

**AMH 3931: United States History Since 1945**  
**University of Florida**  
**Department of History**  
**Summer B 2021**

**Instructor:** Kaitlyn Muchnok

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**Office Hours:** Thursday 12:30 P.M. to 2:30 P.M. via zoom & by appointment

**Class Meeting Times:** MTWRF, 3:30 P.M. to 4:45 P.M. (Period 6)

**Class Number/Section Number:** 10250/4F50

**Room:** Keene-Flint 0119

**Course Description:**

This course explores the transformation of American life, culture, politics, and society since the end of World War II. In the postwar era, the United States experienced tremendous change as the nation became a, and then, the, world super power. Topics we will examine include: the Cold War, the fate of liberalism and the rise of conservatism, the civil rights movement, women's rights, the politics of gender and sexuality, the New Left, Vietnam and the anti-war movement, the religious Right, the AIDS epidemic, mass incarceration and the War on Crime/Drugs, the War on Terror, globalization and many more.

Questions we will explore include: What is the proper role of government in economic and social life? To what extent should the government legislate morality? What are the governments duties and responsibilities to citizens? What are citizens duties and responsibilities to one another? Who is a citizen? What does American citizenship mean? How did various generations respond to cultural and political conflicts that arose from the conditions of diversity? How does one's gender, race, ethnicity, religious background, and/or economic status affect their access to liberty, equality, power, and opportunity? What role does violence play in American society? What is the meaning of American freedom, equality, and patriotism? What is the relationship between politics, culture, and American society? To answer these questions, students will analyze primary source evidence, engage critically with secondary sources written by historians, and work on developing their communication skills via class discussions, written assignments, and research projects. The goal is to provide students with both a better understanding of America's past and present in a lively, interactive, and thought-provoking way.

**Required Readings:** The following textbooks are required for this course. I encourage you to buy used when possible. Amazon is a great resource for ordering much more affordable copies.

- Glenn C. Altschuler, *All Shook Up: How Rock 'N' Roll Changed America* or
- Elaine Tyler May, *Fortress America: How We Embraced Fear and Abandoned Democracy*.
- H. W. Brands, *American Dreams*
- For an additional, \*free\* textbook to consult, check out *American Yawp* at:  
<http://www.americanyawp.com/>

## Course Assignments:

- **Participation** (200 points total)
  - Students are expected to arrive to class on time, silence cell phones, and engage proactively with the course lectures and discussions. To get a high participation grade, students should comment, ask questions, or respond to fellow classmates during discussion sessions. While we will not have weekly quizzes, it is expected that students demonstrate they've done the required weekly readings through their engagement in discussion.
  
- **Perusall Primary Source Readings & Responses** (200 points total)

Each week, students will read a series of primary sources in addition to the assigned course materials. Using the Perusall function found in the left-side column on Canvas, students will access the weekly sources, read them, and post comments about the material. **Comments should be analytical and critical in nature.** Students should not summarize or respond with simplistic reactions. Students are encouraged to evaluate each source, question and recognize the author's assumptions, biases, and credibility, and discuss what each source can and cannot tell us about the topic at hand. It is also encouraged for students to engage with one another; students should respond to the comments of other classmates or ask questions the instructor will pose during discussion. Respectful debate and disagreement are encouraged. For more of an explanation of what is expected, see the course E-Learning page.
  
- **Pop Culture Project & Presentation** (200 points total/50 points each)
  - One of the central questions this course examines the relationship between popular culture, politics, and American society. You will be assigned a specific decade to research, analyze, and discuss with the class in a presentation. You have creative license to choose which form(s) of popular culture you want to focus on. This may include, but is not limited to: music, television shows, movies/films, art, sports, fashion and style, technology, food, and/or games/toys. The goal of this assignment is to research the popular culture of a certain era and analyze to what extent it reflected, rejected, challenged, and/or critiqued the time period. After your group presentation, you will submit a 1-page reflection paper.
  
- **Book Review** (200 points total/100 points each)
  - Students will complete one book review on **EITHER** monograph assigned in this course: Glenn C. Altschuler's *All Shook Up: How Rock 'N' Roll Changed America* or Elaine Tyler May's *Fortress America: How We Embraced Fear and Abandoned Democracy*. The book review should explain the author's main arguments and evaluate how effective and compelling their conclusions and claims are. Each review should be between 4 to 5 pages in length, double-spaced, in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins.
  
