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HISTORY 339--THE HISTORY OF THE PRESENT: THE US SINCE 1968

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will gain historical perspective on the development of the modern United States. In addition, students should develop a set of skills and habits of mind that derive from serious study of history, including:

- appreciation for how a historical perspective can enrich understanding of contemporary problems;
- the ability to analyze the value and limitations of various sources as evidence;
- a capacity to weigh multiple perspectives and evaluate the merits of competing interpretations,
- research skills using both primary and secondary sources, and
- proficiency in constructing persuasive and evidence-based arguments in written, oral, and digital formats.

BU HUB OBJECTIVES: This course will meet [BU Hub Learning Outcomes](#) for Social Inquiry II, Historical Consciousness, and for Research and Information Literacy (BU HUB LEARNING OUTCOMES IN BOLD BELOW)

In particular, students will:

-- complete a series of writing assignments that ask them to **create historical narratives, evaluate interpretations based on historical evidence, and construct historical arguments.** Lectures and readings will model these skills and class discussions will also ask students to think in these ways.

--In nearly every class (and in the writing assignments), **students will demonstrate an ability to interpret primary source material (textual, visual, or aural) using a range of interpretive skills and situating the material in its historical and cultural context.**

--In their assessments of sources and writing assignments, **students will demonstrate knowledge of religious traditions (such as Roman Catholicism, evangelical Protestantism, and New Age spirituality), forms of political organization (different forms of voter**

mobilization, political communication, governmental structures, interest group politics), and socio-economic forces (including de-industrialization, mass immigration, consumer culture, social movement activity), and how these have changed over time.

--In class discussions and through assignments, including the “Where’s Waldo” assignment and the policy research project, students **will apply principles and methods from the social sciences based on collecting new or analyzing existing data in order to address questions, solve problems, or deepen understanding. They will understand the nature of evidence employed in the social sciences and will demonstrate a capacity to differentiate competing claims in such fields. This includes reflecting on and critically evaluating how social scientists formulate hypotheses, gather empirical evidence of multiple sorts, and analyze and interpret this evidence.**

--In their primary source analysis, research proposal, bibliography and final research paper, students will learn and **demonstrate the ability to search for, select, and use a range of publicly available and discipline-specific information sources ethically and strategically to address research questions.**

--By producing a substantial research project in a series of iterative phases, students **will demonstrate understanding of the overall research process and its component parts, and be able to formulate good research questions or hypotheses, gather and analyze information, and critique, interpret, and communicate findings.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

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|--|-------------------|
| 1. Primary Source Analysis (Due September 26) | 10% |
| 2. Historical Analysis Essay (Due Oct. 17) | 20% |
| 3. Social Sci Evidence and Argument (Where’s Waldo?) Analysis (Due Nov 19) | 10% |
| 4. Research Project (An Iterative Process with Multiple Deadlines) | 40% |
| --Proposal (Due October 3) | 5% |
| --Suggested Meeting with Mugar Archivist (Oct. 10- Nov. 14) | |
| --Bibliography (Due November 7) | 10% |
| --Final project (Due December 5) | 25% |
| --Reflection (Due December 13) | 1 BONUS POINT |
| 5. Final Exam (December 17, 2019) | <u>20%</u> |
| | 100% |

Primary Source Analysis. Following the instructions for the Primary Source Analysis (posted on the Assignments page of the Course Website), students will choose a short document (fewer than five pages) from a folder of primary sources, analyze the document by answering a series of short questions about them (1 or 2 paragraphs each; the total will be no more than two pages). The completed assignment is due in class on Thursday, September 26. The Primary Source Assignment will account for 10% of your final grade in the course.

2. Historical Analysis Essay. On October 8, I will post questions for a historical essay, asking students to analyze a historical question and develop a historical argument. In class, on Thursday, October 17, students will turn in a paper of approximately six double-spaced, typewritten pages (1500 words), analyzing one of the questions in an intelligent and coherent essay. You should print a copy of your essay in 12-point font, in pages numbered at the upper right corner, and submit it in class. Late papers will be penalized one half grade per day. The essay will account for 20% of your final grade in the course.

