

History 103.3  
Garceau  
Clough 300  
X-3290  
T,Th, 9:40-11:10am  
3-5pm

Dee  
Clough 301,  
Ofc Hrs: M,F,  
3-5pm

### INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION: POST-WORLD-WAR II AMERICA, 1945-1963

#### Course Description:

The years following World War II have a curious reputation. Some historians characterize the Fifties as an era of innocence and simplicity, a period of calm before the restless Sixties. One thinks of “Happy Days,” when the nation prospered, its social life distinguished by little more than a series of harmless fads: the hula hoop, tailfinned cars, and chlorophyll gum.

At the same time, scholars of Fifties culture point to disturbing signs of repression and unease, such as the Cold War and the Red Scare. The consensus is that the Fifties exhibited a kind of cultural fundamentalism-- a return to simpler definitions of order through patriotism, domesticity, and the pursuit of material security.

How accurate is this view of the 1950s? We can test these assumptions by exploring the mood of post-World War II America through its political life, gender relations, race relations, art, literature, and film. Through each of these lenses we will investigate the period from 1945 to 1963, keeping in mind the following questions: How was democracy redefined? If there were challenges to the status quo, what forms did they take, and why? How did gender and racial identity shape the way individuals understood their relationship to the larger society? How did Americans reconcile their needs for individualism and community? Finally, within the larger context of twentieth century American history, what elements of change and continuity are present in Fifties culture?

#### Course Requirements:

Most important are consistent attendance and participation. Come to class having done the reading listed for that day on the syllabus. Good discussion depends upon your preparation. Class participation counts as 25% of your grade. Over two absences will lower your average by a full letter grade.

Written assignments include a 7-8 page synthetic essay, a 4-5 page critical review, and a short research paper of 10-12 pages. The synthetic essay will focus on a conceptual unit in the course, drawing on course readings and classroom discussion. The critical review will focus on one book or journal article of your choice, on a topic covered by the

course. The research paper will be an original investigation using primary sources. This paper will go through two drafts, with the first due April 13 and the revised paper due May 3. Time has been set aside for student presentations of research on the last day of class. Class presentation of research is optional.

Required Texts:

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1947).  
Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *A Coney Island of the Mind* (1958).  
Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1968).  
Richard Rovere, *Senator Joe McCarthy* (1959).  
Elaine Schrecker, Ed. *The Age of McCarthyism; A Brief History with Documents* (1994).  
Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955).  
Coursepack (xeroxed collection of articles and documents).  
Coursepacks will be available at the History Department office in Clough 308.

COURSE OUTLINE

Th Jan 13: Introduction to the Course

Miller & Nowak, "Introduction," Coursepack, pp.3-20.

Vance Packard, "A Classless Society?" Coursepack, pp.31-36.

Stephanie Koontz, "American Families in the 1950s,"  
Coursepack, pp.23-41.

UNIT I: ORDERING THE POSTWAR WORLD

The Cold War and the Red Scare

T Jan 18: Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism*, pp.1-40.

Th Jan 20: Fried, "Electoral Politics and McCarthyism: The 1950 Campaign,"  
Coursepack, pp.192-222.

Schrecker, "The World of American Communism: Party Members  
Talk About Their Experiences," *Age of McCarthyism*, pp.95-105.

The Politics of Fear

T Jan 25: Film: "Seeing Red." Class meets at Burrow Viewing Room.

Th Jan 27: Rovere, Senator Joe McCarthy.

#### Subversion, Manipulation, or Reform?

T Feb 1: Schrecker, The Age of McCarthyism, pp.70-94; and documents, pp.203-30.

Th Feb 3: Miller & Nowak, "Learning to Love the Bomb," Coursepack, pp.43-83.

Miller & Nowak, "Showdown at the Little Red Schoolhouse," Coursepack, pp.248-68.

#### The Well-Adjusted Man

T Feb 8: William H. Whyte, "Belongingness," Coursepack, pp.32-46;  
William H. Whyte, "Togetherness," Coursepack, pp.46-59.

Vance Packard, "Emerging: A Diploma Elite," Coursepack, pp.42-9.

