

University of Texas at Austin, Fall 2017
AMS 370/ 31225
BUR 436A
M/W/F 1-2pm

Professor: Lauren Gutterman
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Office hours: MW 2-4pm or by
appointment

Rebels and Rejects: Rethinking the 1950s

Focusing on the first two decades after the end of WWII—the “long 1950s”—this seminar course examines how the context of the cold war influenced American culture and politics, particularly with regard to race, gender, and sexuality. In many ways, cold war paranoia about the communist threat prohibited political dissent, but it also indirectly inspired or created limited opportunities for civil rights struggles for people of color, women, and gays and lesbians. Similarly, despite the postwar emphasis on social and cultural conformity, this era witnessed the development of influential subcultural communities and dramatic cultural innovations with regard to literature, art, and music. This course thus uncovers the roots of the radical liberation movements and social and cultural transformations that emerged with full force in the 1960s. We will examine issues including the early civil rights movement in Mississippi, Asian Americans’ battles against housing discrimination in California, the development of gay and lesbian urban bar cultures, the suburban nuclear family ideal and those bachelors, Beatniks, working women and delinquent teens who defied it.

Goals:

- To introduce you to a range of methods and materials that have been used to study American politics, culture, and society in the 1950s.
- To learn how to identify and critique scholarly arguments.
- To learn how to build your own arguments.
- To learn how to conduct archival research and analyze primary source materials.

Major Questions:

- How did social, cultural, and political transformations of the postwar era lay the groundwork for the dramatic transformations of the 1960s?
- What is the relationship between political radicalism and social and cultural rebellion?
- In what ways did Americans in the postwar era challenge, question, or diverge from mainstream norms?
- What motivated some Americans to political action, cultural innovation, or social dissent in this era?
- What connections exist between the postwar period and our own historical moment?

Required Texts:

Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1957)

Hettie Jones, *How I Became Hettie Jones* (New York: Grove Press, 1990).

*The co-op has ordered used copies of this book, you may also find them online.

Assignments:

Reading Responses

Students will be required to complete 4 reading responses of around 500 words (1.5 to 2 double-spaced pages). These response papers should be turned in to the correct discussion folder by 10 am the day of class. Each response should reflect on the readings to be discussed that day. While these responses are

an opportunity for you to reflect on the materials and share your thoughts and opinions, they must also answer the following questions: Who are the authors? What do they argue? What evidence does they use? After answering these questions you may then provide your personal response to the material.

To ensure that students are not all writing responses on the same days, Group 1 will respond to Monday readings, Group 2 will respond to Wednesday readings, and Group 3 will respond to Friday readings. Students will be assigned groups on the first day of class.

Participation

Active participation is essential to this course. Missing more than 3 classes will affect your final grade. Participation requires more than simply showing up to class. You must complete the readings in advance and come to class prepared to actively contribute to discussion. If you do miss a class please contact one of your peers to find out what you missed.

Midterm Paper

For this assignment you will be required to complete one short 5-7 page paper due **October 14th**. The questions for the midterm will be given at least one week ahead of time.

Final Paper and Presentation

For this assignment you will be required to complete one 10-12 page paper on a “rebel” or “reject” of your choice. You will have to use at least two primary sources, two secondary sources (not from course syllabus), as well as two in-class readings. A paper proposal/annotated bibliography will be due **November 4th**. A rough draft will be due **November 18**. The final draft will be due **December 14th**. You will also prepare a 10 minute presentation on your final paper to present to the class during the final week.

You are encouraged, **but not required** to select an individual to write about who has an archival collection on campus, either at the Briscoe Center for American History or the Harry Ransom Center. You might also want to begin thinking about who you want to write about fairly early in the semester. If you do not choose to write about an individual with primary materials on campus, please talk with me about other ways to locate primary materials online or in other ways.

