HIST 5306: Recent Interpretations of American History
Fall 2009 - (Section 001): Wednesdays, 6:00 – 8:50pm - 141 Holden Hall

Professor (contact information):
Dr. Sean P. Cunningham
Email: sean.cunningham@ttu.edu
Website: courses.ttu.edu/secunnin

Course Description and Purpose

- This course will primarily examine the political history of the United States since 1945, contextualized within the social, cultural, diplomatic, and economic history of the period. Of major focus will be the political realignments related to shifts in modern liberalism and modern conservatism during the 1960s. Additionally, each student will also engage the historiography of any topic or theme relevant to their research interests involving post-1945 US history, and produce an annotated bibliography on the historiography of that topic or theme. Students will also be expected to lead a book discussion and write eight book reviews while also attending and participating in weekly discussions.

Required Texts:

- Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*.
- Catherine E. Rymph, *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism From Suffrage Through the Rise of the New Right*.

Assignments and Grading:

- Your overall grade in this course will be based on the following assignments:
  - Class Participation: 10%
  - Class Discussion Leadership: 10%
  - Common Book Reviews (6): 40%
  - Selected Book Reviews (2): 20%
  - Annotated Bibliography: 20%

- Overall course grades will be determined on the following scale:
  - 93 – 100% = A
  - 90 – 92% = A-
  - 87 – 89% = B+
  - 83 – 86% = B
  - 80 – 82% = B-
  - 77 – 79% = C+
  - 73 – 76% = C
  - 70 – 72% = C-

- A more detailed explanation of “Grading Standards” can be found through the professor’s website: (courses.ttu.edu/secunnin)
Class Participation: All students are expected to attend each class session and participate fully in discussions. Any student who must miss class for any reason should contact the professor prior to class.

Class Discussion Leadership: Discussions of weekly common readings will be led by a different student each week. Students should prepare to lead a discussion of that week’s common reading in consultation with the instructor. Students will sign-up for a week to lead during the first class session of the semester.

Common Book Reviews:
- Each student will write six book reviews on common readings throughout the course of the semester. Students may choose to write on whichever six books from the common readings list they prefer.
- Book Reviews should be between 3-4 pages in length and will be due on whichever day the particular book being reviewed is also being discussed in class.
- Students should refer to the professor’s website for more information on what a book review should look like.

Selected Book Reviews:
- Each student will also write two book reviews on texts selected by the student from the “Selected Reading Assignments” listed in the reading schedule of this syllabus. Additionally, students will prepare a brief 5-10 minute presentation for each selected book being reviewed. Students will be allowed to “draft” selected books during the first class session of the semester.
- Book Reviews should be between 3-4 pages in length and will be due on whatever day the particular book being reviewed is also being discussed in class.

Annotated Bibliography: (2 copies REQUIRED):
- Each student will produce an annotated bibliography on a topic or theme of their choosing, selected in consultation with the instructor.
- All topics or themes must deal with some aspect of post-1945 US history. It is highly recommended, but not mandatory, that topics or themes align with the student’s broader research goals (i.e. thesis and/or dissertation preparation).
- Students should include between 40-50 texts relevant to their chosen topic or theme. For each text included in the bibliography, students should strive to answer the following:
  - What is the author’s thesis? (Quoted, if possible)
  - What are the author’s major arguments?
  - What is the author’s primary contribution to the historiography?

All written assignments described above should conform to the following guidelines:
- Typed (double spaced), 1-inch margins (all the way around), 12-point font (Times News Roman – or similar), page numbers, and appropriate citations (parenthetical if a book critique; footnote / endnote if a research paper) – (Chicago Manual of Style / Turabian).
- Students should consult the professor’s website for further instructions on formatting guidelines.
- A paper will be considered late if it is turned in at any point after the end of the class meeting in which the paper is due. Late papers will be accepted at a penalty of 10 points for the first minute late and 5 points per each additional calendar day late beyond the due date.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
- Lead a graduate-level book discussion.
- Communicate a solid understanding of the historiographical arguments that shape studies of post-1945 U.S. political history.
- Communicate in significant detail the historiographical issues which complicate their own
individually chosen areas of interest.

- Communicate a solid understanding of how our present has been shaped by our past and how future decisions and courses of action can be informed by history.

**Methods of Assessment**

- 1) Class Leadership – Students will be expected to lead one class discussion over a common reading. Students will be expected to facilitate a conversation on the reading and, when necessary, provide guidance by way of posing appropriate questions and or providing comments on the argument, structure, significance, context, and overall effectiveness of the book being studied.

