

**MODERN AMERICA, 1945 TO THE PRESENT**  
**HIST 3073**  
Dr. Hamilton

**Fall 2010**  
**MWF 9:05-9:55am**  
**LeConte Hall, Room 321**

Office: 306 LeConte Hall  
Email: shamilto@uga.edu  
Office hours: MW 10-11am

**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 OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS**

**Objectives**

Students will gain breadth and depth of knowledge of American history since 1945. Students will improve their skills in reading, writing, and discussing complex ideas at an advanced level. Good writing is learned in part by reading extensively and intensively, so we will do a significant amount of reading (50 to 150 pages per week).

**Attendance**

Attendance at *every* class meeting is mandatory. All absences are considered unexcused. You have four free "skips" that should allow you to attend to any personal or family emergencies that arise. After your fourth 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 will write three short reading response papers (see ELC for more details). Up to ten quizzes or in-class writing assignments will be administered to make sure the reading is being done.

**Exams**

There will be three exams, each covering approximately one-third of the course material (readings, lectures, videos, and discussions). Each of the exams will include short-answer identifications and analytical essays. You are responsible for providing your own blue books for each exam (they are for sale at the bookstore).

**Writing Assignments**

Students are required to complete two formal writing assignments. One will be a short paper of 500-750 words, written in response to Laura Wexler's *Fire in a Canebrake* (see ELC for more details). The second writing assignment is an original essay of 1000-1250 words on the Vietnam War (see ELC for more details).

**Late Assignments**

Assignments will be penalized 10 points (out of 100) for every 24 hours 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 announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. This means that course readings and requirements are subject to change at the professor's discretion.

## Academic Integrity

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible for informing 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](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/academic_honesty.htm)

## Grading

Please consult "How to Get an A" and "Grading Policies" on ELC for detailed information on how I assign grades for course work.

Discussion, Reading Responses, and Quizzes	15%
Short Paper I	5%
Exam I	20%
Research Paper	20%
Exam II	20%
Exam III	20%

## READING LIST

The following books are required reading, and will be available for purchase at the bookstore (or online). 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.

- Laura Wexler, *Fire in a Canebrake: The Last Mass Lynching in America* (Scribner 2003)
- Meg Jacobs and Julian E. Zelizer, *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years, 1981-1989: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford 2010)

## SCHEDULE

Aug. 16	Introduction to the Course
Aug. 18	Lecture: The Legacies of Depression and War
Aug. 20	Film: <i>The Atomic Café</i> (1982)
Aug. 23	Lecture: Truman, the Cold War, and Containment
Aug. 25	Lecture: Constructing a Postwar World
Aug. 27	Discussion: Required Reading: *Melvyn Leffler, "The Origins of the Cold War, 1945-1948," in <i>For the Soul of Mankind</i> (Hill and Wang 2007), pp. 11-83; *David Riesman, "The Nylon War (1951)" in <i>Abundance For What?</i> (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 67-79.
Aug. 30	Lecture: Big Government, Big Business, Big Labor
Sep. 1	Lecture: "Pinkos," "Commies," and the "Homosexual Menace"
Sep. 3	Discussion: Required Reading: *Testimony of Walt Disney before HUAC (1947); *"Homosexuals in Government" (1950); *Senator Joseph McCarthy on George C. Marshall (1951); * Margot Canaday, "Building a Straight State: Sexuality and Social Citizenship under the 1944 G.I. Bill," <i>Journal of American History</i> 90 (Dec. 2003): 935-57.

Sep. 6	NO CLASS—LABOR DAY
Sep. 8	Lecture: Supermarkets, Suburbs, and the Politics of Affluence
Sep. 10	Discussion: Required Reading: *Shelley Nickles, "More Is Better: Mass Consumption, Gender, and Class Identity in Postwar America," <i>American Quarterly</i> 54 (Dec. 2002): 581-622.
Sep. 13	Lecture: Bebop, Rock n' Roll, and the Beats
Sep. 15	Lecture: Agribusiness and the Transformation of Rural Life
Sep. 17	<b>Exam I in Class</b>
Sep. 20	Lecture: The Civil Rights Era I
Sep. 22	Lecture: The Civil Rights Era II
Sep. 24	Discussion: Required Reading: Wexler, <i>Fire in a Canebrake</i> , pp. 1-244 (entire).
Sep. 27	Lecture: JFK and the Promise of American Liberalism
Sep. 29	Lecture: LBJ and the "Great Society"
Oct. 1	Discussion: Required Reading: *Susan Levine, "No Free Lunch," in <i>School Lunch Politics</i> (Princeton 2008), pp. 105-126.
Oct. 4	Lecture: The Civil Rights Era III
Oct. 6	Discussion: Required Reading: *Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (1963); *Anne Moody, "A Lunch-Counter Sit-In in Jackson, Mississippi" (1968); *Black Panther Party Platform and Program (October 1966); *Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Position Paper, "The Basis of Black Power" (1966)
Oct. 8	Film: <i>Freedom on My Mind</i> <b>Paper I due to ELC by 11:59pm</b>
Oct. 11	Lecture: Protesting "The Machine"—The New Left and the New Right
Oct. 13	Lecture: Vietnam: Into the Quagmire
Oct. 15	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); *George Skakel, "One Soldier's View: Vietnam Letters" (1967-68); *The John Birch Society and the Vietnam War (1965/1968).
Oct. 18	Lecture: Second-Wave Feminism
Oct. 20	Video: "Edith the Job-Hunter," <i>All in the Family</i> , first aired September 28, 1974.
Oct. 22	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"
Oct. 25	Lecture: From <i>Silent Spring</i> to Earth Day
Oct. 27	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); *Warren J. Belasco, <i>Appetite for Change</i> , (Cornell 2007), pp. 68-94.

Oct. 29	NO CLASS—FALL BREAK
Nov. 1	Lecture: Watergate, Nixon, and the Imperial Presidency
Nov. 3	<b>Exam II in Class</b>
Nov. 5	Research Day / Meet the Archivists at Russell Library
Nov. 8	Lecture: The Personal is Political: Race, Rights, and Taxes
Nov. 10	Lecture: The "Southernization" of American Culture
Nov. 12	Discussion: Required Reading: *Peter Schrag, "The Forgotten American," <i>Harper's</i> , Aug. 1969, 27-34; *Joseph Crespino, "Civil Rights and the Religious Right," in <i>Rightward Turn</i> (Princeton 2008), pp. 90-105.
Nov. 15	Lecture: Panic at the Pump—The Global Politics of Food and Fuel
Nov. 17	Lecture: Crises of Confidence
Nov. 19	Film: <i>The End of Suburbia</i> (2003)
Nov. 22-26	NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 29	Lecture: The Reagan "Revolution"
Dec. 1	Lecture: The End of the Cold War
Dec. 3	Discussion: Required Reading: Jacobs and Zelizer, <i>Conservatives in Power</i> , pp. 1-9, 54-61, 72-77, 83-94, 99-104, 111-117, 126-128, 131-133, 146-148, 161-168, 183-186, 191-201, 225-227, 230-231.
Dec. 6	Lecture: An Age of Inequality and Uncertainty
Dec. 7	Course Review <b>Paper II due to ELC by 11:59pm</b>
Dec. 13	<b>Exam III, 8:00-11:00am</b>