

HIST 345
Modern American History, 1945-Present
Spring 2009, T Th 11:30-12:45
Seney Hall 322

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COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description:

This course focuses on modern American history from 1945 to the present with particular emphasis on the social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of the United States. In order to understand post-World War II America we will look at four themes throughout the semester: 1) the variety of ways Americans have reacted to their abundant society, 2) the ways the Cold War affected Americans, 3) political interaction between the dominance of Democratic liberalism and ascending Republican conservatism, and 4) the contention over defining American freedom. Topics include, but are not limited to the political, social, and economic consequences of World War II; the evolving and expanding Cold War; American culture and its critics; Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and the decline of liberalism; and the rise of the conservative right.

Course Goals:

There are several objectives for this course. First, by gaining a factual knowledge of this historical period the course seeks to assist students in learning to think historically by recognizing and criticizing evidence and using primary and secondary sources to understand the process of history. Second, this course strives to help students discover, understand, and appreciate the interplay of forces and personalities that shaped the history of modern America. Third, as a writing intensive class that fulfills the sophomore writing requirement, this course will also assist students in developing and refining their writing abilities by organizing, describing, and reaching conclusions on paper about material that they have studied. These skills will benefit students in the future when they enroll in upper division courses.

Required Reading: These books are available at the campus bookstore and on reserve at the library

Ralph B. Levering, Vladimir O. Pechatnov, Verena Botzenhart-Viehe, and C. Earl Edmondson, *Debating the Origins of the Cold War: American and Russian Perspectives*, (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).

Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, (New York: Archer Books, 2007).

Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1940*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, 1998).

Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Kent B. Germany, *New Orleans After the Promises: Poverty, Citizenship, and the Search for the Great Society*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's Press: Boston, 2001. On reserve only, not at the bookstore. You may want to buy your own copy through Amazon.

Primary documents and journal articles on E-Reserves of the library's web page.

Grading and Assignments:

Essay One (6-8 double-spaced pages, Times New Roman type font size 10) on the Aftermath of World War II and the developing Cold War (20%) initial draft due **February 17** at the *beginning* of class and final draft due **February 24** at the *beginning* of class. **Essay Two** (8-10 double-spaced pages, Times New Roman type font size 10) on 1950s American culture (30%) initial draft due **March 19** at the *beginning* of class and final draft due **March 26** at the *beginning* of class. **One page reading responses** (10%). **Participation** (10%) includes active participation and engaged listening during class discussion and advice given in peer reviews of essays. **Final Essay Exam, May 6, 2:00-5:00 p.m.** (30%). Study questions for the final examination will be passed out at least one week prior to the exam.

All assignments as well as your final course grade will be based on the +/- system.

Honor Code:

We are a community of scholars. Therefore, academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Your name or signature on a paper or test submitted for credit shall indicate you have neither given nor received unauthorized information on the work, nor have you condoned the giving or receiving of unauthorized information by others. As a student at Oxford College of Emory University you have agreed to abide by the honor pledge and have taken upon yourself the responsibility of upholding the Honor Code; you are urged to inquire of the Honor Council about any doubtful case at any time throughout the semester. For complete details on the Honor Code please see the Oxford College 2008-2009 Catalog.

Note on writing and plagiarism: Students must be scrupulous to avoid plagiarism and to give very precise and complete citations for any work used in any way. Always make it precisely clear to the reader through the use of quotation marks and citations which words, if any, are taken from some other source. Be very careful if you draw on any source—whether from the internet or an archival reference—to give the precise source of each and every word used. Avoid using too many direct quotations; I am much more interested in your paraphrasing of, and commentary upon, the authors' arguments than in your ability to quote directly. Nevertheless, even when paraphrasing you need to cite the source used. For further details see Chapter 5 in Mary Lynn Rampolla's *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* as well as the American Historical Association's "Statement on Plagiarism" that will be handed out and discussed in class.

Attendance Policy:

Class begins at 11:30a.m. and ends at 12:45 p.m. A 300-level course requires your regular attendance and active participation in class. Students are allowed two absences, every absence after that will deduct points from the class participation/attitude portion of your final course grade. It is your responsibility to obtain missed notes from class and to turn in all assignments on time. During class discussion of reading material I expect you to have prepared before class. Your class participation grade will be based upon your discussion of the material at hand, merely talking for talking's sake is not considered valid participation. If you attend class regularly but never participate in class discussion your participation grade will be a C (75), so do your best to offer your thoughts or opinions on the reading material throughout the course of the semester.

If you miss a due date for any assignment, **only absences due to medical or family emergencies** (for example, attending the funeral of an immediate family member) are valid. You will need to present written evidence of your illness or family emergency for an excused absence. If you miss a due date on a written assignment, whether in preliminary draft form or final form, a late penalty of **five points per day** (including weekends) will be deducted from your grade for that assignment. If you turn in your written assignment after the beginning of class but on the same day it is due you will be deducted **2.5 points** from your grade for that assignment. **I do not accept written assignments turned in via e-mail. I only accept hard copies of written assignments.** You cannot change the time of your final exam because of travel plans, vacation plan, job opportunities, or having more than one final exam on one day.

I encourage you to visit me during my office hours, or make an appointment with me if my office hours do not coincide with your schedule. One of the positive experiences you can have at Oxford College is getting to know your professors well. So, take advantage of that opportunity and come see me throughout the semester.

Class Etiquette:

E-mail: We will have a class conference on LearnLink that corresponds with this course. I will post all assignments on the conference as well as other pertinent items that may enhance class discussion. When communicating with your fellow classmates on the conference or with me on my personal e-mail address do not post anything that you would not be comfortable saying to your classmates or to me in person.

