

History 245: The United States Since 1945 Spring 2008 Moravian College

Dr. Francis Ryan

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Office: Comenius 301

Office Hours: Wednesday 10-12, or by appointment

Class Meets Monday and Wednesday 10:20-11:30 Comenius 309

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 distributed or 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 15 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 ten 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.

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*

January 14-16

Promises to Keep, Chapter 1, pp. 4-32.

Week 2: *Into the Cold War*

January 21-23

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 2, 33-64. Charles A. Kupchan and Peter L. Trubowitz, "Grand Strategy for a Divided America," Foreign Affairs (July/Aug 2007): 71-83.

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

January 28-30

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 3, pp. 65-96.

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*

February 4-6

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 4, pp. 97-131.

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 February 6.

Week 5: *The 1950s: The Other Side of the Picture Window*

February 11-13

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 5, pp. 132-159.

Essay on Hurley's article due in class, Wednesday, February 13.

Week 6:

February 18-20

Feb 18: Mid-Term Exam

Feb 20: Looking ahead to the 1960s

Week 7: *The Kennedy Era*

February 25-27:

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 6, pp. 160-184.

Week 8: Spring Break

March 3-5

Week 9: *The Civil Rights Movement*

March 10-12

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 7, pp. 185-213 and Chapter 8, 214-240.
Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: Charismatic Leadership in a Mass Struggle," Journal of American History, Vol. 74, September 1987, pp. 448-454.

Week 10: *The Vietnam War and the Response at Home*

March 17-19

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 10, pp. 263-290.

Week 11: *The Social Changes of the 1960s.*

March 24: **2nd in-class exam.**

March 26:

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 9, pp. 244-262, Beth Bailey, "Sexual Revolution(s)."

Week 12: *The Late 1960s*

March 31-April 2

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

Week 13: *The Watergate Scandal*

April 7-9

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

Week 14: *The “Me Decade” Continued*

April 14: No Classes

April 16: The 1970s.

Reading: Boyer, Promises to Keep, Chapter 13, pp. 353-383.

Finish Farber, Taken Hostage.

Final research papers due in class April 16.

Week 15: *Only Yesterday: The 1980s, 90s and Today*

April 21-23

Reading:

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

**America Since 1945: History 245
Suggested Paper Topics**

Below is a list of possible paper topics for this class’s major writing project. Please select a two appealing topics and email me your choices before Wednesday January 30. (No two students may select the same topic, so the first person who claims a paper topic gets it.) Students with interest in a specific topic not listed below may contact the professor to discuss its possibility. The earlier you begin your research the better: the Reeves Library has an excellent selection of recent U.S. history books that you may use as a base for your work. However, most will also need to secure books and articles through interlibrary loan. Please make use of the library’s *World Cat* catalogue for books, and *America: History and Life* or *JSTOR* for history based articles.

Papers are to be no less than 15 pages long, typed, stapled and double spaced, and must adhere to standard Chicago style format (citations should be provided in footnotes). All papers should be based on no less than 10 secondary sources (books or articles) which are to be listed in a bibliography at the end of the paper.

Each student should schedule at least one conference with the professor to discuss the paper during the course of the semester. Such conferences are intended to aid in narrowing down the paper themes and approaches you take. Also, the papers are *historiographical* essays—providing analysis of how various historians have interpreted the chosen topics, and *how and why these interpretations have changed over time*.

Please note that all papers will be downgraded one letter grade for each day of lateness. Please also consult Moravian College's guidelines on academic integrity in the Student Handbook.

Hand in two **2** copies of your paper on April 16, one for me to grade and return to you, another for my files.

Bibliographies (typed) due in class February 6.

Final paper due in class April 16.

U.S. Politics

Historical Views of the Truman Administration
Historical Views of the Eisenhower Administration
Historical Views of the Kennedy Administration
Historical Views of the Nixon Administration
Historical Views of the Ford Administration
Historical Views of the Carter Administration
Historical Views of the Reagan Administration
Historical Views of the George H. Bush Administration

Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs Crisis
Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis
Harry Truman and Civil Rights
Eisenhower and Civil Rights
John Kennedy and Civil Rights
Lyndon Johnson and Civil Rights
Richard Nixon and Civil Rights
Richard Nixon and Environmentalism
The Nixon Administration and Foreign Policy
The Watergate Scandal
John Kennedy's Vietnam Policy
President Reagan's economic policies

Historical views of The Dixiecrats
Historical views of Robert Kennedy
Historical views of George Wallace
Historical views of Barry Goldwater
Joseph McCarthy
Hubert Humphrey
Harry S. Truman and the Decision to Use Atomic Weapons
Robert McNamara
Henry Kissinger
US policy and the Irish "Troubles"
The Marshall Plan

The Korean War
The Equal Rights Amendment
The Gulf of Tonkin Incident

Robert Kennedy and the 1968 presidential campaign
Eugene McCarthy and the 1968 presidential campaign
George Wallace
George McGovern
Strom Thurman and the Dixiecrat Rebellion of 1948
Henry Wallace and the 1948 presidential election.
Barry Goldwater and the 1964 Presidential Election
President Truman, General Douglas MacArthur and the Korean War
President Eisenhower's Policy in Vietnam

Social and Cultural Themes

Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Baseball
The Beat Writers and 1950s America
Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers Movement
Stonewall and the Gay Rights Movement
Martin Luther King and Organized Labor
Martin Luther King and the Vietnam War
The Birmingham Bus Boycott
Malcolm X and Black Power
The 1964 Civil Rights Act
The Sexual Revolution
Environmentalism
Historical Interpretations of the 1970s
Historical interpretations of the 1980s.
Historical Views of American Sports (Football, Baseball, etc)
The New Left
Young Americans for Freedom
1960s student radicalism
Folk Music
Rock music and the Counterculture
Jimmy Hoffa and the Teamsters Union
Women and Labor since 1945
Organized Labor and the Civil Rights Movement
The Rise and Impact of Baseball Unionism
The Women's Movement
Television in the Post War Period
Latino/Latina Movements since 1945
The Yippies
The Black Panthers
Allen Ginsberg and 1960s Radicalism
The Weathermen Underground

The Decline of Bethlehem Steel
The Campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment
Roe v. Wade
Betty Friedan and Modern Feminism
The Red Scare and Hollywood

Politics and Diplomacy

Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy
John Foster Dulles and American Foreign Policy
Robert McNamara and the Vietnam War
U.S. politics and the Irish “Troubles”
The Gulf of Tonkin Incident
The Marshall Plan
U.S.-Israeli Relations in the Eisenhower Administration
U.S.-Israeli Relations in the Kennedy Administration
U.S.-Israel Relations in the Johnson Administration
U.S. Israeli Relations in the Nixon Administration
U.S. Israeli Relations in the Carter Administration
The U2 incident
Fredrick Hayek and Post-War Conservative Thought
The Rise of the Christian Right
Historical Views of the 1991 Gulf War
The Manhattan Project
The Iranian Hostage Crisis
Japanese Internment during World War Two
U.S. and Puerto Rican relations since 1945

