wed, Sep 11:

- Jackie Robinson documents

Week 3: Origins of the Cold War

Mon, Sep 16:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 17-31

Wed, Sep 18:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 31-42

Week 4: Postwar Society and Culture

Mon, Sep 23:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 43-61

Wed, Sep 25:

- Ruth Feldstein, “‘I Wanted the Whole World to See’: Race, Gender, and Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till”
- *Reading Quiz #1*

Week 5: The Black Freedom Struggle

Mon, Sep 30:

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

Wed, Oct 2:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 80-87

Week 6: Race and the Image of American Democracy

Mon, Oct 7:

- Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, Chapter 4: “Holding the Line in Little Rock”
- *Reading Quiz #2*

Wed, Oct 9:

- NO CLASS – Watch movie of your choice, from the list provided by the instructor (on the assignment sheet for Paper #1)

Week 7: Vietnam and the 1960s

Mon, Oct 14:

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

Wed, Oct 16:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 107-120
- *Paper #1 due*

Week 8: The Great Society and the Limits of Liberalism

Mon, Oct 21

- Julian Zelizer, *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and the Battle for the Great Society*, Chapter 4: “Legislating Civil Rights”

Wed, Oct 23:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 120-134

Week 9: Suburban Ascendance and Urban Crisis

Mon, Oct 28:

- Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, Chap. 14: “The Drive-In Culture of Contemporary America”
- *Reading Quiz #3*

Wed, Oct 30:

- 1967 Newark uprising coverage in *Life* and *Jet* magazines

Week 10: Feminism and Gay Liberation

Mon, Nov 4:

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

Wed, Nov 6:

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

Week 11: Conservative Ascendance

Mon, Nov 11:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 167-184 and 193-197
- Bruce Springsteen, “Born in the USA” (1984)

Wed, Nov 13:

- Watch the movie *All the President’s Men* (1976) before class available through Rutgers library

Week 11: Migration and Globalization

Mon, Nov 18:

- Reed Ueda, *Postwar Immigrant America: A Social History*, Chapter 3: “The Changing Face of Post-1965 Immigration”

Wed, Nov 20:

- Larry King Live, NAFTA Debate (1993)
<https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2016/09/02/nafta-debate-1993-al-gore-ross-perot-entire-larry-king-live.cnn/video/playlists/larry-king-live-interviews/>
- *Paper #2 due*

Week 12: The Rise of Mass Incarceration

Mon, Nov 25:

- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, Chapter 3: “The Prison Fix”
- *Reading Quiz #4*

Wed, Nov 27: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

Week 13: 9/11 and After

Mon, Dec 2:

- Jennifer L. Bryan, “Constructing ‘the True Islam’ in Hostile Times: The Impact of 9/11 on Arab Muslims in Jersey City”

Wed, Dec 4:

- Ingalls/Johnson, *US Since 1945*, 216-225

Week 14: Obama and the Promise of Post-Racial America

Mon, Dec 9:

- Barack Obama, Keynote Address to the Democratic National Convention (2004)
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “Fear of a Black President,” *The Atlantic*, August 22, 2012
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/09/fear-of-a-black-president/309064/>

Wed, Dec 11

- Exam Review/Big Takeaways/Course Evaluations

Wed, Dec 18: Take-home exam due 6PM