

Cold War Culture
Prof. David Greenberg
SAS Honors Seminar

Class Time: Wednesday 1.10-4.10
Email: davidgr@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Wed. 10.30-12.30
Course No.: 01:090:277

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Index No.: 51025

Syllabus

Description. The years just after World War II did much to define American politics and culture in the half century that followed. Although the 1950s seem more than a lifetime away, many of the concerns of those years—from the prediction of a war without end against a ruthless global enemy to domestic fears of repression and conformity—are pertinent to our own day. Other issues—the mixed blessing of material abundance, the efforts by women and blacks to shatter constraining cultural bonds, a new aesthetic of spontaneity and informality in art—have scarcely disappeared since. In examining American culture from roughly 1946 to 1960, the course seeks to show the interconnectedness of politics, ideas, and culture; to complicate conventionally accepted clichés about the period; to locate the origins of cultural patterns that persist in our own time; and to appreciate as well the important differences of this era from our own.

Course Requirements.

- Regular attendance. This course meets only two and a half hours a week. Arriving on time and staying for the duration is essential. Students may miss *one* class during the semester, no questions asked. Students who miss more than one class—or substantial portions of more than one class—will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each class missed, even if they notify the professor in advance. (The scale includes minuses, even though Rutgers does not allow such grades. e. g., if you are on pace to earn an A, and you have two unexcused absences, you will earn a B+.) In case of severe illness or other extraordinary events, documentation must be provided. And to be clear: “Severe illness” does not refer to a bad cold or the flu. It refers to something like meningitis or a car accident.
- Active participation. One central purpose of a seminar like this is to teach students to form their own ideas and share them with their peers. The very work of the course consists of engaging in a discussion of ideas. Students who abstain from discussion are missing the course’s whole purpose. A class in which a student doesn’t contribute to discussion is equivalent to a missed class. *In other words, if you miss one class because of illness and are completely silent through a second class, you will be penalized.* Although I appreciate that some people are more soft-spoken or shy than others, if you are truly phobic about talking in class, you should probably not take this course.
- Reading. The class reading ranges between 125 and 150 pages a week.
- Classroom Presentation. Each week one student will prepare a 15-minute presentation framing the readings. *This presentation should not summarize the reading chapter by chapter.* Rather, it should aim to give a broad overview of the subject under discussion. The material for class that we read does not consist of purely factual accounts of what happened. Each reading has a point of view, and the points of view expressed are

often controversial. Your presentation should explain why these readings are interesting or controversial and what aspect of their viewpoint is distinctive.

- **Short Paper. Due Feb. 17.** You are to write a four-page (maximum) essay. You are to take a prominent magazine from the period under discussion (1946-1960) such as *Time*, *Life*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The New Republic* or any number of others. Choose one issue and read it through cover to cover. What does it tell you about the mood or concerns or attitudes of the country during this period? How does what you find in your magazine relate to what we have read and discussed in class so far? You will be graded on the clarity and style of the writing, the originality and cogency of the thesis, and your use of the readings. All papers should be in Times New Roman (or a similar font, like this, Georgia), 12-point size, with normal margins. Please put your name and page number on every page. No cover page is necessary.
- **Term Paper. Due Apr. 21.** The main piece of writing for the course is a ten-page paper that explores some aspect of Cold War culture in depth. I will post a bibliography of books you may wish to read, grouped by topic. You should choose at least three books on a given topic and write a review-essay analyzing them. I will provide some examples of model review-essays.

Additional Rules and Information.

- We will be using Sakai for the class. Go to <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> and log in using your Rutgers ID and password. On the site I will post announcements, assignments, readings, and so on.
- Cell phones must be turned off upon entering the classroom and may not be used in the classroom or during class time.
- Laptops may be used for note-taking only. No emailing or Web-surfing during class.
- Students must show up on time and stay for the duration of the class. During class, students should not engage in personal conversations, read newspapers, do crossword puzzles, or undertake other personal diversions unrelated to class activity.
- I will return all emails, usually on a first-come, first-served basis. Do not assume that I have received your email. Sometimes it gets stuck in a spam folder. If I don't reply within 48 hours, please follow up with a phone call. If it's urgent, please call me.
- The Aresty Center [<http://aresty.rutgers.edu/>] is a great resource for learning about how to conduct research. It also provides some funds for undergraduate research projects and hosts a symposium – this year on **Apr. 23** – at which you can present your work. The deadline to apply for the symposium is **Feb. 19**. See the site for more details.

Academic Integrity.

Plagiarism and cheating are, of course, forbidden, according to Rutgers University policy. You are responsible for reviewing and obeying these policies. A lengthy statement of the policy is at <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.

On plagiarism, this statement (from history.rutgers.edu/undergrad/plagiarism.htm) appears in Rutgers University's rules. Like all such rules, it applies to this class.


Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment ..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.


Reading List.


