

HIST 396 The United States Since 1945

Semester: Fall 2008

Instructor: Elena Razlogova

Classroom: H-619

Time: Mon. 6-8:15 pm

Course website: <http://digitalhistory.concordia.ca/courses/hist396f08/>

Office: LB 1041-11

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Course Overview

This class will present a study of Post World War II United States that extends through the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—a period when Americans experienced unprecedented political transformations at home and globally. The class will explore general trends in political, social, and cultural history, including the atomic bomb, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, feminism, youth culture, environmentalism, post-Fordist economy, and the so-called “war against terror.” Students will examine these events through secondary literature and a variety of online primary documents, including government memos, newspaper articles, films, music recordings, photographs, advertisements, and posters.

Texts

Required:

Articles and documents available online, linked from the online syllabus.

Reference works (on reserve at Webster Library Circulation Desk):

Paul S Boyer, *Promises to Keep: The United States Since World War II*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

William Henry Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Robert Griffith, ed., *Major Problems in American History Since 1945: Documents and Essays*, Major problems in American history series (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 1992).

Assignments and Grading

Successful completion of the course depends, most basically, on regular attendance in class, evidence of preparation and application, active participation in class discussions based on close readings of the required texts and documents, and completion of all exercises and assignments *on time*.

1. Weekly Quizzes (any 5)	20%
2. Wikipedia Entry Edit	20%
3. Class Presentation	20%
4. Final Paper	40%

Participation

Success in this class depends upon attendance at lecture and participation in any discussion provoked by the lecture and/or readings in class. You will not be able to complete your assignments if you don't regularly come to class.

Deadlines

The penalty for late assignments will be 5% of the grade per day. **No extensions will be granted except in cases of a DOCUMENTED emergency.**

Assignments

Weekly Quizzes (any 5)

Every week during class there will be a quiz after the break, designed to test you on readings and comprehension of the day's lecture. I will use your 5 best answer sheets to calculate the final grade for this assignment.

Wikipedia Entry Edit

Update a Wikipedia entry on post-1945 U.S. history. Choose an entry that needs refinement in content and explanation and concerns a topic you already know something about. Add 1 or 2 significant historical points, with details and references (at least 2-3 sentences on each point). Grading will be based on historical significance of the information you added and the clarity of explanation in your edits of the entry. The online syllabus provides links to web pages mentioned below.

1. Go to Wikipedia Main Page and find an article on an aspect of post-1945 U.S. History.
2. Create an account (click on "create account" in the top right corner) and sign in.
3. Edit the article and save.
4. Post the link to the entry you edited as a comment on the blog entry that explains this assignment in the online syllabus. Include your Wikipedia username so I can trace your edits.

You have to follow Instructions on how to cite in Wikipedia, in particular the sections on Footnotes, Embedded Links, and Images.

Wikipedia Entry Edit is due online by **8 am Mon, Sept. 29.**

Class Presentation

Every student will make a 10 minute presentation on readings. Pick an argument in an article assigned for a given day. It can be the main argument in the article, an insight that you found most original and useful, or a point that you found fallacious. Explain your opinion of the article using additional sources you found on your own (other articles and books, documents, audio, or visual sources) to support your argument. You may want to choose the theme you particularly care about for this assignment—in that case, you probably have already read or viewed something about it that you could show us and you won't have to do additional research.

Some questions you should answer in your presentation:

What is the particular point you are discussing?

Does the author present sufficient evidence to support his/her argument?

What did you find most original and useful?

Or, In what ways do you think the author might have done things differently?

To sign up to present on a particular day, go to the blog entry with this assignment in the online syllabus and state your preference for a day as a comment to the post.

Final Paper

Write a 7-10 page research paper analyzing an aspect of post-1945 U.S. history and based on primary and secondary sources. Your paper should present a clear thesis supported by evidence and footnotes. You may not use reference works as the main sources for this assignment.

A list of topics, with relevant primary and secondary sources and other research and writing aids, will be available shortly.

Final Paper is due in class on **Mon, Dec. 1.**

Policies

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is an affront to me and to your peers. Plagiarism is submitting work that is not your own as if it were yours. This includes copying material, even a few sentences, from published or unpublished sources, from the internet, or from another student without citing the source. It also includes presenting another person's ideas or paraphrasing the work of another person without citing the source. Plagiarism also includes handing in bought papers, papers obtained from free essay websites, or having another person write your paper for you. Anyone suspected of copying other people's work *without clear acknowledgement*, or of any comparable act, will be reported to the Faculty of Arts and Science for plagiarism.

Syllabus: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus during the year if/as necessary. Please check the online syllabus before every class.

SHAC Announcement

Students of History Association of Concordia represents all undergraduate students registered in one or more history classes at Concordia. We organize social and academic events; publish the undergraduate journal *Historiae*; and run a peer tutoring program. For information on volunteering, getting help with classes, getting published, or for upcoming events, check our website at: <http://alcor.concordia.ca/~shac/index.htm> (or access through the History Department site), or stop by our office for free coffee (LB-620.2). We can be reached at shaconcordia@yahoo.com.

Schedule

Please go to the online version of the syllabus to see the articles and documents assigned for each day—some of them are in audio and video format and many are subject to change. Please check the updated list of materials before every class.

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| Sept. 8 | Course Introduction |
| Sept. 15 | The Origins of the Cold War |
| Sept. 22 | The Age of Prosperity |
| Sept. 29 | McCarthyism
Wikipedia Entry due. |
| Oct. 6 | Cold War Abroad |
| Oct. 13 | No Class - Thanksgiving |
| Oct. 20 | Civil Rights |

Oct. 27	Counterculture
Nov. 3	The Vietnam War
Nov. 10	Militant Protest
Nov. 17	Post-Industrial Economy
Nov. 24	The Culture Wars
Dec. 1	Post-Cold War Order Final Paper Due.