3. Social Sci Evidence and Argument Analysis (Where's Waldo) Assignment: Following the instructions posted on the Assignments page of the Course Website, students will choose one of 3 issues (rise of conservatism, gun control/gun rights, and development of modern Boston) around which historians and other social scientists have assembled different bodies of evidence, drawn different conclusions, and made different recommendations. Analyzing multiple approaches to the same question, students answer a set of questions asking them in one-or-two paragraphs to identify the assumptions of different disciplines/subfields, the methods adopted, the evidence assembled. Students then explain how those assumptions, methods and evidence selection shaped conclusions. The completed assignment is due in class on Tuesday, November 19. The assignment will account for 10% of your final grade in the course.

4. Research Project. Each student will complete a significant work of original research, either individually or as part of a two-person collaboration. Following the guidelines on the Research Assignment instruction sheet (posted under Assignments on the course Blackboard site), each student will identify an important historical problem related to media and politics in modern U.S. history; research that problem; select, curate, and annotate primary sources; and present their conclusions in a digital format.

Students will develop and submit their projects in a series of stages:

--On **October 3**, you will submit a brief proposal (250-500 words), describing your research question and explaining the significance of the problem. The proposal will account for 5% of your final grade in the course. If it is late, you will lose points.

--On **November 7**, you will turn in a preliminary bibliography. The bibliography should list at least ten sources that you are consulting for this project, group them by category (categories depend on the question being researched; in some cases, the categories might be type of source, in some cases subject areas, in some cases time periods), and provide a brief description (one to three sentences of each category). The bibliography will account for 10% of your final grade in the course.

--During **late October** or **November**, each student will meet at least once with an instructor or teaching fellow to discuss progress on the research project. In addition, students are encouraged to consult with one of the librarians at least once during the semester.

--By 5 PM on **Thursday, December 5**, students will submit the final project. It will account for 25% of your final grade in the course.

--By 5 PM on **Friday, December 13, 2019**, students will complete and turn in the reflection worksheet (posted on the Assignments page). It asks a series of short questions about what you learned in the course of the research project. By completing the reflection, students will receive 1 bonus point toward your final grade in the class.

4. **Final Examination.** The Final Examination will take place from 12:30-2:30 PM on Tuesday, December 17, 2018. The exam will count for 20% of your final grade in the course.

NOTE ON PLAGIARISM. **Remember that plagiarism is a serious offense.** The Boston University Code of Academic Conduct defines plagiarism as “any attempts by a student to represent the work of another as his or her own.” Plagiarism is subject to serious sanctions, including reprimand, suspension, and expulsion. For a detailed description of Boston University’s rules, consult the code of conduct at www.cs.bu.edu/students/conduct.html

NOTE ON WRITING ASSIGNMENTS. For a detailed description of the proper format for historical essays, students should consult the BU History Department Writing Guide. You will find a link to the Writing Guide at the Blackboard website. “Writing Tips,” a brief set of guidelines for essays in HI 339, is also posted on the website. Make sure that you review the writing tips before you turn in your first essay.

NOTE ON TECH: Use of laptops (and other digital devices) is not permitted in class (except at times designated by the instructors). Please stow your devices before the start of every class. If you have a certified condition that requires the use of a digital tool, let the instructor know.

READINGS: All books are available in paperback at the Bookstore. Students can find additional assignments at the Blackboard Learn (Blackboard 9) website. Those readings are labeled with an asterisk (*) below. Readings are assigned from the following volumes:

Kevin Kruse and Julian Zelizer, *Fault Lines*

Michael Patrick MacDonald, *All Souls*

Jay McInerney, *Bright Lights, Big City*

Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail, 1972*

Assorted Primary Source Documents and Scholarly Articles (Available at the Website)

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on the Blackboard Learn website.