Glenn Altschuler, *All Shook Up* (Oxford University Press)
 Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light* (UNC Press)
 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (Norton)
 David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (Ballantine Books)
 Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (Penguin)
 Stephen Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins)
 Tom Wicker, *Dwight Eisenhower* (Times Books)
 Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 6th ed.,
 Pearson Longman, 2006. ISBN: 0321435362 (recommended).

Weekly Assignments.

 **Book** available at Rutgers University Bookstore or in Alexander library reserves


 **Article** available at online on the class website at the Sakai site.

 **Article** on the Web.

 **Clip** on the Web.

Jan. 20


Introduction

 Robert Griffith, "The Cultural Turn in Cold War Studies," *Reviews in American History* 29 (2001), pp. 150-157.

Jan. 27


The Ike Age


 Tom Wicker, *Dwight Eisenhower*.

 David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, Ch. 18.

Feb. 3

Origins of the Cold War

 William Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, 6th edition, pp. 31-78.

 Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. "Origins of the Cold War," *Foreign Affairs*, 1967, pp. 22-52.

 George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947, pp. 566-582.

📁 Walter Lippmann, "The Cold War," reprinted in *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1987, pp. 869-884.

Feb. 10

The Bomb

📖 David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, Chs. 2, 6, 24.

📖 Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light*, Parts 1, 2, 4 & 7.

Feb. 17

Politics and the Red Scare

⊕ **First Paper Due**

📖 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, Chs 1, 3, 16-17, 23.

📖 Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, pp. 1-52.

📁 Leslie Fiedler, "Hiss, Chambers, and the Age of Innocence," *Commentary*, August 1951.

📁 Irving Howe, "Lillian Hellman and the McCarthy Years."

Feb. 24

Cold War Adventurism

📖 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, Chs. 25-27.

📁 Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, Ch. 5.

📁 Michael Kackman, *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture*, Ch. 1.

📁 Michael Ignatieff, "What Did the CIA Do to His Father?," *New York Times Magazine*, April 1, 2001.

📁 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxuH577PkVg>

📁 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EkI-r-JzkU>

Mar. 3

Cold War Journalism

📁 Mark Van Pelt, "The Cold War on the Air," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 18:2 (1984), pp. 97-110.

📁 Eric Alterman, *Sound and Fury*, Ch. 2.

📁 Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*, Ch. 5.

📁 Godfrey Hodgson, *America in Our Time*, Ch. 7 pp. 134-153.

📁 Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, Ch. 10 225-248

Mar. 10

Affluence and Conformity

📖 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, Chs 8-12, 33, 35.

📖 Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, Ch. 3.

📁 Irving Howe, "This Age of Conformity."

📁 Alan Brinkley, "The Illusion of Unity in Cold War Culture," in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, pp. 61-73.

Mar. 17

SPRING BREAK

over break, please start reading:

📖 Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*.

We will discuss it the week of April 7, but it's long and you should start it now.

Mar. 24

Civil Rights Movement

📖 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, Chs 28-30, 36, 44.

📁 Mary Dudziak, "Brown as a Cold War Case," *Journal of American History*.

Mar. 31

Film, Television and the Mass Culture Debate

- 📖 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, Chs 13-15, 19, 34, 43.
- 📖 Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, Chs. 6 & 7.
- 📁 Dwight Macdonald, "Masscult and Midcult."
- 📁 Richard Pells, *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age*, pp. 174-182, 217-232.

Apr. 7

Literature – The Beats

- 📖 Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*.
- 📖 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, pp. 295-307.
- 📁 Louis Menand, "Drive, He Said," *The New Yorker*, October 1, 2007.
- 📁 Norman Podhoretz, "The Know-Nothing Bohemians," *Partisan Review*, 25 (Spring 1958).

Apr. 14

Feminism

- 📖 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, pp. 564-598 [34].
- 📖 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. Chs. 1-4, 12-14, Epilogue .

Apr. 21

Art

🔴 Second Paper Due

- 📖 Erika Doss, "The Art of Cultural Politics," in *Recasting America*, pp. 195-217.
- 📁 Jane DeHart Mathews, "Art and Politics in Cold War America," *American Historical Review* 81:4 (October 1976), pp. 762-787.
- 📁 Clement Greenberg, "Avant Garde and Kitsch."
- 📁 Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters."
- 📁 Meyer Schapiro, "The Nature of Abstract Art."
- 📖 Max Kozloff, "American Painting During the Cold War," *Artforum* 11, 1973 43-54. <http://tinyurl.com/kozloff>

Spend time browsing these sites:

<http://thomashartbenton.com/gallery1.htm>

<http://www.jackson-pollock.com/onlineartgallery.html>

Apr. 28

Rock 'n' Roll

- 📖 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, pp. 456-79.
- 📖 Glenn Altschuler, *All Shook Up*, pp. 3-129.
- 🎧 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hcLtvilg5w>
- 🎧 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6A3vLlVa3I>
- 🎧 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ofD9t_sULM
- 🎧 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WG9fs7qnBoY>