

SYLLABUS  
History 340: The United States since World War II  
Spring 2018

Instructor: Timothy Reagin

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Class Meetings: MW 5:00 – 6:15

Office hours: MW 4pm and by appt.

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**History Department Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/>

**History Department Website:** <https://his.uncg.edu/>

**Course Description:**

This course surveys United States history from the end of World War II to the twentieth century. It will emphasize the political, military, diplomatic, social, cultural, and economic changes during that time frame. Major themes to be covered include the origins of the Cold War, the struggles of African Americans, Native Americans, Women, and gays for equal rights, the presidential administrations of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, American participation in three wars -Korean, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf- and their impacts on American society, Nixon's imperial presidency, the years of malaise under Ford and Carter, and the conservative counterrevolution.

Some of the big questions we will answer in this class, which we can directly relate to the political divisions currently in the nation, include: 1.) Did the United States return to "normalcy" after WWII? If it did, was everyone included, or who was left out of postwar prosperity? 2.) How did minority groups respond to the prosperity of the postwar years? 3.) What led to a liberal revolution in the United States in the 1960s and '70s? 4.) Why did America respond to those liberal decades with a conservative counterrevolution? 5.) How did the liberal and conservative decades lead us to the twenty first century?

History is not simply the memorization of facts and dates, nor is it just the story of kings and generals. It is some of that, but historians care more about the ability to perform historical thinking skills (such as determining the significance of any document). In short, to "do history" is to become a more well informed citizen of the world with the ability to communicate effectively with your fellow citizens. To answer our big questions, we will need to engage historical thinking skills to determine the answers for ourselves.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Answer the big questions in American history since World War II by synthesizing evidence to evaluate historical arguments.

2. Develop historical thinking skills including:

Evaluating and interpreting historical evidence, determining historical significance, using periodization to analyze change over time, and synthesizing arguments.

3. Foster collegiality through classroom discussions of primary sources and historical thinking skills.

4. Use information literacy skills to evaluate secondary sources.

**Teaching and Learning Methods:**

History 340 will be taught through a variety of methods. I will offer lecture presentations for content. Additionally, we will read primary documents, secondary materials, and watch documentaries to promote classroom discussion.

Supplemental readings will play a key role in classroom discussion throughout the semester and developing the historical thinking skills outlines in our Student Learning Outcomes. We will reserve time noted on the schedule to discuss weekly readings. We will address wide-ranging big historical questions. As such, your participation will be essential to learning in this class in order to answer our big questions.

**Required Readings:**

You may find these books at the bookstore or another, cheaper place such as Amazon or Thriftbooks.

Bruce Schulman. *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents*. 978-0-312-41633-1

James Olson and Randy Roberts. *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents*. 978-0-312-14227-8.

Sarah Phillips and Shane Hamilton. *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics: A Brief History with Documents*. 978-0-312-67710-7

Meg Jacobs and Julian Zelizer. *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years, 1981-1989: A Brief History with Documents*. 978-0-312-48831-4

## Assignments and Grading Breakdown:

### Book Reviews: 100 Points each = 200 Points SLO # 2 and 4

Students will complete two book reviews. We are reading 4 books in this class, you can pick any 2 of those 4 to review. Please note that you will review 2 of the 4 books, but only the Part I of each book. You MUST submit 1 of your reviews before Spring Break.

These are not the same as a book report. Each book review should be between 3-4 pages (minimum of three full pages). Additionally, you will need to find out additional information about the book's author and its reception. You will need to search for the author to find information such as: who is he/she, are they historians, where do they teach, where were they educated? Then (after you complete your own review) search for other reviews of the book on JSTOR: was it well received or were there criticisms of it? This additional information should take up about a paragraph or two.

A detailed prompt will be handed out to you.

Writing assistance is available at the University Writing Center (in MHRA). See me if you need directions. Your tuition pays for it, so use it!

### Primary Source Discussions: 100 Points SLO #3 and 4

Students will read the assigned documents from our books (as noted on the course schedule) by the class it is assigned to and come prepared to discuss it. You will take notes while you read and during class discussion on what you think is relevant to help answer our weekly big question (noted on the schedule) Your 100 points will be based on your discussion and written notes taken during the discussion. You will need to be prepared to answer questions and discuss the book with classmates. I will lead the discussions but I will also rely on your input to guide the discussions. We will have ten discussions; each will be worth 10 points

### Primary Source Written Questions: 50 points each = 100 Points SLO #3 and 4

You will need to submit written primary source analyses for the primary documents on 1/24 and 4/11. I will provide you guiding questions one week in advance and you will need to type or write a response to be turned in.

### Primary Source Discussion Questions: 50 points each = 100 Points SLO #3 and 4

In addition to attending the regular discussions, students will prepare five questions that we need to discuss with the primary sources **two times**. You must email me these questions a minimum of 5 hours before the class for which the sources are assigned. Each question will be judged on its quality (10 points per question), do not submit a question that looks like this: "What was this source about?" Our primary sources will come from the Part II section of every book. You may consult the questions in the back of each book for inspiration, but you may not copy those questions. I will model what I am looking for during our first primary source discussion on 1/17, you may choose any two weeks after that to develop questions. Pay attention to the weekly question that I wrote on the schedule and think about how you can ask questions that will add value to that week based on the primary sources that you read.

