

## History 158 Course Abstract ("America Since 1945": From WWII's End to George W. Bush and Iraq) Prof. B. Bernstein

Winter Q. lecture course, 1:15-2:05, in Rm 02 (Hist. Bldg), normally M, Tu, W, Th. Prof. B. Bernstein, Office Hrs.: W, 2:20-3:05, and Th., 2:20-4:00, in Rm 206, with advance signups on list on office door.

4-5 units. Lecture class (usually 3-4 lectures weekly) with about 68-80 students. C/NC option offered. The course is for any students and not just History students. It also fulfills the IR US foreign-policy requirement, and the GERs for Social Science and for American Cultures. No prerequisites for this class, and it is designed to be intellectually accessible to students with varied backgrounds.

Students wishing to take the course for 5 units will write a brief essay (8-11 pages) and also take a 50-minute weekly section, or, if choosing not to take a section, a somewhat longer paper. The paper for section will be on the reading assigned for section in any week, and will be due at the beginning of the section meeting. The longer-paper option, if chosen, will be on specified reading and subjects, which will be provided at the end of the first week on a list of about 30 subjects. Students taking the course for 4 units need not write a paper or take a section, and the grade then necessarily will be determined by the midterm exam (optional) and final exam.

Section reading assignments will be drawn almost entirely from the regular assignment list (for 4-unit students), and thus on average will not add more than about 10 more pages per week. The sections will deal with: the atomic bomb "decision"; the origins of the Cold War; the origins of the Korean War; the Eisenhower Presidency; JFK and the Cuban Missile Crisis; the US and the war in IndoChina; universities and 1960s protest; the rise of civil rights concern; the rise of feminism; the war in Iraq.

The work for the fifth unit will constitute one-fifth of the final course grade, though sometimes an unusually strong performance in the fifth-unit work may lead to a slightly heavier weighting of that work in determining the final grade in the course.

Brief Description of Course. This is a lecture course (about 38-40 lectures), normally four times a week, focusing mostly on US foreign policy and domestic policy, with less attention to intellectual and social history. The course begins with the atomic bomb and the origins of the Cold War, and treats, among other subjects, the development of the early Cold War and the origins and ending of the Korean War, McCarthyism, the Eisenhower presidency, JFK, the Bay of Pigs, and the Cuban missile crisis, 1960s culture and the Left, the war in Vietnam, the Black Freedom/civil rights struggle, the rise of feminism, Nixon and Watergate; the Carter Presidency and crises in foreign policy, the rise of conservatism and the Reagan Presidency, the end of the Cold War, Bush and the 1991 Gulf War, the Clinton Presidency, and the "crisis" of 9/11. The course ends with issues reaching into 2006-07 on war and world order, possibly on welfare and race policy at home, and definitely on Bush and Iraq, which will involve at least two lectures. The last major reading in the course will also focus on Bush and the war.

The lectures are generally interpretive, and often the required reading has been selected partly because it disagrees with the lectures, and thus introduces students to conflicting interpretations. The exams are also conceived to invite students to deal with conflicting interpretations, and essay questions are provided at least four days and ideally five days in

advance. The course is conceived to be intellectually engaging and richly informative.

The course, while focusing on the interpretation of US history, 1945-2007, will occasionally in lecture and more often in section treat the related problem of how and why some interpretations are endorsed and others rejected, how historians construct and assess such analyses, and how this process can be critically understood.

Optional Essay, and Exams (required final but optional midterm)

5-unit students: 8-11-page essay for the fifth unit with a section; or an 12-14 page paper and no section. Fifth-unit work is normally a fifth of the final grade in the course.

4-unit students: no essay or section required.

Exam: Optional in-class midterm, and required in-classroom final exam. The essay questions for the exams will be provided at least four days and ideally five days in advance, and students will have a choice of questions when writing the exams.

Required reading will be in Bookstore and on reserve (about 225 pages of reading weekly)

Because the Bookstore lost various copyright waivers that I had placed on file and has changed its policy on this matter, I am still somewhat revising (as of November 22) the reading list to try to reduce costs to students and to assure intellectual coverage. I'm also seeking to determine whether I can eliminate either LaFeber or Schaller in order to save students additional money.

<u>America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2007</u>	Walter LaFeber
<u>Twentieth-Century America</u>	B. Bernstein and Allen Matusow, eds
<u>Present Tense</u>	Michael Schaller et al.
<u>The Atomic Bomb</u>	B. Bernstein, ed.
<u>Eisenhower and the Cold War</u>	Robert Divine
<u>Dreams Die Hard</u>	David Harris
<u>Chain Reaction: Rights. . . Race</u>	Thomas and Mary Edsall
<u>State of Denial</u>	Bob Woodward

A course reader of about 280 pp., probably in two parts. CR I will include the materials from both Twentieth-Century America and The Atomic Bomb, and therefore the cost should be reduced because the course instructor controls many of the copyrights and intends to waive all fees. The course readers will also include some key speeches, declassified government reports, and declassified minutes of high-level government meetings.

Other Comments--More Detailed listing of lectures. Subjects of lectures include, among others: the atomic bombings; origins of the Cold War; the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and containment; the Korean War; civil rights in the 1940s and 50s; the Eisenhower administration; anti-communism and "McCarthyism"; intellectuals and social responsibility; Kennedy, the Bay of Pigs, and the Cuban missile crisis; the Black Freedom struggle in the 60s; the IndoChina war; protest in the 1960s; the roles of universities; the conflicts over liberalism; the imperial presidency and the road to Watergate; the rise of conservatism and race and welfare issues; Carter, Reagan, and the arms race; the Iran-Contra controversy; the end of the Cold War; feminist movements; Bush and the Gulf War; disputes over welfare and race policy; the Clinton presidency and the impeachment crisis; the crisis of 9/11, and issues of world order and US intervention abroad including especially George W. Bush and the war in Iraq, 2003-07. Lectures usually Mon, Tues., Wed., and Thurs. The instructor will also hold two or possibly three optional discussions during the term, at 1:15-2:05. An optional film or two--most likely, J. Robert Oppenheimer and nuclear-weaponry issues, and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and war-- may be offered in the evening.