The rules for writing e-mail in formal situations—class discussions, letters to professors, student discussion lists—do not necessarily apply when writing e-mail to friends and family. So, here are my suggestions for using e-mail in our class. When writing to me or on our LearnLink conference you should use a serious tone. Address me by my proper title, follow rules of grammar and mechanics, and do not use all lower or upper case letters. You should use black ink in your e-mail message and a normal size font. Avoid using expletives and other slang in formal situations. I have heard it said that writing is like fashion, one style is not appropriate for every situation. For example, you would not wear your bathing suit to a job interview at a bank. So, get in the habit of using your

professional voice when communicating as a professional, in your case your profession right now is being a college student.

Do not assume just because you *can* get in touch with me when you want to that I will be available to read your message. I rarely check e-mail once I leave campus, which is usually around 5:30 p.m., and I don't check e-mail over the weekend. So, note that I read e-mail from 9:00-5:30 Monday through Friday. Also, take time to think about your message before you send it. Never send a message when you are feeling emotional, particularly if you are upset or angry. I also do not accept written assignments via e-mail. I only accept hard copies of written assignments.

Finally, know that e-mail is not a very private communication system. Your messages can be printed out, and they can also be sent on to others as forwarded messages. Any private message you send potentially can come under public scrutiny; therefore you should not write anything that would cause you or someone else embarrassment or trouble should your e-mail become public. Most importantly, remember that even though you cannot see them, you are communicating with real human beings whenever you send e-mail. Do not let the impersonal screen make you forget to be as respectful in your communication as you would be when speaking face to face.

Class Discussion: We will spend time this semester discussing readings written by professional scholars as well as by ourselves. In this process of discussion it is important to nurture the habit of being a good listener. Practice paying close attention to what others are saying as well as what you are saying. Through this process of listening well we will also respect each other. Our goal is to understand, not to operate only out of a place of judgment. In this manner we will be able to see the nuance and historical context of what we study to gain a deeper understanding. It is also essential that we build a sense of trust among ourselves that will enable us to speak frankly about some difficult parts of our historical past. If education means anything it changes us. That is not easy because we do not like change. So we have to be prepared to face historical reality to enable us to see the world from the perspective of others.

Students should approach discussions having read the assigned readings and thought of questions and ideas provoked by the material. Do not be modest in introducing ideas in class or in politely opposing the ideas of others. Ideally, discussion is a form of active learning that reinforces the sense that the classroom is a community of learning. Students should expect to learn a great deal from each other, as well as from the reading material and their professors.

Cell Phones: I do not take phone calls during class so you should not either. Turn off your cell phone when you are in class or when we are visiting a historic site.

SCHEDULE

Jan 15	Syllabus, What does it mean to live in an abundant society?	
Jan 20	44 th Presidential Inauguration watch in class	
Jan 22	Impact of WWII–the Holocaust and the A-Bomb	E-Reserves Abzug & Hersey, Wiener Chap 1-2
Jan 27	Impact of World War II–Chicago as an example	Hirsch Chap 1-2
Jan 29	Impact of World War II–Chicago as an example	Hirsch Chap 3-4
Feb 3	Origins of the Cold War–the American Perspective	Levering, pp 1-62
Feb 5	Origins of the Cold War–the Russian Perspective	Levering, pp. 85-151
Feb 10	Early Cold War–CIA Under Truman	Weiner, Chap 3-7
Feb 12	Cold War Culture–the CIA Under Eisenhower	Weiner, Chap 8-16
Feb 17	Draft of Essay One on Impact of WWII and Beginnings of the Cold War due at beginning of class. Bring 5 copies of your essay to class (20% of paper grade).	
Feb 19	Cold War Culture–Political Culture	Schoenwald, Chap 1-3
Feb 24	Cold War Culture–Television and America	Doherty, Chap 1-4
Feb 26	Final Draft of Essay One due at the Beginning of Class (80% of paper grade)	
	Cold War Culture–Television and America	Doherty, Chap 5-7
March 3	Cold War Culture–Television and America	Doherty, Chap 8-12
March 5	1950s Race Relations Policy–Chicago as an example	Hirsch Chap 5-7 and epilogue
March 10	No Class Spring Break	
March 12	No Class Spring Break	
March 17	Kennedy and Johnson–1960s begin	
March 19	Draft of Essay Two on Cold War Culture due at the Beginning of Class. Bring 5 copies of your essay to class (20% of paper grade).	
March 24	LBJ's Great Society–the War on Poverty as an example	Germany, Chap 1-9
March 26	LBJ's Great Society–the Civil Rights Movement	E-Reserves
	Final Draft of Essay Two due at the Beginning of Class (80% of paper grade)	
March 31	LBJ's Great Society–the Civil Rights Movement	E-Reserves
April 2	LBJ's Foreign Policy–the CIA in the 1960s	Weiner, Chap 17-27
April 7	The Rise of Modern Conservatism	Schoenwald, Chap 5-7
April 9	The Limits of Liberalism–New Orleans as an example	Germany, Chap 10-concl
April 14	Foreign Policy under Nixon and Ford	Weiner, Chap 28-35
April 16	Ronald Reagan and Modern Conservatism	E-Reserves
April 21	CIA under Carter, Reagan, and Bush	Weiner, Chap 36-43
April 23	CIA under Clinton and G.W. Bush	Weiner, Chap 44-50

April 28	War on Terror or New Cold War?	E-Reserves
April 29	Reading Day	
May 6	Final Exam, 9:00-12 noon. Bring a large blue book and pen or pencil.	