### Mid-Term Examination: 100 Points SLO #1

Students will complete an exam covering the first half of the course material. Questions will include short answer identifications, short essays, and primary source analysis. You will have multiple options to choose from on this exam. Answers will be judged on accuracy, employment of historical thinking skills, and abundance of historical information. If you have an extremely substantial and documented reason for missing the mid-term, contact me at the earliest possible time to schedule a make-up time. It is your responsibility to notify me as early as possible to schedule the make-up.

### Final Examination: 100 Points SLO #1

Students will complete an exam covering the final half of the course material. Questions will include short answer identifications short essays, and primary source analysis. Answers will be judged on accuracy, employment of historical thinking skills, and abundance of historical information. You will have multiple essay options on this exam. The final examination is not cumulative but will include important material from the mid-term as I see fit. There will be no make-up time for the final.

### Attendance and General Participation: 100 points SLO #2

I will pass around a daily attendance sheet that you must sign. I expect every student to attend every class session. Attendance and participation will count towards a portion of your grade. You can miss 3 class meetings before I begin deducting points from your final grade. Since the course is out of a total number of points, I will deduct 5 points from your final grade per absence beyond the third. **I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences.**

Students are expected to attend every class, be attentive, and act in an adult manner. The correlation between class attendance and student grades is strongly related. If you absolutely have to miss a class for a serious reason, I suggest you get the class notes from a classmate. It is your responsibility to keep up with the class notes and readings. Do not be late to class. I do not like tardiness. Please raise your hand if you have a question about anything I say. We will also watch short videos and documentaries in this course. I will ask you to write a short reflection on two of those – the points for that will come from this category.

**Total:** 800 Points

No weighted grades here. Divide your total earned points by 800 and you will arrive at your percentage. I adhere to UNCG's standard grading scale. [https://reg.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/UGB\\_1718.pdf#page=35](https://reg.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/UGB_1718.pdf#page=35)

### **Makeup or late work**

You will have the opportunity to make up missed assignments (excluding the final and any in class discussions) at a grade reduction. I will accept late work at a 10% per day, including weekends, grade reduction. For example: If this class ended at 6:15pm and I don't have your assignment in my hand at that time the clock will start. This does not mean that you will earn a 9 out of 10 if you turn it in one day late, it means you will earn whatever grade you do and then I will take 10% off. If you hand me a subpar assignment and it earned 7 out of 10 points, the lateness will turn it into a 6 out of 10 and so on.

### **Code of proper classroom conduct**

The classroom is a learning environment and requires appropriate behavior. A higher degree of maturity and consideration for others is expected of you now that you are in college. Students will NOT: 1.) talk to neighbors or whisper during class, 2.) arrive or depart as they please, 3.) eat in class, 4.) use cell phone telephones, I know when you are texting, TURN IT OFF, I can hear vibrations and so can everyone else - it's distracting and annoying. 5.) Interrupt other students who are participating. Students WILL: 1.) raise your hand if you have a question, 2.) attend to bathroom needs before or after class, 3.) eat before or after class - I'm okay with drinks. I take all of this very seriously and I expect you to take it seriously too.

We may engage some differing views from our own in this class, especially during discussions. You will maintain proper decorum if you encounter an opposing attitude that you do not agree with. I will ask you or tell you to leave the class if I think you are being intentionally disrespectful to a colleague. It is okay, actually preferable, to disagree but we must be adult about it. I encourage, and love, questions and comments. Raise your hand during class, see me before or after class, or during my office hours. At the first sign of trouble - come to me and I will help you. I may not know you are having problems if you don't come to me.

### **Academic Integrity**

The best learning environment is one based on mutual respect and trust. However, the desire to achieve a good grade without doing the necessary work may tempt some students to cheat on exams or to represent the work of others as their own. As should be obvious to anyone at UNCG, plagiarism and cheating are wrong and are acts of "academic dishonesty." The term "academic dishonesty" means a deliberate and deceptive misrepresentation of one's own work.

There are no mitigating circumstances to justify academic dishonesty. If you are unclear about what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, please ask - Ignorance is no excuse. Discovery of academic dishonesty will bring stiff penalties, including a failing grade for the assignment in question and possibly a grade of F for the course. The maximum penalty at UNCG for plagiarism is possible expulsion from the entire UNC system, so for your own sakes, DO NOT PLAGIARIZE. Don't think you can fool me. I have been reading and writing history for many years now. You will be caught if you plagiarize. This is not a challenge; this is a plea. Don't do it, it will ruin your career as a student at UNCG. See our university's integrity policy here: <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/>

### **Additional Information**

I want you to succeed in this class. Please come see me if you are having trouble, or if you want to talk history! Ask questions, read often, study often.

Please keep all returned assignments as your receipt in the unlikely event of a bookkeeping error. You will need to show me your graded work to correct the mistake.

The course schedule on the following page will change as circumstances dictate. Considering the breadth of material that we have to cover in a short period of time, do not be surprised if I have to revise the schedule. I will announce in class and by email if I need to make changes.

