History N124B: The United States Since 1940

This course examines the history of the United States from World War II to Vietnam Era. After the economic downturn of the 1930s and the Great Depression, the United States entered World War II, recovered its economic footing, and was transformed into a modern military power. The national mobilization for World War II created immediate and long-term changes in the home front and re-directed our foreign policy. By the 1950s, the Civil Rights Movement was established in the South after the war’s end as a grass roots movement for social equality in the South. Abroad, containment in the Cold War paved the way for liberation rhetoric and the rise of McCarthyism. By the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement had laid the groundwork for a series of other social movements throughout the nation and the Cold War had brought us into an involvement in the Vietnam conflict. By the 1970s, Nixon Republicanism had come to a halt as a result of the Watergate crisis while negotiations occurred in the Paris Peace talks in search of an exit strategy from Vietnam. The course will end with a final assessment of the Great Society, the importance of social movement, suburban flight, and the effects of OPEC on the United States economy. A key component of this class will be student-directed research on the topics under discussion. Along with our readings and exams, a research paper based on research and secondary topics will be due.

Required Readings:

1. Isaacson and Thomas, The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made
2. Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters
3. George Herring, America’s Longest War
4. John Updike, Rabbit, Run
5. Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Ice
6. Rachel Carson, Silent Spring
7. Slavenka Drakulic, How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed (excerpts)
8. Michael Schaller, Reckoning with Reagan (excerpts)

Please note that with regard to the reading assignments listed in the calendar section (next page), make sure to have the reading completed prior to the week for which it was assigned.

CALENDAR

*Week One* (July 5–6-7)

Lecture:
Before Pearl Harbor: An Overview
World War II: Events and Experience Abroad
World War II: At Home
Conservative Resurgence: 1946

Read: Wise Men, pp. 17 – 35, chapters 1-9

*Week Two* (July 12–13-14)
Truman’s Surprise
The Cold War: Stages of Evolution Abroad
The Cold War: Stages of Evolution at Home
McCarthyism Continued

READING:
The Wise Men, chapters 9 – 19
Parting the Waters, chapter 1 - 4

Assignment: On the Waterfront

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Week Three (July 19-20-21)

Lecture:
March to Suburbia
Modern Civil Rights Movement
Domesticity, Gender Codes, and Working Women
Youth Culture

READING:
Wise Men, chapters 20 - 24
Parting the Waters, chapters 5 – 22
Rabbit Run (entire)

Assignment: The Graduate

Mid-Term Exam (July 21)

Week Four (July 26-27-28)

Lecture:
Camelot Idealism: International Policy and National Growth
Critiques of Growth: Environmentalism, the New Left, and Conservative Populism
Berkeley and America

READING:
Parting the Waters, chapter 23
Silent Spring (entire)

Assignment: Berkeley in the Sixties

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Week Five (August 2-3-4)

Lecture:
Vietnam, I
Great Society, Affirmative Action, and Changes in Immigration
1968: The Young and the Restless
Crisis After Crisis: The Commanding Heights
Vietnam II

READING:
Soul on Ice (entire)
America’s Longest War (entire)

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Week Six (August 9–10–11)

Lecture:
The End of the Nixon Era, The “Me” Decade
Reagan, Gerontocracy, and Perestroika
The Revolutions of 1989
Oil, Terror, and the Environment

READING:
How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed (excerpts)
Reckoning with Reagan (excerpts)

Assignments: (with tentative dates)

Mid-term Exam: 20% of total grade Due: July 21
Critical Analysis Essay: 20% of the total grade Due: August 11
Film Quizzes: 20% of the total grade
Construction towards the Research Paper: 20% of the total grade
  1) Thesis and one-paragraph proposal (Total: 5% of the 20%) Due: July 14
  2) Annotated bibliographies (Total: 15% of the 20%
     - Five secondary sources (Sub-total: 5%) Due: July 21
     - Four primary sources (Sub-total: 5%) Due: July 28
     - Five peer-reviewed journal articles (Sub-total: 5%) Due: August 4

Final Research Paper/ Final Exam: 20% of the total grade
Due: August 11

Annotated Bibliographies
Finding sources for your research paper is the first step; you also need to evaluate each
source and understand how it will impact your research. You will write four annotated
bibliographies on your sources. An annotated bibliography lists the sources (using proper
documentation, Chicago style), and will give a 75-100 word summary of each source and
its relevance to your research (this assignment description so far is 77 words). You will
write one bibliography for each of the following:
  • Five secondary sources (Texts, periodicals, journals, internet sources)
  • Four primary sources
  • Five peer-reviewed journal articles

Research Paper

Introduction
“When you write an argument, you attempt to convince a reader to agree with you on a
topic open to debate. You support your position, proposal, or interpretations with
evidence, reasons, and examples – factual, logical data, not opinions” (Troyka 147).
“Research writing involves three steps: conducting research, understanding and
evaluating the results of your research, and writing the research paper with accurate
documentation. [...] First, you can choose a topic on which intelligent people have differing opinions. Next, you analyze your sources to decide which position appears most reasonable. Your paper would then take the form of an argument that shows readers you have considered the various positions and chosen a reasonable one” (Troyka 484-5).

Topics
The topic of your research will be a national or global issue related to our course. You will have some freedom to decide your own topic from a list, but the instructor must agree upon the topic.

Bibliography
You will find and evaluate fourteen sources while completing your annotated bibliographies; a minimum of eight of these sources must be used in your research paper; although, you are free to use more.

Workshop and Draft
A rough draft of your paper will be workshopped on Thursday, August 4. The workshopped draft must be handed-in with your final draft.

Length
Your essay must be a minimum of 2000 words (about 8-9 pages); the bibliography does not count in total word count. Put the word count on the final page.

Due Date
The final draft is due on Thursday, August 11, 2011.

Academic Standards for Assessment:
The "A" essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively and to construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The "B" essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the "A" essay. The chief difference is that the "B" essay will show some describable weakness in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The "C" essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weaknesses in fundamentals, usually development, with barely enough specific information to illustrate examples or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the "B" essay.

The "D" essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment – too simplistic or too short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate examples or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that are serious and/or frequent enough to interfere substantially with the writer's ability to communicate.
The "F" essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible, or it may demonstrate a failure to follow instructions.

Participation: Participation is a crucial to this class, and punctuality to class is crucial to participation.

Grading Standards: A (90 – 100%); B (80 – 89%); C (70 – 79%); D (60 – 69%); F (0 – 59%)