Sep 3 Introduction to the Course: The Mist of History

Sep 5 *Annus Mirabilis, Annus Horribilus*: 1968 and the Postwar Legacy

READ BY END OF WEEK 1: Thompson, p. 1-April; Late 1960s Documents Folder
(Schrag and Wallace).*

Sep 10 The Trickster: Nixon's Domestic Presidency

Sep 12 Nixon and Kissinger, Vietnam and the World

READ BY END OF WEEK 2: Thompson, May-Dark Interlude; Late 60s Documents Folder
(McKeen, Schulman).*

Sep 17 "We're Finally On Our Own": Student Radicalism after 1968

Sep 19 The Legacy of Woodstock

READ BY END OF WEEK 3 : Thompson, August-Epitaph; Kruse and Zelizer, pp. 1-43;
Kent State Documents Folder

Sep 24 Research Methods with Mugar Librarians Ken Liss and Donald Altschiller
(PRIMARY SOURCE ASSIGNMENT DUE)

Sep 26 Watergate

READ BY END OF WEEK 4: MacDonald, Chs. 1-4; Kruse and Zelizer, chs. 2-3.

Oct 1 *E Pluribus Plures*: From Integration to Cultural Nationalism

Oct 3 *E Pluribus Plures*, Part II: Disco Nites, Rapper's Delites (**PROPOSALS DUE**)

READ BY END OF WEEK 5: MacDonald, chs. 5-11; Race and Cultural Nationalism
Documents Folder.

Oct 8 The Third Great Awakening: Religion and Community

Oct 10 The Carter Presidency/Discussion of MacDonald

READ BY END OF WEEK 6: Kruse and Zelizer, ch. 4.; Me Decade Documents Folder,

Oct 15 **NO CLASS—TUESDAY SCHEDULE ON MONDAY**

Oct 17 The Me Decade and the Politics of Self: Excursions into 1970s Culture (**ESSAY DUE**)

READ BY END OF WEEK 7: Kruse and Zelizer, ch. 5; Feminism Documents Folder.

Oct 22 Feminism
 Oct 24 Research Project Workshop

READ BY END OF WEEK 8: Kruse and Zelizer, ch. 6; Men's Movement Documents Folder.

Oct 29 From the Duke to Iron John: Men and Masculinity
 Oct 31 Rise of the Sunbelt

READ BY END OF WEEK 9: McInerney, pp. 1-98; Kruse and Zelizer, ch. 7;
 Sunbelt/Frostbelt Documents Folder

Nov 5 Thunder on the Right: The New Right and the Tax Revolt
 Nov 7 Material Dreams, Material Nightmares: Stagflation and the Money Revolution
(BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE)

READ BY END OF WEEK 10: McInerney, pp. 99-182; Conservatism
 Documents Folder

Nov 12 Reaganism
 Nov 14 Years of the Yuppies: Economics and Culture in the 80s/Discussion of McInerney

READ BY END OF WEEK 11: Kruse and Zelizer, chs. 8-10; Yuppies Documents Folder.

Nov 19 The Privatization of Everyday Life
(SOC. SCI. EVIDENCE ASSIGNMENT DUE)
 Nov 21 Trouble in Lakewood: The End of the Cold War and American Society

READ BY END OF WEEK 12: New Diversity Documents Folder.

Nov 26 The Clinton Presidency
 Nov 28 **NO CLASS--THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

READ BY END OF WEEK 13 Kruse and Zelizer, chs. 11-12.

Dec 3 Post-Conservative America? Post-Feminist America?
 Dec 5 2019: Contemporary America in Historical Perspective
(RESEARCH PROJECT DUE)

READ BY END OF WEEK 14: The 2000s Documents Folder; Kruse and Zelizer, chs. 13-14.

Dec 10 Conclusion
 READ BY END OF WEEK 15: Kruse and Zelizer, Ch. 15.

(RESEARCH PROJECT REFLECTION DUE DECEMBER 16)

(FINAL EXAM DECEMBER 17—12:30-PM)