History 45: America Since 1945

This course is a survey of social, political and cultural history of the United States since 1945. Topics include: The Cold War, McCarthyism, Civil Rights, Rock n’ Roll, TV, Baby Boomers, JFK, Gender, LBJ, the Viet Nam War, Nixon and Watergate, The Oil Crisis, The rise of the New Right, Ronald Reagan, George Bush I & II; Bill Clinton, 911, the Iraqi War. We will use the presidencies to help generalize the political climate, discuss the sensibility of each era and select some cultural and social events. The entire era is heavily documented with film of actual events, especially the Atom Bomb, McCarthyism, Civil Rights, the Vietnam War, Ronald Reagan, and the Gulf War, the Election of 2000. We will view portions of these documentaries in class and you are urged to finish viewing them in the library.

**Papers:** There are four written assignments in the class: first a 7 page essay on McCarthyism based on the Ellen Schrecker documents and readings in class; then a mid-term which consists of one essay and ten identifications; Third the analysis of a set of documents on 9/11, 7-10pp.; fourth a final examination consisting of two essay questions and ten identifications. No late papers will be accepted for any reason. Ample time has been provided for the completion of these essays on the due date.

**Requirements:** Reading the weekly reading material, preparing carefully for class and participation in class discussions are also part of the requirement. Failure to attend more than three classes will cost one half grade for each additional absence. Students who have a history of incompletes are strongly encouraged not take this course; I do not do incompletes. There are no late papers in this course. Attendance is required, this is a departmental rule: your grade will go down if you miss classes. You may use the computer to take notes in class, but if I catch you surfing the net, emailing or doing anything other than note taking, the privilege will be revoked.

**Due Dates:** McCarthyism paper,(20%) September 29. (7pp.); midterm (30%) October 27th in class exam ; 9/11 Papers (30%) Dec. 12th (7-10pp); Final examination (20%) (Take Home Examination, ten ID’s in class, December 8th, essay due Dec. 15th No late papers, no exceptions!
**Books:**
Robert Caro, *LBJ: The Passage of Power*
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*
Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*
Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism*
Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies*
Tom Wolfe, *Bonfire of the Vanities*
Stephen Coll, *Ghost Wars; the Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden*
Bob Woodward, *Shadow*

**Documentaries:** We will be viewing about ten documentaries in class during the semester. We will not by any means see the entire film so you are encouraged to take out films after class. In many cases you will see exerts from a series. I urge you to take notes, to pay attention to the content and if you miss class with a documentary presentation you must email me to confirm that you have seen it.

**Articles, Chapters and Electronic Readings:** You are responsible for reading all of the required texts, but additional credit goes to students who are willing to delve into various topics more deeply. Those readings are to be found in Moodle. Reading is lighter in the weeks before your final papers and exams. I will refer to all of the reading in class but will not go over the details: that is your job. The exams are designed to allow you to give me a sense of the depth of your reading.

**Special Speakers:** September 11th 4:30 pm in Pearson Theatre, Lang on the Legacy of Brown v. Board; also on October 1 on the Legacy of the Swarthmore Uprising, 1969.

**Schedule of Classes, assignments, documentaries.**

**WEEK 1**
September 1
Movie, “Saving Private Ryan,” The Normandy Invasion, June 6, 1944

These Moodle readings are required:
Paul Boyer, *By the Bombs Early Light (Moodle)*

September 3 The Post War Scramble
September 5 Truman and Stalin at Potsdam

These Moodle readings are required:
David McCullough, *Truman* ch. 10-13. (after this read for the day assigned)

**WEEK 2**
September 8 Truman’s Foreign Policy, 1947-49
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, ch 1-2
James E. Cronin, “Reviews of the Marshall Plan,” use Jstor to download this review from *Social History,*(15:1) 1990, pp. 135-139.

**September 10  Nuclear War and Soviet Spies**
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, ch 6, 23-24
Ellen Schrecker, *Age of McCarthyism*, Introduction

*Movie, “Atomic Café”*

**September 12 Movie, “Atomic Café”**
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, ch 3

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**WEEK 3**

**September 15 The Cold War at Home**
Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, *The Rosenberg File* ch. 1, 2, 30
Walter and Miriam Schneir, *Invitation to an Inquest*, ch 1, 9 & 23
Ellen Schrecker, *Age of McCarthyism*
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, 4-8, ch 18, 33, 32, 34, 35

**September 17  Eisenhower in the Atomic Age**

*Movie: Death of a Witch Hunter: Joe McCarthy in the Army-McCarthy Hearings*

**September 19 Marilyn Monroe in Levittown**
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, 4-7, ch 18

*Movie: Death of a Witch Hunter*

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**WEEK 4**

**September 22  Elvis Presley, Suburban Culture, Rock’n’Roll**

*These Moodle Readings Are required:*
Landon Jones, *Great Expectations*
Fred Friendly, “This is What TV is For.”
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, ch., 8-11, 16-17, 31

