

Victory to Watergate: America, 1945-1976

History 389, section 2. George Mason University. Spring 2005

Mondays, 4:30 – 7:10 pm. Innovation Hall 206

Course website: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrage/hist389spring05/home.htm>

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Office Hours: Mondays 2:15 – 4:15 pm and by appointment.

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Syllabus revised: March 2, 2005

This course will explore the United States from the end of World War II to the Bicentennial of 1976. These three decades were a period of extraordinary economic growth and rising expectations, but also wrenching social change and political conflict. Main themes will be the emergence of the civil rights movement and feminism; the domestic and international events of the Cold War, especially the Vietnam War; and the rise and fall of the presidency's prestige in the years of the Great Society and Watergate.

Books

Appy, Christian G. *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides*. 2003. Reprint, New York: Penguin, 2004. \$16

Lemann, Nicholas. *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*. 1991. Reprint, New York: Vintage 1992. \$16.

McGirr, Lisa. *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*. 2001. Reprint, Princeton University Press, 2002. \$23

Raines, Howell. *My Soul Is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered*. 1977. Reprint, New York: Penguin, 1983. \$15

Rosen, Ruth. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. 2000. Reprint, New York: Penguin, 2001. \$15.

Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. 1996. Reprint, Princeton University Press, 1998. \$23

Thompson, Hunter S. *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*. 1973. Reprint, Warner Books, 1992. \$8.

Requirements

Guidelines for reading efficiently, building strong thesis statements, and organizing essays can be found online at http://www.schrage.info/teaching/teaching.html .

Reading responses and presentations (20 percent each, total 60 percent)

On three occasions you will submit five-paragraph essays (roughly 500-750 words or two double-spaced pages). The assignment is to choose one item from the period about which we are reading and to explain how it complicates the week's reading. That is, you should show that reading the document gave you a better understanding of the issue at hand than reading the book alone. The easiest source of materials is the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database, linked at http://oscr.gmu.edu/sql/subdb.php?Arts_&_Humanities. An article, editorial, or advertisement from the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* should be sufficient material, though you are welcome to choose other primary sources. **Please bring two copies of each paper to class and include a copy of the primary source with each paper.**

Your essays should conform to the guidelines for thesis statements, essay form, and style posted at <http://www.schrage.info/teaching/teaching.html>. Before submitting them, you should follow the steps on the pre-submission checklist at <http://www.schrage.info/teaching/checklist.html>.

Due dates vary. In each case, your essays must be brought to the start of class. Late papers, including papers brought late to class, will be penalized a full grade and 1/3 of a grade for each additional 24-hour period or fraction thereof. Late papers may be e-mailed to zschrag@gmu.edu in .doc, .rtf, or .pdf format.

At the start of class you are expected to present your argument to the class and, with other members of your group, to lead the discussion.

Final paper (25 percent)

At the end of the course you will submit a final paper of 1250-1750 words (roughly 5-7 pages) contrasting two sets of documents produced at least fifteen years apart within the period 1945-1976. Your essay should demonstrate change over time and explain the reasons for that change, using material from readings and lecture. The length of the documents is for you to decide. Two books will be more than enough, while two letters to the editor will not be sufficient.

The final paper is due in stages. The paper proposal should pose a question you seek to answer and state the type of source you are looking for. The annotated bibliography should list the sources you have found, explain who created them and why, and explain what you can learn from them. The final paper should present a thesis statement and support it with evidence from the sources. Only the final product will be graded.

Participation (15 percent)

In addition to helping lead the discussion on the days when you have papers due, you are expected to arrive in class promptly prepared to join in a discussion of the weekly reading.

Basic classroom rules

- Bring the books we are discussing to class each week.
- Do not eat in the classroom, before or during class.
- Turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other noisemakers.
- Take notes.

Policies

All assignments are governed by the George Mason University **honor code**, online at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>. You are expected to work independently and to acknowledge all sources, including assigned texts and materials found online. Consult Gordon Harvey's "Writing with Sources," <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources> for instructions on when and how to cite, and ask me if you need clarification. In general, any sentence in your work that can be traced to a single sentence in someone else's work should bear a footnote. Any collaboration, such as consultation with the Writing Center, should also be acknowledged. Violations of academic integrity will be reported to the administration and may result in grade penalties, including failure of the course.

In case of **inclement weather**, please call the main switchboard at 703-993-1000 or consult the main web page at <http://www.gmu.edu/> to see if classes are cancelled. I expect to cancel class only when the university cancels all classes.

If you are a student with a **disability** and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC. All students are expected to check their **gmu.edu e-mail** regularly and are responsible for information sent to their GMU addresses.

Schedule

1. January 24.

- Introduction
- Lecture: America at 1945

2. January 31

- Discussion: *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 1-88. **Group 1 responses due.**
- Lecture: The Specter of Communism

3. February 7

- Discussion: *Suburban Warriors*, 20-110. **Group 2 responses due.**
- Lecture: Suburbs and Cities

4. February 14

- Discussion: *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 181-258. **Group 3 responses due.**
- Lecture: The Dawn of the Civil Rights Movement

5. February 21

- Discussion: *My Soul Is Rested*, 1-74. **Group 4 responses due.**
- Lecture: Missiles and Rockets

6. February 28

- Class cancelled by snow.

7. March 7

- Discussion: *Suburban Warriors*, 111-186. **Group 1 responses due.**
- Lecture: The Great Society

March 14 NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

8. March 21

- **Paper proposals due from all groups.**
- Discussion: *The Promised Land*, 111-221. **Group 2 responses due.**
- Lecture: The Peak of Civil Rights

9. March 28

- Discussion: *My Soul Is Rested*, 233-323. **Group 3 responses due.**

- Lecture: Johnson's Vietnam

10. April 4

- Discussion: *Patriots*, 35-149. **Group 4 responses due.**
- Lecture: The Counterculture

11. April 11

- **Annotated bibliography due from all groups.**
- Discussion: *The World Split Open*, 63-93, 143-195. **Group 1 responses due.**
- Lecture: Nixon's Vietnam

12. April 18

- Discussion: *Patriots*, 343-429 . **Group 2 responses due**
- Lecture: Backlash

13. April 25.

- Discussion: *Suburban Warriors*, 187-261. **Group 3 responses due.**
- Lecture: Watergate

14. May 2

- Discussion: *Fear and Loathing*, 58-95, 337-393. **Group 4 responses due.**
- Lecture: America at 1976

May 11, 4:30 pm: Final papers due in History Department office.