Here is an initial list of individuals to consider:

Briscoe Center

James and Lula Farmer – civil rights activists
Saul Alinsky – community organizer
C. Wright Mills - sociologist

Ransom Center

Mary McCarthy – novelist
James Baldwin – writer/civil rights activist
Carson McCullers – novelist
Allen Ginsberg – Beat writer
Neal Cassady – Beat writer
Carol Bergé – Beat writer

Jack Kerouac – Beat writer
Fannie Hurst - writer

Additional Notes/Requirements

You must bring your readings to class, either printed out or on a lap top.

I reserve the right to create additional in-class assignments that will count towards your participation grade.

Plus/minus grades will be used in this course.

All students are required to visit me once during office hours. You cannot earn an A in this course if you do not come to office hours at least once.

Late assignments may be docked 5 points each day they are late. If you believe you will require an extension you must contact me at least 24 hours in advance.

University Resources and Policies

I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222, <http://www.uwc.utexas.edu>. The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis.

Students who are found guilty of academic dishonesty will fail the course and be reported to Student Judicial Services. Plagiarism occurs if you represent as your own work any material that was obtained from another source, regardless of how or where you acquired it. For examples of plagiarism, see http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

By UT-Austin policy, you must notify me of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Evaluation:

Attendance and class participation – 10%

Reading responses – 20%

Midterm Paper (5-7 pages) – 30%

Final Paper (10-12 pages) – 40% total

 Annotated Bibliography – 10%

 Rough draft – You may revise for a better grade or take the rough draft grade for your final

 Final draft – 25%

 Paper presentation – 5%

A 100-93 / A- 92-90 / B+ 89-87 / B 86-83 / B- 82-80 / C+ 79-77 / C 76-73 / C- 72-70/ D + 69-67 / D 66-63/ D- 62-60/ F 59-lower

Weekly Schedule:

Wednesday, August 29 – Welcome!

Civil Rights Activists

Friday, August 31

- Charles Payne, “Testing the Limits: Black Activism in Postwar Mississippi” from *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*, (2007 reprint; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 29-66.

Monday, September 3 – NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

Wednesday, September 5

- Danielle L. McGuire, “Walking in Pride and Dignity,” from *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: Vintage Books, 2011), 84-135.

Friday, September 7

- **Primary document workshop: Meet in lobby of Briscoe Center for American History, 2300 Red River St.**

Monday, September 10

- Ruth Feldstein, “I Wanted the Whole World to See: Race, Gender, and Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), 263-303.

Wednesday, September 12

- Shana Bernstein, “Interracial Activism in the Los Angeles Community Service Organization: Linking the World War II and Civil Rights Eras,” *Pacific Historical Review* 80.2 (May 2011), 231-267.

Friday, September 14

- Charlotte Brooks, “*Sing Shen v. Southwood*: Residential Integration in Cold War California” *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 3 (August 2004): 463-493.

Bad Moms and “Difficult” Women

Monday, September 17

- Elaine Tyler May, “Nonmothers as Bad Mothers: Infertility and the ‘Maternal Instinct’” in *“Bad” Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. Molly Ladd-Taylor and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 198-219.

Wednesday, September 19

- Renee Romano, "Immoral Conduct:" White Women, Racial Transgressions, and Custody Disputes," in *"Bad" Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. Molly Ladd-Taylor and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 230-252.

Friday, September 21

- Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism: Union Women in the Postwar Era" in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), pp. 57-83.

Monday, September 24

- Jacqueline Jones, "The Roots of Two Revolutions, 1940-1955," from *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (2010, reprint; New York: Basic Books, 1985), 195-227.

Wednesday, September 26

- Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, "A Weekend Wasn't a Weekend If There Wasn't a Fight': The Tough Bar Lesbians of the 1950s," in *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 67-112.

Friday, September 28

- Maria Elena Buszek, "Pop Goes the Pin-Up: New Roles and Readings in the Postwar Era" from *Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University 2006), 232-267.

Playboys and "Perverts"

Monday, October 1

- Carolyn Herbst Lewis, "Masculinity, Sexual Function, and Male Heterosexual Health" in *Prescription for Heterosexuality: Sexual Citizenship in the Cold War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 71-94.

Wednesday, October 3

- Elizabeth Fraterrigo, "Pads and Penthouses: Playboy's Answer to Suburbanization" in *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 80-104.