Vance Packard, "Pecking Orders in Corporate Barnyards," Coursepack, pp.80-6,

#### UNIT I: ORDERING THE POST-WAR WORLD (continued):

#### The Well-Adjusted Man

Th Feb 10: Film: "Twelve Angry Men" (1956-57).

You must see this film before coming to class.  
Film will be shown Wed. Feb.9, at 7pm in Burrow Library.

T Feb 15: Wilson, The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (1955).

Th Feb 17: Mailer, "The White Negro," Coursepack, pp.1-18.

Excerpts, Playboy (1958,1959), Coursepack.

## The Well Adjusted Woman

T Feb 22: Film: "Rosie the Riveter." Meet in Burrow Viewing Room.

Baxandall et al., "America's Working Women," Coursepack, pp.245-47.

Augusta Clawson, "Shipyard Diary of a Woman Welder," Coursepack, pp.251-53.

"Accommodating the Working Woman," Coursepack, pp.255-57.

"Postwar Plans," Coursepack, pp.261-63.

Th Feb 24: "The Feminine Mystique: 'Why I Quit Working,'" Coursepack, pp.299-302.

"I Denied My Sex," Coursepack, pp.263-69.

"Working Mothers and Delinquency," Coursepack, pp.269-70.

**\*FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT\***

T Feb 29: May, "The Reproductive Consensus in the Postwar Era," Coursepack, pp.415-20.

Vanek, "Time Spent in Housework," Coursepack, pp.499-506.

Cowan, "The Industrial Revolution in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the Twentieth-Century," Coursepack, pp.383-93.

Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," pp.15-32.

UNIT I: ORDERING THE POSTWAR WORLD (continued)

Th March 2: Film: "Rebel Without a Cause."

You must see this film before class.

Film will be shown Wed, March 1 at 7pm in Burrow Library.

**\*FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE, FRIDAY MARCH 3\***

SPRING BREAK: March 4-12.

## UNIT II: AFRICAN-AMERICAN PROTEST

### The Literature of Invisibility

T March 14: Ellison, *Invisible Man*, "Prologue" and chapters 1-12.

Th March 16: Ellison, *Invisible Man*, chapters 13-25 and "Epilogue."

### The Struggle for Equality

T March 21: Guest Speaker: Russ Wigginton, "Civil Rights During WWII."

Th March 23: Lecture: "The Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955."

Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter From a Birmingham Jail,"  
Coursepack, pp.182-95.

\*SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT\*

T March 28: Sitkoff, "Bigger Than a Hamburger," Coursepack, pp.61-87.

Sitkoff, "The Long Journey," Coursepack, pp.88-117.

Th March 30: Writing Workshop

Patricia N. Limerick, "Dances With Professors," Coursepack.

\*SECOND ESSAY DUE\*

T April 4: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Parts 1 and 2.

Th April 6: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Parts 3 and 4.

## UNIT III: CROSS-CURRENTS IN THE CULTURE

### Abstract Expressionism

T April 11: Guest Lecture: Professor David McCarthy

Miller & Nowak, "More Than a Music," Coursepack, pp.291-313.

Film: America's Dream Life

Th April 13: Film: "On the Waterfront."

You must see this film before class.

Film will be shown Wed., April 12, at 7pm in Burrow Library.

Miller & Nowak, "Hollywood in Transition," Coursepack,  
pp.314-43.

\*RESEARCH PAPER, FIRST DRAFT DUE\*

Poetry: Critical Vision

T April 18: Lawrence Ferlinghetti, A Coney Island of the Mind (1958).

EASTER BREAK: April 20-23

T April 25: Making Sense of It All: Synthesis and Reflection

Th April 27: Student Presentations

Friday, May 3: \*FINAL DRAFT, RESEARCH PAPER DUE\*

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## MOVIE SCHEDULE

Date	Time	Location	Film
T Jan 25	in class	Burrow Library Viewing Room	"Seeing Red"
W Feb 9	7pm	Burrow Library Viewing Room	"Twelve Angry Men"
T Feb 22	in class	Burrow Library Viewing Room	"Rosie the Riveter"
W March 1	7pm	Burrow Library Viewing Room	"Rebel Without a Cause"
W April 12	7pm	Burrow Library Viewing Room	"On the Waterfront"