**September 24**

*Movie, “That Rhythm, Those Blues”*
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, ch., 12-15

**September 26**

*Movie, “That Rhythm, Those Blues”*
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, ch., 19-22
Robert Caro, *LBJ: The Passage of Power*, 3-108

*McCarthy Papers Due Monday, September 29*

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**WEEK 5**

**September 29 JFK and the Second Reconstruction**

*These Moodle Readings Are required:*
Tayor Branch, *Parting the Waters*, ch 4 & 5; *Pillar of Fire* ch. 39 & 40
Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

**October 1  MLK and Medgar Evers**

*Movie, “Eyes on the Prize” part 1 and 4*
David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, ch., 35, 44
October 3  Cuba, Vietnam and LBJ
Movie, “Eyes on the Prize”
David Halberstam, The Fifties, ch 25-.27,
Robert Caro, LBJ: The Passage of Power, p. 159-307

WEEK 6
October 6  Civil Rights, the Cold War and Confrontational Politics
Robert Caro, LBJ: The Passage of Power, Part 3 & 4, pp. 307-391
David Halberstam, The Fifties, finish.
Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippĩ, finish
Mary King, Freedom Song, ch. 3 & 4.
Movie, “Eyes on the Prize”

October 8  Gender Politics in War Time
Joanne Meyerowitz, ed. Not June Cleaver:
Women and Gender in the Postwar America, 1945-1960
Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique;
Philip Wylie, “Common Woman,” in A Generation of Vipers
Radio Documentary, Miss America, 1968
David Halberstam, The Fifties, ch 19-20

October 10  The Tragedy of LBJ
Robert Caro, LBJ: The Passage of Power, Part 5
Michael Herr, Dispatches
Robert McNamara, In Retrospect
David Halberstam, The Fifties, ch., 23
Movie, Vietnam part 1 & 3

WEEK 7

October Break: October 10-20

WEEK 8
October 20  Richard Nixon and the Politics of Division: 1968
Movie “Vietnam a Television History”
Bruce Schulman, The Seventies, Intro., &ch.,1
October 22  The Election of 1972 and Politics of Impeachment
Nixon and Watergate
Movie, “ All the Presidents Men”
Bruce Schulman, The Seventies ch 2-4
These Moodle Readings Are required:
John Opie, “The Santa Barbara Oil Spil, 1969”
Charles Issawi, “The 1973 Oil Crisis and After,”
Bruce Schulman, The Seventies Part II-III
Bob Woodward, Shadow, ch.1-2

WEEK 9
October 27  Midterm Examination

October 29  Ronald Reagan
Movie: Ronald Reagan
Read: Wolf, Bonfire of the Vanities
Richard Viguerie, We’re Ready to Lead!

October 31
Movie: “RR in the American Experience”
Daniel Yergen, The Prize, ch. 27-34
Tom Wolfe, Bonfire of the Vanities
Bob Woodward, Shadow, ch.3

WEEK 10
November 3  Irangate
Stephen Coll, Ghost Wars, Prologue and Part 1

November 5  Rust Belt America
Randy Shilts, And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the Aids Epidemic, ch 13-21; 28-30, 40-41, 47, 50, 54-55, 57-58

November 7  The End of the Cold War

WEEK 11
November 10 George Herbert Walker Bush
Stephen Coll, Ghost Wars, Prologue and Part 2, to ch. 19

Movie: Frontline: The Gulf War

November 12
Movie: Frontline: The Gulf War
Bob Woodward, Shadow, ch.4

November 14 Oil and the Environment
Movie: Frontline: The Gulf War

WEEK 12
November 17  Bill Clinton
Stephen Coll, Ghost Wars, Prologue and ch. 20 and Part 3 to ch. 28
Bill Clinton, My Life Ch 28-47
Sydney Blumenthal, The Clinton Wars, ch 5-7, 11-13

November 19  Truth to Power: the Monica Lewinsky Thing
Bob Woodward, Shadow, ch 5

November 21
Movie: Frontline: The Clinton Years

WEEK 13
November 24 Election of 2000
Movie, “Recount Democracy”
Stephen Coll, Ghost Wars, Prologue and ch. 20 and Part 3 ch 29 to the end.

These Moodle Readings Are required:
Michael T. Klare, Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of Dependency on Imported Petroleum, ch. 1-3

November 26 George Bush
Movie: “W”

Thanksgiving: November 27

WEEK 14
December 1  “9/11 and the National Security State”
The War in Iraq: 2003-2008
Movie: “Rumsfeld’s War”
December 3  Iraq, Afghanistan and Lady Gaga
December 5  The Election of 2008

9/11  Papers Due December 12

WEEK 15
December 8  In Class ID examination

This class ends on Monday December 8 There will be a Take Home Final Examination due on December 15th but you will do the ten ids in the last class on December 8th. Your take home exam is Due on December 15th at noon. If the paper is not turned in to me in hard copy by this deadline you will not pass the course.