Friday, October 5

- Julia Pine, "In Bizarre Fashion: The Double-Voiced Discourse of John Willie's Fetish Fantasia" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 22, no. 1 (January 2013): 1-33.

Monday, October 8

- John D'Emilio, "Radical Beginnings of the Mattachine Society" and "Retreat to Respectability," from *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (1998, reprint; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) pp. 57-91.

Wednesday, October 10

- Nicholas L. Syrett, "A Busman's Holiday: In the Not-So-Lonely Crowd: Business Culture, Epistolary Networks and Itinerant Homosexuality in Mid-Twentieth-Century America," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 21, no. 1 (January 2012): 121-140.

Friday, October 12

- Tim Retzliff, "Seer or Queer? Postwar Fascination With Detroit's Prophet Jones," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 8, no. 3 (2002): 271-296.

Sunday, October 14 – MIDTERM PAPERS DUE ONLINE, MIDNIGHT

Delinquents

Monday, October 15

- James Gilbert, "The Great Fear" in *Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 63-78.

Wednesday, October 17

- James Gilbert, "Selling Youth Culture," in *Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 196-211.

Friday, October 19

- **Primary document workshop: Meet at Harry Ransom Center – no readings!**

Monday, October 22

- Leerom Medov, "Oedipus in Suburbia: Bad Boys and the Fordist Family Drama," *Rebels Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 167-214.

Wednesday, October 24

- Rachel Devlin, "Female Juvenile Delinquency and the Problem of Sexual Authority in America, 1945-1965" *Yale Journal of Law & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (1997): 147-182.

Friday, October 26

- Amanda Littauer, "Going Steady: Permissiveness, Petting, and Premarital Sex in the 1950s," from *Bad Girls: Young Women, Sex and Rebellion before the Sixties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015) pp. 111-142.

Beats and Bohemians

Monday, October 29

- John Clellon Holmes, "This is The Beat Generation," *New York Times Magazine*, November 16, 1952, 10, 19, 20, 22.
- Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (1957).

Wednesday, October 31

- Kerouac continued.

Friday, November 2

- Kerouac continued.

Sunday, November 4 – PROPOSAL AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, MIDNIGHT

Monday, November 5

- Wini Breines, “The Other Fifties: Beats and Bad Girls” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), 382-408.

Wednesday, November 7

- Hettie Jones, *How I Became Hettie Jones* (New York: Grove Press, 1990).

Friday, November 9

- Jones, continued.

Monday, November 12

- Todd F. Tietchen, “The Cubalogues (and After): On the Beat Literary Movement and the Early Cuban Revolution,” *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 63, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 119-152.

Artists and the Avant-Garde

Wednesday, November 14

- Cary Cordova, “Freedom in the Beats: Latino Artists and the 1950s Counterculture” from *Heart of the Mission: Latino Art and Politics in San Francisco* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 41-63.

Friday, November 16

- Frances Stonor Saunders, “Yanqui Doodles,” from *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (1999, reprint; New York: The New Press, 2013), 212-233.

Sunday, November 18 – ROUGH DRAFTS DUE ONLINE, MIDNIGHT

Monday, November 19

- David Ake, “Re-Masculating Jazz: Ornette Coleman, ‘Lonely Woman,’ and the New York Jazz Scene in the late 1950s,” *American Music* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 25-44.

Wednesday, November 21 – NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

Friday, November 23 – NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

Monday, November 26

- Caroline A. Jones, “Finishing School: John Cage and the Abstract Expressionist Ego,” *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (Summer 1993): 628-625.

Wednesday, November 28

- Vincent Brook, “Puce Modern Moment: Camp, Postmodernism, and the Films of Kenneth Anger,” *Journal of Film and Video* 58 no. 2 (Winter 2006): 3-15.

Friday, November 30 – Final Presentations

Monday, December 3 – Final Presentations

Wednesday, December 5 – Final Presentations

Friday, December 7 – Final Presentations

Monday, December 10 – Final Presentations – LAST DAY

Friday, December 14 - FINAL DRAFTS DUE ONLINE, MIDNIGHT