

MODERN AMERICA, 1945 TO THE PRESENT
HIST 3073

Fall 2007
TR 8-9:15am
LeConte Hall, Room 101

Dr. Hamilton
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Office hours: MW 2:30-4:00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

After decades of depression and war, the United States emerged after World War II as a dominant world force, experiencing unprecedented economic growth and rapid technological change. The promises and problems of prosperity took center stage in national politics, as a greatly enlarged federal government crafted social and economic policies in response to the demands of mobilized social movements. This course will examine the legacies of these interactions between society and state, including the politics of the Cold War, the political culture of mass consumption, labor and civil rights struggles, conflicts over the social welfare state, the war in Vietnam and the antiwar movement, second-wave feminism, the economic and environmental crises of the 1970s, the neo-conservative revolution, and global confrontations at the end of the century. We will develop our understanding of these large-scale historical changes both from the perspectives of current historians and through the recollections of people who participated and observed history in the making.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance

Attendance at *every* class meeting is mandatory, and will significantly help your grade since exam questions will be drawn from my lectures as well as the reading material. I will take attendance daily, and all absences are considered unexcused. Repeat: there is no such thing as an excused absence. You have two free "skips" that should allow you to attend to any personal or family emergencies that arise. After your second absence from class, I will deduct *one percentage point* from your final course grade for each subsequent absence. If you encounter any issues in your personal or academic life that prevent you from attending class on a regular basis, you should contact me immediately.

Reading and Discussions

Required readings are listed below. You are expected to complete the assigned reading materials *before* each class session. Active participation in the discussions is required. To facilitate discussion, each student is required to post to WebCT, at least 2 hours prior to daily discussion, two *analytical* questions in response to each session's reading. Occasional surprise ("pop") quizzes or in-class writing assignments will be administered to make sure the reading is being done.

Exams

There will be three exams (two in-class midterms and one take-home comprehensive final exam). These will take the form of a combination of short-answer identifications and long-answer analytical essays. Students who do the required reading, attend class regularly, take good notes, and develop insights and analyses on the course material will do well on the exams.

Writing Assignments

Students are required to complete two writing assignments. The first is a film review, due Sep. 13—a 250-500 word (1-2 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font, 1" margins) critical analysis of an approved movie (see WebCT for details). The second writing assignment is an original essay on public reaction to the Vietnam War using primary source materials located at the Russell Library. This essay, due Nov. 6

(upload to WebCT by 8am), should be 1000 to 1250 words (4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font, 1" margins) in length. Specific information on this assignment is available on WebCT. Assignments will be penalized 10 points (out of 100) for every day that they are late. No paper extensions will be granted except under truly extraordinary instances.

Note on Requirements

Please note that the course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary, and if so, will be announced to the class by the instructor. This means that course readings and requirements are subject to change at the professor's discretion, and it is the student's responsibility to keep abreast of class announcements.

Academic Integrity

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. In short, do not plagiarize. Any infringement of the University's Academic Honesty Code—no matter how minor—will result in an automatic "0" (zero). Visit the following website for more information: http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/academic_honesty.htm

GRADING

Discussion	10%
Quizzes and Reading Questions	5%
Exam I	20%
Research Paper	20%
Exam II	20%
Exam III	25%

READING LIST

The following books are required reading, and will be available for purchase at the bookstore (or online), as well as placed on reserve at the library. Other documents, marked by an asterisk (*) in the schedule, will be made available on the course website. Students who provide me with a blank CD-R can also have all the PDFs burned onto the disk.

- John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).
- Joyce Johnson, *Minor Characters* (Houghton Mifflin, 1983)
- Ann Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (Dell, 1968)
- James S. Olson and Randy Roberts, eds., *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1998)
- Karen R. Merrill, *The Oil Crisis of 1973-1974: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2007).

SCHEDULE

- Aug. 16 Introduction to the Course: The Legacies of Depression and War
- Aug. 21 Lecture: Truman, the Cold War, and Containment
Film: *The Atomic Café* (1982)
Required Reading: Gaddis, *Cold War*, pp. 1-63.

