

History 160: America in the Sixties

Professor Michael Flamm
Elliott Hall: (740) 368-3634
Office Hours: T 9-10 am / TH 3-5 pm (or by appointment)

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Fall 2006

Texts:

- David Farber, The Age of Great Dreams*
- Tim Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name*
- Tim O'Brien, If I Die in a Combat Zone*
- Alice Echols, Scars of Sweet Paradise*

*All texts are available at the bookstore. The * indicates the text is also on reserve in the library.*

Requirements:

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| • Participation | 10 percent |
| • Essay #1 | 15 percent |
| • Essay #2 | 15 percent |
| • Exam #1 | 15 percent |
| • Exam #2 | 15 percent |
| • Exam #3 | 30 percent |

Class participation will include regular attendance, informed discussion, and reading quizzes, both scheduled and unscheduled. Significant improvement will receive appropriate recognition.

Deadlines:

- September 26: Essay #1
- October 3: Exam #1
- October 31: Essay #2
- November 7: Exam #2
- November 28: Essay #3 (optional rewrite)
- December ??: Exam #3

Late work will result in substantial penalties (one full letter grade per day). Academic misconduct will lead to severe sanctions in full accordance with university policy.

Topics and Readings (due that day):

Week One: August 28-September 1

Course Introduction

America Astir: Abundance and Activism

Due: Farber, chapter 1; “The Other America” (packet)

Discussion: 1) Why according to “The Other America” was poverty invisible? 2) What movement or individual has had the most long-term impact – for better or worse? Why?

Week Two: September 4-8

Kennedy and the Cold War

Due: Farber, chapter 2; begin Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name

Discussion: 1) Was the policy of “flexible response” wise or dangerous? 2) Was Kennedy prudent or reckless during the Cuban Missile Crisis?

Kennedy and the Politics of Image

Due: Farber, chapter 3; continue Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name

Discussion: 1) Why was (is) Kennedy more popular in death than in life? 2) What does Kennedy’s enduring appeal say about American society?

Week Three: September 11-15

Johnson and the Politics of Power

Due: Farber, chapter 4; continue Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name

Discussion: 1) What was the chief motivation behind the Great Society? 2) Was the Great Society a success or a failure?

The Evolution of the Civil Rights Movement

Due: Farber, chapter 5; continue Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name

Discussion: 1) How and why did the movement evolve in 1961 and 1962? 2) What was the most important shift?

Week Four: September 18-22

The Transformation of the Civil Rights Movement

Due: “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and “Study Questions” (packet)

Discussion: 1) How and why was the movement transformed between 1963 and 1964? 2) What was the most important shift?

Video: 4 Little Girls

Due: Finish Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name

Week Five: September 25-29

Discussion: Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name

Due: **Essay #1**

Discussion: 1) What experience most moved or troubled you? Why? 2) Does the book make you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of race relations? Why?

The Fragmentation of the Civil Rights Movement

Due: “On Revolution” and “Study Questions” (packet)

Discussion: 1) How and why did the movement fragment after 1965? 2) What was the most important source of fragmentation?

Week Six: October 2-6

Exam #1

The Origins of Vietnam

Due: Farber, chapter 6

Discussion: Was U.S. intervention in Vietnam inevitable?

Week Seven: October 9-13

The Path to War

Due: “Kennedy Interviews” (packet); begin O’Brien, If I Die in a Combat Zone

Discussion: 1) Based on the “Kennedy Interviews,” would JFK have intervened in Vietnam in 1965 if he had lived? 2) What was the main reason LBJ chose to intervene in Vietnam in 1965?

The Ordeal of Vietnam (I): The War in Indochina

Due: Farber, chapter 7; continue O’Brien

Discussion: 1) Why was the war so difficult for American soldiers? 2) Why was the U.S. military unable to prevail in Vietnam?

Week Eight: October 16-20

The New Left and the Politics of Protest

Due: Farber, chapter 9; “Port Huron Statement” (packet)

Discussion: 1) Based on the “Port Huron Statement,” what factors accounted for the emergence of the New Left? 2) What factors accounted for the disintegration of the New Left?

The Crisis of Liberalism

Due: Farber, chapter 10; continue O’Brien

Discussion: 1) Why was conservatism triumphant in 1968? 2) What were the long-term implications for American politics?

Week Nine: October 23-27

The Ordeal of Vietnam (II): The War at Home

Due: “A Time to Break Silence” (packet); finish O’Brien

Discussion: 1) To what extent should the anti-war movement receive credit or blame for the outcome of the Vietnam War? 2) In “A Time to Break Silence,” what is the most compelling argument that King makes against the war? Why?

Video: Two Days in October

Due: Continue O'Brien

Week Ten: October 30-November 3

Discussion: If I Die in a Combat Zone

Due: **Essay #2**

Discussion: 1) What incident most moved or troubled you? Why? 2) Do you admire O'Brien? Why or why not?

The Outcome of Vietnam: "Peace with Honor"

Due: Prepare for exam

Discussion: 1) Was Nixon able to achieve "Peace with Honor" in Vietnam? 2) Why has the Vietnam War remained so divisive for Americans?

Week Eleven: November 6-10

Exam #2

The Counterculture and the Politics of Authenticity

Due: Farber, chapter 8; begin Echols, Scars of Sweet Paradise

Discussion: 1) How does the Counterculture compare to the New Left? 2) Was the Counterculture a radical movement?

Week Twelve: November 13-17

The "Other" Americans and the Struggle for Equality

Due: Continue Echols

Discussion: 1) In what ways was the civil rights movement a model for others? 2) What groups have made the most/least progress in America? Why?

The New Right and the Politics of Reaction

Due: Continue Echols

Discussion: 1) What factors explain the emergence of the New Right? 2) What factors explain the success of the New Right?

Week Thirteen (University Holiday)

Week Fourteen: November 27-December 1

Nixon and the Politics of Polarization

Due: **Essay #3** (optional rewrite)

Discussion: 1) Were the "Politics of Polarization" successful? 2) What were and are the long-term consequences?

Video: The Sixties

Due: Finish Echols

Week Fifteen: December 4-8

Discussion: Scars of Sweet Paradise

Due: Reading quiz

Discussion: 1) Do you admire Joplin? Why or why not? 2) Was she in the end primarily a victim of her choices, her times, or a society that could not understand or appreciate a woman who refused to conform?

The Feminist Movement and the Politics of Gender

Due: Farber, chapter 11; “The Power of the Positive Woman” (packet)

Discussion: 1) Why according to “The Power of the Positive Woman” is feminism a mistake? 2) Was the emergence of the feminist movement a positive or negative development? Why?

Week Sixteen: December 11-15

Lessons and Legacies: The Sixties in History and Memory

Due: Farber, Preface and Conclusion

Discussion: 1) How do the 1960s continue to influence American politics, society, and culture? 2) What are the most important lessons and legacies of the 1960s? Why?

Course Conclusion

Due: “Goodbye to All That” and “Times of Greatness and Wonder” (packet)

Discussion: 1) Is America a better or worse country today as a result of the 1960s? 2) Who makes the better case for (Hayden) or against (Horowitz) the 1960s?

For changes and updates, please consult the ERes course page. The discussion questions serve as a general guide to reading assignments and class participation.