HIST 283101: Modern America—The United States Since 1945  
Alex Bloom

Summer 2016
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An investigation of America since World War II. Topics include the Cold War, McCarthyism, Civil Rights, Vietnam, the women’s movement, the Reagan years and life in the 1980’s, 1990’s to the present.

This course is a survey of recent American history, beginning in 1945. Due to the amount of material we have to cover and the brief time during the summer session, the course will be primarily lectures. At several times, however, we will discuss some of the reading specifically. At any point, please feel free to ask questions or comment on the reading material.

Despite the pace and the emphasis on lecturing, you should make sure to keep up with the reading assignments. Some readings are meant to supplement the material presented in class. Others provide the basic structure for the topic and the class time will focus on particular aspects of that subject. The reading is not meant to repeat class material, but to expand upon it.

Course Objectives
1. Students will demonstrate knowledge, across cultural settings, and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age in the U.S. since 1945, in a variety of topics including youth in the 1950s and 60s, racial constructs in the postwar years, women’s lives in this era, and more.
2. Students will demonstrate ethical knowledge of the United States in the postwar years, as demonstrated by studying the history of these years—political, social, and diplomatic.
3. The student will demonstrate how to analyze and critically evaluate documents and texts, understand how historical analysis is constructed, and discuss important ideas and concepts that emerged in the period.
4. The student will demonstrate skill in written expression, as well as come to understand the variety of sources employed by modern historians.

**Reading**

H.W. Brands, *American Dreams: The United States Since 1945* (Brands)

William Chafe, et al., eds., *A History of Our Time, 8/e* (Chafe)

Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, eds., *Takin’ It to the Streets, 4/e* (Bloom)

**Requirements**

**Undergraduates Who Are Not Boston College History Majors**

In addition to the midterm examination, scheduled for July 8, and the final examination, July 29, you will be able to write an optional short paper, which will be due Wednesday, July 22. This is not extra credit, but will allow you to choose how you will work in this course. If you write a paper, it will reduce the weight of the midterm and final exam. We will discuss the paper topics in class.

**Graduate Students and, perhaps, Boston College History Majors**

In addition to the midterm and the final examination, to receive graduate credit or, perhaps, undergraduate major credit, you have to write a research paper based on one aspect of the course. We will discuss this paper further. It will be due on Monday, July 27.

**Course Outline**

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<th>June</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<td>World War II and the Cold War</td>
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<th>29</th>
<th>The Liberal’s Cold War; The Conservative’s Cold War</th>
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<td>Brands 3-50, 55-67; Chafe: 5-17, 41-45.</td>
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<th>July</th>
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<td>The Domestic Cold War: McCarthyism</td>
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<td>Film: “Red Nightmare”</td>
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<td>Brands, 50-55; Chafe: 8-28</td>
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<th>“Happy Days” and “Movement Days”: Suburban America and Civil Rights</th>
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<td>Brands, 68-91; Chafe: 38-40, 61-65, 96-102, Bloom, 12-17.</td>
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<th>Sixties Prologue: Civil Rights, JFK, and LBJ</th>
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<td>Brands, 100-130; Chafe: 73-77; Bloom: 17-40, 54-60, 91-96.</td>
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**Midterm Examination**

Film: “Hearts and Minds”

**July 20**

Vietnam: The War in the Rice Paddies

**25**

Tumult in the Streets: The War at Home and the Counterculture

**27**

Rebellions at the Margins: Women, Gays, and People of Color

**Aug 1**

Nixon and Watergate; The Politics of Malaise: Ford, Carter, and the 70s

**Final Examination**

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**Class Attendance**

It is my expectation that students will have done the reading **before** coming to class. What I say will be with the understanding that you know the general context of the day’s topic, which will come from the reading. Attendance will be taken.

When an occasion occurs that prevents you from attending class, it is your obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. You are still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If you miss a class, you are responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.

**Grading**

Your grade will be computed on the basis of the following. The midterm will count for 40% of your final grade, the final 60%. In addition, there will be the optional essay you can write, which will reduce the weight of your midterm and final. (Graduate student grading will be calculated slightly differently.)
WCAS Grading System:
The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67) and C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the Student Learning and Support Center in the O’Neill Library Computer Center will issue a new one. The SLSC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Classroom Laptop Use

Students may use a laptop computer in regular classes provided it is used only for class-related work and not used to check e-mail, surf the web, or engage in other out-of-class activities during class time. The same holds true for smart phones, notebooks, and other devices, including sending text messages during class. Students violating this rule will be barred from bringing a laptop or other electronic device to class. If violations of this occur more than twice in this class, all laptops and electronic devices will be barred from the class entirely. Students may use laptop computers during examinations only with the permission of the instructor.

Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.
Important WCAS Policies
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.