If you need to contact me outside of class, email me. I check it several times daily. Should you email me, please do so in a professional manner. Begin and end every email with an appropriate salutation.

If class is cancelled for any reason - snow, hurricanes, or a sick instructor - you will be notified on your UNCG issued email address, so check it often.

**Course Schedule [Assignments and readings in brackets. Please read ALL material assigned by the date identified in brackets in the schedule below]**

**Week 1 (1/8 – 1/10) Postwar Mood**

Course introduction, Syllabus, What is history? Dawn of the Atomic Age. The Truman succession: Domestic Politics.

**Week 2 (1/17) Postwar Challenges 1/15 – Class Cancelled – Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

**[Read by 1/17 *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics* documents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]**

Origins of the Cold War. McCarthyism.

Primary source discussion: A return to normalcy?

**Week 3 (1/22 – 1/24) Postwar Troubles**

**[Read by 1/24 *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics* documents 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 23, 26, 27, 28,]**

**[Submit on 1/24 your written analysis of the primary source question I provided]**

The Korean Challenge. The Fabulous Fifties: Social and Cultural trends.

Primary source discussion: A return to normalcy for everyone?

**Week 4 (1/29 – 1/31) Postwar Consensus**

**[Read by 1/31 *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics* documents 30, 36, 42, 44, 48 and have your book review of Part I ready to turn in, if you choose to review this book]**

The Fabulous Fifties: Social and Cultural trends. We Like Ike: Politics and Diplomacy in the 1950s.

Primary source discussion: How did minority groups respond in the post-war United States?

**Week 5 (2/5 – 2/7) The Civil Rights Movement**

Origins of the Civil Rights Movement. From Brown to Birmingham and Beyond.

**Week 6 (2/12 – 2/14) Liberalism Revived**

**[Read by 2/14 *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism* documents: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]**

JFK and Camelot. LBJ and the Great Society

Primary source discussion: What led to a “liberal revolution” with JFK and LBJ?

**Week 7 (2/19 – 2/21) The Quagmire**

**[Read by 2/21 *My Lai* documents 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 23, 26, 34, 36, 37, 39, 42, 45, 47, 60, 61, 67]**

Vietnam: Escalation and Frustration. The Anti-War Movement and 1968.

Primary source discussion: What happened in My Lai and why did American soldiers participate?

**Week 8 (2/26 – 2/28) The Unraveling of Consensus**

**[Read by 2/28 *My Lai* documents 34, 36, 37, 39, 42, 45, 47, 60, 61, 67 and have your book review of Part I ready to turn in, if you choose to review this book]**

The Counterculture.

Primary source discussion: War criminals or scared young soldiers?

3/5 – 3/7 – Classes Cancelled – Spring Holiday

**Week 9 (3/12 – 3/14) The Nixon Presidency**

**MIDTERM 3/12**

Nixon’s Foreign Policy. Nixon’s Domestic Policy and Domestic Enemies.

**Week 10 (3/19 – 3/21) American Politics in Transition**

**[Read by 2/14 *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism* documents: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,]**

Watergate. Ongoing Reform: Women, American Indians, and Gays.

Primary source discussion: Can the President of the United States commit treason?

**Week 11 (3/26 – 3/28) Race and Rights**

[Read by 3/28 *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism* documents: 19, 20 and have your book review of Part I ready to turn in, if you choose to review this book]

Civil Rights in the 1970s

Primary source discussion: Did the culmination of a liberal revolution lead to the conservative counterrevolution?

**Week 12 (4/2 – 4/4) The Me Decade**

[Read by 4/4 *Conservatives in Power* documents 1, 2, 4, 6]

The Me Decade and the Seventies Scene. Reagan's Counterrevolution: At Home and Abroad.

Primary source discussion: What factors led to the rise of the "Silent Majority" after the 1970s?

**Week 13 (4/9 – 4/11) The Age of Reagan**

[Read *Conservatives in Power* documents 9, 13, 17, 19, 22, 28, 29, 33, 34]

[Submit on 4/11 your written analysis of the primary source question I provided]

Reagan's Counterrevolution: Life in the 1980s

Primary source discussion: Were the 1980s the beginning of a new American trend toward conservatism?

**Week 14 (4/16 – 4/18) Eighties and Nineties America**

[Read by 4/18 *Conservatives in Power* documents 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 46, 49, 51, 53, 54, 57 and have your book review of Part I ready to turn in, if you choose to review this book]]

George H.W. Bush and the Primacy of Foreign Policy. On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency.

Primary source discussion: Did the election of Bill Clinton reverse the conservative trend?

**Week 15 (4/23 – 4/25) The Twenty First Century**

W. and Obama.

In class primary source reading. Discussion: Does the 21<sup>st</sup> century belong to liberals or conservatives?

**Week 16 (12/5)**

Class wrap-up and review for the final.

Our final is on Monday April 30th from 7:00 – 10:00pm outlined by the University's final exam schedule.

-Keep in mind that this schedule is a general outline and may change but I will let you know well in advance of any due dates if I have to change it-