- Aug. 23 Lecture: Constructing a Postwar World
 Discussion
 Required Reading: Gaddis, *Cold War*, pp. 64-118.
- Aug. 28 Lecture: "Pinkos," "Commies," and the "Homosexual Menace"
 Required Reading: *Testimony of Walt Disney before HUAC (1947); *"Homosexuals in Government" (1950); *Senator Joseph McCarthy on George C. Marshall (1951)
- Aug. 30 Film: *On the Waterfront* (1954)
 Discussion
 Required Reading: *Peter Biskind, "The Politics of Power in *On the Waterfront*," *Film Quarterly* 29 (Autumn 1975): 25-38.
- Sep. 4 Lecture: Supermarkets, Suburbs, and the Politics of Affluence
 Discussion
 Required Reading: *Shelley Nickles, "More Is Better: Mass Consumption, Gender, and Class Identity in Postwar America," *American Quarterly* 54 (Dec. 2002): 581-622
- Sep. 6 Lecture: Agribusiness and the Transformation of Rural Life
 Discussion
 Required Reading: *John H. Davis, "Business Responsibility and the Market for Farm Products," Address before Boston Conference on Distribution, Oct. 17, 1955
- Sep. 11 Lecture: Bebop, Rock n' Roll, and the Beats
 Discussion
 Required Reading: Johnson, *Minor Characters*, first half
- Sep. 13 Lecture: JFK and the Promise of American Liberalism
 Discussion
 Required Reading: Johnson, *Minor Characters*, second half.
- Sep. 13 Film Review Due, upload to WebCT by 11:55pm**
- Sep. 18 Lecture: LBJ and the "Great Society"
 Exam Review
- Sep. 20 Exam I (in class)**
- Sep. 25 Lecture: The Civil Rights Era I: Inequality
 Discussion
 Required Reading: Moody, *Coming of Age* (part I)
- Sep. 27 Lecture: The Civil Rights Era II: Struggle
 Discussion
 Required Reading: Moody, *Coming of Age* (part II).

- Oct. 2 Film: *Freedom on My Mind* (1994)
- Oct. 4 Lecture: The Civil Rights Era III: Politics
Discussion
Required Reading: Moody, *Coming of Age*, finish.
- Oct. 9 Lecture: Protesting "The Machine"—The New Left and the New Right
Discussion
Required Reading: *Hendrik Hertzberg, "The San Francisco Sound," (Oct. 1966), pp. 3-18;
*Students for a Democratic Society, "The Port Huron Statement," (1962); *Young
Americans for Freedom, "The Sharon Statement" (1960)
- Oct. 11 Exam II (in class)**
- Oct. 16 Visit the Russell Library
- Oct. 18 Lecture: Vietnam: Into the Quagmire
Film: *The War at Home* (1979)
- Oct. 23 Film: *The War at Home*, cont'd
Discussion
Required Reading: Olson and Roberts, *My Lai*, pp. 1-112, 133-139, 146-151, 176-186.
- Oct. 25 NO CLASS—FALL BREAK
- Oct. 30 Lecture: Second-Wave Feminism
Discussion
Required Reading: *SNCC Position Paper: Women in the Movement (1964); *Casey Hayden and
Mary King, "Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo" (1965); *Betty Friedan, "The Problem That
Has No Name" (1963); *Barbara Susan, "About My Consciousness Raising"; *Pat
Mainardi, "The Politics of Housework"
- Nov. 1 Lecture: From *Silent Spring* to Earth Day
Discussion
Required Reading: *Lady Bird Johnson, "Remarks before the General Session" (1965); *Ben H.
Bagdikian, "The Rape of the Land" (1966); *Lois Gibbs, "Knocking on Doors at Love
Canal" (1983).
- Nov. 6 Research Paper Due, upload to WebCT by 8:00am**
- Nov. 6 Lecture: Watergate and the Fall (?) of the Imperial Presidency
Discussion: Research Paper findings
- Nov. 8 Lecture: The Personal Is Political: Race, Rights, and Taxes
Lecture: The "Southernization" of America

- Nov. 13 Lecture: "Southernization," cont'd.
 Discussion
 Required Reading: *Peter Schrag, "The Forgotten American," *Harper's*, Aug. 1969, 27-34.
- Nov. 15 Lecture: Panic at the Pump—The Global Politics of Food and Fuel
 Lecture: Crises of Confidence—American "Malaise"
- Nov. 20 Lecture: Crises of Confidence, cont'd
 Discussion
 Required Reading: Merrill, *Oil Crisis*, pp. 1-28, 37-41, 48-98, 113-122, 124-133, 140-143, 149-152.
- Nov. 22 NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK
- Nov. 27 Lecture: The Reagan Revolution
 Discussion
- Nov. 29 Lecture: The End of the Cold War
 Discussion
 Required Reading: Gaddis, *The Cold War*, pp. 189-266.
- Dec. 4 NO CLASS—Today is a "Friday Schedule"
- Dec. 6 Lecture: An Age of Uncertainty and Inequality
 Required Reading: *Nelson Lichtenstein, "Supply Chains, Workers' Chains, and the New World of Retail Supremacy," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 4 (2007): 17-31
- Dec. 12 Final Take-Home Exam due (upload to WebCT by 11:55pm)**