- **Timeline** (200 points)
  - Students will select a specific theme, issue, problem, etc., to examine throughout the course of the semester. Using Timeline JS, students will create a timeline tracing and

analyzing the most important events, people, policies, etc. relevant to their specific topic in chronological order. The activity is intended to be analytical and will require a short reflection summary. The list of potential themes to explore will be announced on the course E-Learning Page.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is essential to your learning experience. Attendance will be taken every class meeting day. You are permitted **three** unexcused absences without penalty. The fourth unexcused absence will result in a drop of your overall grade by half a letter grade (for example, instead of receiving a B+ you would receive a B). Each additional absence will result in an additional half letter decrease in your grade. Please note that if you plan on using an unexcused absence, you do not need to email me to let me know. However, if your absence fits within the university's established acceptable excuses, please communicate with me via email to let me know you will miss class.

**Late Assignments:** I am very willing to provide extensions for assignments should students need them. Please as at least 24 hours before something is due. If not, **late** assignments will receive a reduced grade. An assignment is considered late as soon as the designated time has passed. For example, if the paper is due at 12pm, the paper is considered late at 12:01 pm. The University policy on make up assignments, lateness, and attendance issues can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

**Communication Policy:** Students should communicate with the instructor primarily through email, office hour visits, or appointments made by student requests. Please use [kaitlynmuchnok@ufl.edu](mailto:kaitlynmuchnok@ufl.edu) to contact me during regular business hours. I generally stop checking emails after 7:00 P.M. so please reach out to me earlier in the day with urgent questions and issues. Additionally, students must regularly check the course's E-Learning page for assignment updates, links to required readings, and course announcements.

**Inclusivity Policy:** Additionally, throughout the course, discussion sections and lectures can include sensitive and controversial topics. Given the time period this course focuses on, many of the topics and questions will be, or seem to be, political in nature. Students are free to express their own thoughts, opinion, and ideas, while also being comfortable listening and considering others' insights and perspectives. It is expected that students come to class with an open mind, prepared to engage with complicated issues and questions. Thoughtful, honest, and evidence-based points of view are crucial for productive conversations and learning. To ensure that everyone feels respected, please refrain from personal attacks and offensive remarks. A goal of this class is to emphasize empathy in historical studies, or the ability to understand the feelings or perspective of others, without necessarily sharing their point of view. Please be mindful about what and how you say things; consider the assumptions and biases your opinions and comments may hold and remember that not everyone has the same, universal life experience. Be aware that history is not a fairy tale; history explores the best and worst aspects of humanity. Accept that you may sometimes feel upset, angry, and/or uncomfortable about a subject and that is ok. We can do hard things.

**UF Grading Scale:** Grades will be assigned according to the follow university grading scale.

A	93-100		A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	D	66-67	D-	64-65
F	<64				

**Academic Honesty:** UF policy requires you to access and use your gatorlink account. Excuses regarding not reading emails will not be accepted. Additionally, academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, or submitting someone else's work without citing them will not be tolerated. UF's honor code can be found here: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>.

**Disability Information:** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting the accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Student Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### **Lecture, Discussion, & Assignment Schedule:**

*Each week will be divided into lecture and discussion classes. Perusall readings are due by Tuesday at midnight.*

#### **Week One**

June 28: Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview

June 29 - July 2: READ: *American Dreams* pg. 1-67; *All Shook Up*, pg. 3-98.

#### **Week Two**

July 5: **NO CLASS! Happy Birthday 245<sup>th</sup> Birthday U.S.A!**

July 6 - 9: READ: *American Dreams* pg. 68-99.; *All Shook Up*, pg. 99-192.

#### **Week Three**

July 12 - 16: READ: *American Dreams* pg. 100-158.  
DUE: *All Shook Up* book review by July 15 at midnight

**Week Four**

July 19 - 23: READ: *American Dreams* pg. 159-212; *Fortress America*, pg. 1-56

**Week Five**

July 26 - 30: READ: *American Dreams* pg. 213-264; *Fortress America*, pg. 57-123  
DUE: *Fortress America* Book Review by July 29 at midnight.

**Week Six:**

August 2 - 6: READ: *American Dreams* pg. 266-367; *Fortress America*, pg. 124-197.  
DUE: Final Timeline Project by August 5<sup>th</sup> at midnight