



MODERN AMERICA

1945 to the Present

Alex Bloom

617.787.0237
abloom@wheatonma.edu

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.

Reading

William Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey*, 6/e (text)
William Chafe and Harvard Sitkoff, eds., *A History of Our Time*, 7/e (C&S)
Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, eds., *Takin' It to the Streets*, 2/e (B&B)

Grading

Undergraduates Who Are Not Boston College History Majors

In addition to the midterm examination, scheduled for July 16, and the final examination, August 6, you will be able to write an *optional* short paper, which will be due Thursday, July 30. 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 and, 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 Thursday, July 30.

Modern America

2

Course Outline

- June 30 Introduction
World War II and the Cold War
- July 2 The Liberal's Cold War; The Conservative's Cold War
text: 31-77, 131-135, 238-245; C&S: pp. 6-22, 31-36.
-
- 7 The Domestic Cold War: McCarthyism
Film: "Red Nightmare"
text: 91-104; C&S: pp. 41-52
- 9 "Happy Days" and "Movement Days":
Suburban America and Civil Rights
text: 77-91, 105-131; C&S: 68-80, 119-127; B&B: 15-18
-
- 14 Sixties Prologue: Civil Rights, JFK, and LBJ
text: 140-236; C&S: 90-98; B&B: 18-40.
- 16 **Midterm Examination**
Film: "Hearts and Minds"
-
- 21 Vietnam: The War in the Rice Paddies
text: 245-289, 333-364; B&B: 153-197, 209-226.
- 23 Tumult in the Streets: The War at Home and the Counterculture
text: 307-315; B&B: 49-61, 81-96, 227-286, 467-476, 508-520.
-
- 28 Rebellions at the Margins: Women, Gays, and People of Color
text: 290-307, 315-322; B&B: 38-48, 103-152, 387-415, 434
441, 493-508
- 30 Nixon and Watergate;
The Politics of Malaise: Ford, Carter, and the 70s
text: 365-411, 427-449; C&S: pp. 300-331; B&B: 287-304.
-
- Aug 4 The Politics of Hope, The Culture of Frustration: Reagan and the 80s;
George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and the 90s
text: 450-491; C&S: pp. 355-389.
- 6 **Final Examination**