

## *Course Syllabus*

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### **Course Information**

<i>Course Number/Section</i>	HUMA 3300
<i>Course Title</i>	Reading and Writing Texts: Post World War II American Culture
<i>Term</i>	Fall 2013
<i>Days &amp; Times</i>	MW 5:30-6:45
<i>Room</i>	ATC 2.101

### **Professor Contact Information**

<i>Professor</i>	Daniel Wickberg
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<i>Office Location</i>	JO 5.428
<i>Office Hours</i>	W 2:00-3:00
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### **Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

Upper division

### **Course Description**

This course develops and focuses the practice of interdisciplinary study in the School of Arts and Humanities, and is intended primarily for upper-division majors within the School. The course will develop the skills necessary to “read,” or interpret, a wide range of texts in an equally wide range of disciplines—philosophy, history, social thought, poetry, fiction, and photography. Attention will also be paid to learning how to write and create texts, to developing the skills necessary to explicate, interpret, integrate research, and make coherent arguments, as well as to express ideas and values.

The texts for this semester will focus on American thought and culture in the immediate post-World War II era of the late 1940s through the early 1960s. Thematically, they will be concerned with a number of issues and problems that concerned American thinkers, writers, and artists in this era: Cold War anti-communism; the perils of affluence and abundance; social conformity and middle-class suburban life; the wake of the Holocaust, totalitarianism and the atomic bomb; race and civil rights; aesthetic modernism and “mass” culture. By focusing on these thematic issues in a number of texts in a variety of genres, we will develop a more complex way of understanding and interpreting texts. One of the crucial features of the class, which will become apparent as the semester develops, is that no text is ever read or interpreted in a vacuum or isolated from a context. The more you know about other texts from the same time period, the more it changes the way you read any particular text from that era.

This course focuses on the development of academic writing skills. The instructor is an historian, and approaches the content of the course from that position, but also looks to broader interdisciplinary perspectives as representative of the interdisciplinary mission of the school.

### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

Students will demonstrate ability to explicate arguments, analyze formal components of texts, interpret texts, and contextualize through integrating research into an analysis of texts

Students will demonstrate understanding of differences between genres and forms of texts.

### **Required Textbooks and Materials**

#### *Required Texts*

The following texts are available for purchase at the campus bookstore and at Off-Campus Books. Additional readings are noted in the syllabus and are on electronic reserve. The electronic reserve password will be made available at the beginning of the semester.

Thomas Doherty, Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture (Columbia U Press)  
978-0231129534

Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man (Random House)  
9780679600512

Robert Frank, The Americans (Steidl,)  
978-3865215840

Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman (Viking Critical Library)  
9780140247732

C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination (Oxford UP)  
978019513738

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Vital Center (Transaction)  
9781560009894

### **Assignments & Academic Calendar**

Monday August 26  
Introduction: No Reading

*Reading The Foundational Text of Cold War Liberalism*  
Wednesday August 28  
Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Vital Center, pp. 1-91

Monday, September 2  
No Class. Labor Day

Wednesday, September 4  
Schlesinger, The Vital Center, pp. 92-188

Monday, September 9  
Schlesinger, The Vital Center, pp. 189-256

Wednesday September 11

Paper 1: Explication

*Reading History, Reading Media and Culture*

Monday September 16

Thomas Doherty, Cold War, Cool Medium, pp. 1-80

Wednesday September 18

Doherty, Cold War, Cool Medium, pp. 81-160

Monday, September 23

Doherty, Cold War, Cool Medium, pp. 161-260

*Reading the Novel, Reading Race in the Civil Rights Era*

Wednesday, September 25

Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man, prologue and chaps. 1-9

Monday, September 30

Ellison, Invisible Man, chaps 10-17

Wednesday, October 2

Ellison, Invisible Man, chaps. 18-25 and epilogue

Monday, October 7

Paper #2 first draft: Close Reading

*Reading the Essay I*

Wednesday, October 9

Norman Mailer, "The White Negro"

