

History 245: The United States Since 1945 Fall 2007 Moravian College

Dr. Francis Ryan

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3, Wednesday 10-11, or by appointment

Class Meets: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:50-10:00, Comenius 218

Course Overview:

The course will allow for an in-depth introduction to the primary themes and shifts that have characterized U.S. society since the end of the Second World War. Some of the primary themes addressed include the emergence of mass consumer society in the post-war era, the social and political implications of the Cold War, the African-American Freedom Movement and other post-1945 social movements. The class also reflects a new dynamic going on in similar classes across the United States in exploring the decade of the 1970s as a major period of American political and cultural change.

Required Texts:

Paul S. Boyer, Promises to Keep: The United States Since World War II. Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

David Farber, Taken Hostage: The Iranian Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam, Princeton, 2005.

Selected Readings Reserved in Reeves Library and on line.

Course Requirements:

Participation/Preparation: 10%

Each student is expected to read all assigned material closely and critically and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings thoughtfully. Each week, students will be provided with "Focus Questions" to help aid in the extensive amount of readings assigned. It is expected that students will be able to respond to these questions in depth; however, students will be expected to go beyond these questions and be able to discuss connections to course material and related reading and presentations. Please note that these focus questions will also provide a foundation for the mid-term and final exams, but that additional questions involving student analysis and synthesis will also be presented on all exams. It is imperative that each student be present and on time so that they may contribute to discussions. Excessive absences and/or lateness will necessarily affect your final grade. If you anticipate that you will be late or absent, please inform the professor via e-mail or telephone. While such notification will be appreciated and understood as courtesy, it will not be viewed as excusing the absence or lateness. The class will also view several movies which will be scheduled for specially arranged evening class

meetings. Please note that these movies are not listed on the syllabus, but will be announced in class. While every effort will be made to accommodate schedules, each student is responsible for viewing the film on their own if they are unable to attend the scheduled viewing.

Mid-term exam: 30% (15% each)

This class will have two in-class examinations, one on February 20 and another on March 27.

Final Exam: 25%

A cumulative final examination will be held at a time and place designated by the College Registrar.

Analysis Essay on the American Diner: 10%

Students will write a 4-5 page paper analyzing Andrew Hurley's article on the transformation of the diner restaurant in the post-war period. The assignment will require students to visit and reflect on their experiences at an actual diner of their choosing. Details on this project will follow.

Historiographic Paper: 25%

Each student will be required to write a ten (10) page paper focusing on how historians have interpreted a specific issue related to the period under study. I will provide a selection of possible topics to choose from in the first week of class. Students are encouraged to begin research on this project as soon as possible, as they may want to take advantage of interlibrary loan services in securing the necessary secondary source materials (books, articles). The paper must be appropriately documented according to MLA guidelines, it must adhere to the rules and principles of Standard American English (grammar, spelling, usage, and rhetoric), and it must use a minimum of eight (8) scholarly sources. Additional information will follow. Out of justice to the class, all late papers will be downgraded one letter grade for each day of lateness. An exception to this would be serious illness verified by a physician. Also, cases of plagiarism will result in an "F" grade.

There will be several films screened in this class. For each viewing, I will do my best to arrange a time and date which will meet the needs of the majority of the class. However, in the likely case that some are unable to attend these screenings, please note that most of the films are available in Reeves Library for viewing, and that all films are easily available through local rental establishments or through Netflix. All are responsible for viewing these films, as they make up a central component of our class.

Note: All of the course requirements listed above must be successfully completed to pass the course

Topics and Readings (Tentative)

The following provides a week-by-week schedule detailing topics and reading assignments. Daily topics listed for our class meetings provide a general sense of the topic of lecture and discussion for that day, although material covered may shift according to the needs of the class. *A note on the assigned readings:* Reeves Library owns electronic copies of the Journal of American History, and all articles listed from that journal can be accessed on-line through the library web page. (Please note however that the first assigned reading from JAH, the Grundy article, is photocopied and on hold in the library.) Other readings have been placed on reserve in the library, and are indicated below.

Week 1: *Background: Twentieth Century U.S. Historical Trends*

August 28-30

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 1.

Week 2: *Into the Cold War*

September 4-6

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 2.

Charles A. Kupchan and Peter L. Trubowitz, "Grand Strategy for a Divided America," Foreign Affairs (July/August 2007): 71-83.

Guest in class, September 6: Bill Ayers

Film: *Good Night and Good Luck. (2006)*

Week 3: *Uneasiness at Dawn: Domestic Trends in the Early Post-War Years*

September 11-13

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 3.

Pamela Grundy, "From Amazons to Glamazons: The Rise and Fall of North Carolina Women's Basketball, 1920-1960," Journal of American History, Vol. 87, June 2000, pp. 112-146.

Week 4: *The Rise of Suburban America*

September 18-20

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 4.

Andrew Hurley, "From Hash House to Family Restaurant: The Transformation of the Diner and Post-World War II Consumer Culture," Journal of American History, March 1997, Vol. 83, pp. 1282-1308.

Paper Bibliography due in class September 18.

Week 5: *The 1950s: The Other Side of the Picture Window*
September 25-27

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 5.
Essay on Hurley's article due in class, Thursday, September 27.

Week 6: Midterm Week
October 2-4

October 2: Mid-Term Exam
October 4: Looking ahead to the 1960s

Week 7: *The Kennedy Era: The Cold War Heats Up*
October 9-11

October 9: *Fall Break, No Class*
Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapters 6-7.

Week 8: *The Civil Rights Movement*
October 16-18

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 8.
Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: Charismatic Leadership in a Mass Struggle," Journal of American History, Vol. 74, September 1987, pp. 448-454.
Michael B. Katz, "Why Aren't U.S. Cities Burning?" Dissent, (Summer 2007): 23-29.
(on-reserve)

Week 9: *The Vietnam War and the Response at Home*
October 23-25

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 10.

Week 10: *The Social Changes of the 1960s.*
October 30-November 1

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 9.

Week 11: Midterm Week, plus *The Sexual Revolution*
November 6-8

November 6: **2nd in-class exam.**
November 8: Beth Bailey, "Sexual Revolution(s)," (on reserve)

Week 12: *The Late 1960s: 1968 and the Return of Richard Nixon*
November 13-15

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 11, pp. 291-321.

Film: Easy Rider (1969)

Week 13: *The Watergate Scandal*
November 20-22

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 12, pp. 322-348. Begin Reading David Farber, Taken Hostage.

Film: All the President's Men (1976)

Nov 22: Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: *The "Me Decade" Continued*
November 27-29

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 13.
Finish Farber, Taken Hostage.

Richard John Neuhaus, "How We Got To Where We Are," First Things (January 2007): 65-71. (on-reserve)

Final research papers due in class November 29.

Week 15: *Only Yesterday: The 1980s, 90s and Today*
December 4-6

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 14.

Final exam to be scheduled by the Registrar's Office.