- 2) Class Participation – Students are expected to participate in each class discussion either by offering comments, answering questions, or posing questions. Students are expected to prepare thoroughly for each week’s common reading discussion and demonstrate that preparation through class participation.

- 3) Book Reviews – Grades will be determined based on the quality of the student’s argument, including organization, structure, style, and content.

- 4) Annotated Bibliography – Students will be expected to deal with the seminal works that have defined their topics or themes, as well as the latest changes / nuances to have an impact on the generally accepted understanding of the topic. Annotations should answer the three major questions posed on page 2 of this syllabus.

- More detail on individual assignments can be found in the above section, “Assignments and Grading.”

**Texas Tech University Academic Honesty Statement**

- It is the aim of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of students to present as their own any work that they have not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense and renders the offenders liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

- Cheating: Dishonesty on examinations and quizzes or on written assignments, illegal possessions of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination or quiz, obtaining information during an examination from the examination paper or otherwise from another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, illegal entry to or unauthorized presence in an office are instances of cheating.

- Plagiarism: Offering the work of another as one’s own, without proper acknowledgement, is plagiarism; therefore any student who fails to give credit for quotations or an essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, and other reference works, or from themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

**Professor’s Academic Honesty Statement**

- Any student caught cheating – whether that be through plagiarism of a published or unpublished work, the use of a paper purchased online, improper collaboration with a fellow student, or any other act which undermines your ability to produce original work – will receive a zero on their assignment, will not be permitted to repeat the assignment, may fail the course, and could be subject to punishment that includes expulsion from the university.

**Classroom Behavior**

- Courteous and appropriate classroom behavior is expected at all times. Since this class will demand everyone's complete attention, students should avoid all forms of inattentive and/or offensive behavior.

- Examples of behavior that will not be tolerated include reading newspapers, surfing the web, listening to iPods or similar devices, working on assignments for other classes, napping, talking with neighbors, coming to class excessively or consistently late, leaving before class is over and without prior notice,
text messaging or other cell phone usage, or any other behavior that distracts either you, other students, or the instructor from the complete focus and attention of the class.

- The instructor reserves the right to dismiss students from class for any of the above-listed activities and, if necessary, issue a reduction of up to 5 percentage points in the student’s overall final grade average.

Readings and Assignments Schedule:

Week One: Wednesday, September 2:
- Class Introduction, Syllabus Overview
- Draft: Class Discussion Leadership
- Draft: Selected Book Reviews

Week Two: Wednesday, September 9:
  - Discussion: What is “the” narrative of post-1945 American history?
- Selected Reading Assignments: NONE

Week Three: Wednesday, September 16:
- Selected Reading Assignments:

Week Four: Wednesday, September 23:
- Selected Reading Assignments:
  - Richard M. Fried, *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America.*

Week Five: Wednesday, September 30:
  - Screening: *Beyond Conspiracy: The Kennedy Assassination*
- Selected Reading Assignments: NONE
Week Six: Wednesday, October 7:

- Common Reading: Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*.
- Selected Reading Assignments:
  - Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*.
  - William A. Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism*.

Week Seven: Wednesday, October 14:

- NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

Week Eight: Wednesday, October 21:

- Common Reading: John A. Andrew, III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics*.
- Selected Reading Assignments:
  - Gregory Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right*.

Week Nine: Wednesday, October 28:

- Common Reading: Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*.
- Selected Reading Assignments:
  - Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*.

Week Ten: Wednesday, November 4:

- Selected Reading Assignments:
  - Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism*.

Week Eleven: Wednesday, November 11:

- Common Reading: Catherine E. Rymph, *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism From Suffrage Through the Rise of the New Right*. 
Selected Reading Assignments:
- Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman’s Crusade*.
- Kenneth Heineman, *God is a Conservative: Religion, Politics, and Morality in Contemporary America*.

Week Twelve: Wednesday, November 18:
- Selected Reading Assignments:
  - Donald Critchlow, *The Conservative Ascendancy: How the GOP Right Made Political History*.

Week Thirteen: Wednesday, November 25:
- NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fourteen: Wednesday, December 2:
- NO CLASS: CONSULTATIONS, INDEPENDENT STUDY

Week Fifteen: Wednesday, December 9:
- NO CLASS: Annotated Bibliography DUE

The instructor reserves the right to make alterations to this syllabus. Alterations, should there be a need, will always be announced in class. Students are responsible to attend class and make note of changes to the schedule. The instructor is not responsible for the student’s failure to make note of schedule changes.

Any student who because of a disability may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible to make any necessary accommodations.