

GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
DIVISION OF LIBERAL ARTS

COURSE SYLLABUS

Index Number: HIST 516  
Course Title: Issues in Modern U.S. History  
Professor: June O. Patton  
Credit Hours: 3.0  
Trimester: Fall 1997



CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

The approach of this course is inclusive and focuses on the issues of the Post World War II era and beyond. It provides a context for in-depth study of more recent events, with an emphasis on content, methodology, and potential applications of U.S. history.

RATIONALE:

The half-century between the Second World War and the 1990s forms a coherent and significant unit of United States history. World War II and the subsequent Cold War defined and shaped the American experience, in a variety of ways, throughout this important period. This course will focus upon the events that fundamentally altered our nation and its role in the world. Recent international and domestic changes as well as trends in scholarly analysis makes a comprehensive understanding of this era central to students of history. It should also prove useful to students of politics, mass communications, economics, public policy, etc. and those simply interested in America's recent past.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify the major themes and issues that shaped American history from 1945 to the present.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of selected aspects of the U.S. domestic scene, the role of America as "The" world leader, and of important contemporary historical interpretations of these events.
3. Demonstrate through analysis and evaluation a comprehension of the changing U.S. role in world affairs and the impact of the "Soviet threat" upon our diplomacy, as well as the long term consequences of the "Cold War".
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical roots of contemporary social, economic and political issues as well as current public policy debates.

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**TEXTBOOKS:**

Schaller, Scharff and Schulzinger, Present Tense: The United States Since 1945 (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston 1992).

Students may be required to purchase various magazines and newspapers etc. during the course. Newspapers will be assigned in class.

**EVALUATION:**

Class Discussion and Assignments	20%
Mid-Term	30%
Oral Report	30%
Book Report/Research Paper	20%

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Read all the required textbooks, class handouts and/or materials placed on reserve in the University Library.
2. Through reading and research, each student will develop a high-level of expertise in a selected and preapproved topic in the subject area and in consultation with the instructor develop a thesis for their class presentation.
3. Based upon their research each student will give a class presentation.
4. Attend class and participate in discussions.
5. Turn in a 10 to 15 page research paper.
6. Take a mid-term examination.
7. Meet with instructor to discuss thesis for class presentation.
8. Complete all class assignments.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS:

- WEEK I Introduction to Course
- WEEK II The New Deal, World War, a Troubled Peace and Korean War  
Read: Chapters 1, 2 and 3
- WEEK III Changes in American and U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1950's  
Read: Chapters 4 and 5
- WEEK IV The New Frontier LBJ's Dream for America and The Nightmare of Vietnam 1960 to 1968  
Read: Chapters 6, 7 and 8
- WEEK V Politics, Protest and The Illusion of Peace  
Read: Chapters 9 and 10
- WEEK VI Domestic Affairs, Watergate and The Ford and Carter Years  
Read: Chapters 11 and 12
- WEEK VII The Home Front and Foreign Policy Under Reagan  
Read: Chapters 13 and 14
- WEEK VIII America in The Nineties  
Read: Chapter 15
- WEEK IX Mid-term Exam
- WEEKS X and XI Will be devoted to meeting with you one-on-one to discuss your thesis. There will be no formal class on these days).
- WEEK XI Newsweek
- WEEK XII Class Presentations