*Reading the Essay II*

Monday October 14

James Baldwin, "Many Thousands Gone"

*Reading the Short Story*

Wednesday October 16

Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery"

*Reading Poetry*

Monday October 21

Elizabeth Bishop, "The Armadillo" (1957)

Wednesday October 23

Robert Lowell, "Skunk Hour" (1959)

*Reading Photography*

Monday October 28

Robert Frank, The Americans

Wednesday October 28

Robert Frank, The Americans

Monday November 4  
Paper #3 Final Draft due

*Reading Drama*

Wednesday November 6  
Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman, pp. 11-139 (text of play)

Monday November 11  
Death of a Salesman, pp. 141-186, 231-289

*Reading the Mass Culture Critique*

Wednesday November 13  
Dwight Macdonald, "Masscult and Midcult"  
Harold Rosenberg, "Pop Culture: Kitsch Criticism"

Monday November 18  
Paper #3: Formal Analysis Image or Poem

Wednesday November 20  
Thinking about research

FALL BREAK

*Reading Social Science*

Monday December 2  
C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, pp. 1-75

Wednesday December 4  
Mills, The Sociological Imagination, pp. 76-142

Monday December 9  
Mills, The Sociological Imagination, pp. 143-226

Wednesday, December 11: Last Day of Class  
Paper #4: Research Paper

**Grading Policy**

Requirements are attendance and participation in class discussion and a series of four papers, including a required revision of paper #2. Failure to attend and participate in class discussions or to complete **all** assignments will result in failure of the class. Repeated absence and tardiness will result in a significant lowering of your grade. To be specific: more than two unexcused absences will result in a drop of one full letter grade for the class participation component of the grade; more than four absences will result in a drop of two full letter grades for class participation; more than eight absences will result in failure of the class. Persistent lateness will also result in lowered grades. Grades will be determined on the following basis:

Class participation	25%
Paper I	10%
Paper II	20%

Paper III	20%
Paper IV	25%

Papers are due on the dates indicated on the schedule. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the class. Papers are due at the beginning of the class meeting. Late papers without a previously arranged extension will be graded down 1/3 letter grade for every calendar day late.

### **Course Policies**

There will be no extra credit work; students will be allowed to revise papers #1 or #3, but if the revision fails to raise the grade, they will not be permitted to revise a second time. Revisions of papers may be submitted until the last day of class meeting. If you must miss class for unavoidable reasons, please let the instructor know. Absences will be excused for the following reasons only: medical illness, family emergency, religious holiday. All excused absences require a note or other form of documentation. The teaching assistant for this class will hold regular office hours and should be consulted about work on papers before you come to the instructor. Academic dishonesty (plagiarism) is a serious offense, and will be dealt with according to the policies of the University. You are expected to know and understand what constitutes academic dishonesty and to behave accordingly; ignorance of what constitutes academic dishonesty is not a legitimate excuse.

### **Classroom Citizenship**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and on time. Late arrivals disrupt the class, so please make every effort to be in class at the scheduled start time. Please give the class your undivided attention. No use of cell phones, personal communication devices, e-readers, or laptop computers will be permitted without the express permission of the instructor; turn off all devices when you come to class. If I find you texting, emailing, or using your phone during class, I will ask you to leave for the rest of the meeting and count you as absent for that day. Passing notes, whispering, and holding side conversations with fellow students will not be permitted; if you have something to say please address the class. The class meeting time is not an appropriate time to work on reading and assignments for other classes. I will confiscate such materials if I find you using them in class. Please treat fellow classmates with civility and courtesy. It is fine to disagree with another student's interpretation or reading, but avoid personal comments and attacks. Debate and disagreement are the lifeblood of intellectual work and are encouraged. Hostile, negative remarks, especially those addressed to students' gender, race, religion, political affiliation or ethnicity are not welcome.