

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number/Section

AMS 2300.HN001

Course Title

American Popular Culture: The Cold War

Term

Spring 2017

Days & Times

T / Th 1 – 2:15 pm

GC 1.208B

Professor Contact Information

Professor

Dr. Erin A. Smith

Office Phone

(972) 883-2338

Email Address

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Office Location

Hoblitzelle Hall (HH) 2.304

Office Hours

Tues. 2:30 – 3:30

Thurs. 5:30 – 6:30

And by appointment

Course Description

This course examines American culture through some of its most popular cultural forms—best-selling novels, magazines, advertising, television, Hollywood films, sports, and popular music. Although we will make connections between the present and the past, the course is focused specifically on the popular culture of the Cold War (mainly 1950s and 1960s) through Hollywood films, pulp novels, television sit-coms and early rock music. We will consider such topics as: norms about gender and sexuality; the post-War religious revival and its co-existence with increasingly secular ways of being in the world; the Cold War and efforts to contain communism abroad; race and early civil rights activity; class and consumption in burgeoning suburbs.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

1. Students will be able to analyze selected works of American literature closely.
2. Students will compare/contrast the representations of gender and/or race from texts assigned for the course.
3. Students will be able to describe the history behind contemporary social, political, and cultural debates, and become educated participants in those debates.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Mickey Spillane, *One Lonely Night* (1951)

Sloan Wilson, *Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955)

Valerie Taylor, *The Girls in 3-B* (1959)

Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (1992)

Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold-War Era* (2008)

All texts are available at Off-Campus Books and the UTD Bookstore.

Additional readings on e-reserve available at

<http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=2098>

PASSWORD:

Additional course materials available through eLearning.

Course Schedule

Tues. 10 Jan.

Organizational / Intro. to Course

Introduction to the Study of Popular Culture

Thurs. 12 Jan.

John Fiske, chap. 23, "Popular Culture" in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 2d ed. Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995): 321-35 (e-reserve)

Tues. 17 Jan.

Geertz, Clifford, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*. Eds. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (Berkeley: U of California P, 1991): 239-77 (e-reserve)

Conformity and Its Discontents: Domesticity, the Suburbs, the Organization Man

Thurs. 19 Jan.

May, *Homeward Bound*, Introduction (1-18), chap. 1, "Containment at Home: Cold War, Warm Hearth" (19-38), and chap. 7, "The Commodity Gap: Consumerism and the Modern Home" (153-73)

****Tues. 24 Jan.**

David Riesman, chapter VI, "The Other-Directed Round of Life: From Invisible Hand to Glad Hand" in *The Lonely Crowd* (Yale UP, 2001): 126-41 (e-reserve)

James Gilbert, chap. 3, "Lonely Men: David Riesman and Character" in *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (U of Chicago P, 2005): 34-61 (e-reserve)

****Thurs. 26 Jan.**

Wilson, *Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, chap. 1-20 (1-143)

Tues. 31 Jan.

Wilson, *Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, chap. 21-41 (143-276)

****Thurs. 2 Feb.**

Betty Friedan, chap. 1, “The Problem That Has No Name” (15-32) and chap. 9 “The Sexual Sell” (206-32) in *The Feminine Mystique* (Norton, 1997) (e-reserve)

Tues. 7 Feb.

Stephanie Coontz, chap. 5, “‘I Thought I Was Crazy’” in *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* (Basic Books, 2011): 81-100 (e-reserve)

Daniel Horowitz, “Rethinking Betty Friedan and the Feminine Mystique: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America,” *American Quarterly* 48.1 (Mar. 1996): 1-42 (e-reserve)

****Thurs. 9 Feb.**

Excerpts from Norman Vincent Peale, *Power of Positive Thinking* (1952) [Table of Contents, Preface (viii-ix), Introduction: What This Book Can Do For You (xi-xiii), and chap. 2 “A Peaceful Mind Generates Power” (15-28)] (e-reserve)

James Gilbert, chap. 6, “‘My Answer’: Billy Graham and Male Conversions” in *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2005): 106-34 (e-reserve)

Erin A. Smith, *from* chap. 5, “Pealeism and Its Discontents: Cold-War Religion, Intellectuals, and the Middlebrow” (135-45) and *from* chap. 6, “The Cult of Reassurance: Religion, Therapy, and Containment Culture” (176-83) [section entitled “God’s Salesman: Norman Vincent Peale and the Gender of Positive Thinking”] in *What Would Jesus Read?: Popular Religious Books and Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2015) (e-reserve).

Early Television: Audiences, Consumers, and Communities

Tues. 14 Feb.

Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, chap. 2 (36-72)

****Thurs. 16 Feb.**

Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, chap. 3-4 (73-135)

Tues. 21 Feb.

Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, chap. 5 (136-180)

In-class screening of *I Love Lucy* episode, "Pioneer Women"

Thurs. 23 Feb. – Midterm Exam

Commies, Queers, and other Subversives: Trash Fiction

Tues. 28 Feb.

May, chap. 4, "Explosive Issues: Sex, Women, and the Bomb (89-108) in *Homeward Bound*

Sean McCann, *from* chap. 4, "Letdown Artists: Paperback Noir and the Procedural Republic" in *Gumshoe America: Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction and the Rise and Fall of New Deal Liberalism* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000): 198-224 (e-reserve)

****Thurs. 2 Mar.**

Spillane, *One Lonely Night*, chap. 1-6 (1-99)

Tues. 7 Mar.

Spillane, *One Lonely Night*, chap. 7-11 (100-174)

Thurs. 9 Mar.

Yvonne Keller, "'Was It Right to Love Her Brother's Wife So Passionately?': Lesbian Pulp Novels and U. S. Lesbian Identity, 1950-1965," *American Quarterly* 57.2 (June 2005): 385-410 (e-reserve)

Lillian Faderman, chap. 5, "'Naked Amazons and Queer Damozels': World War II and Its Aftermath," (118-38) and chap. 6, "The Love that Dares Not Speak Its Name" (139-58) in *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1991) (e-reserve)

****Tues. 21 Mar.**

Taylor, *The Girls in 3-B*, foreword-chap. 14 (v-107)

Thurs. 23 Mar.

Taylor, *The Girls in 3-B*, chap. 15-afterword (107-206)

On the Origins of Rock and Roll: The Politics of Gender, Class, and Race

****Tues. 28 Mar.**

George Lipsitz, chap. 5, “Against the Wind: Dialogic Aspects of Rock and Roll” in *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1990): 99-132 (e-reserve)

****Thurs. 30 Mar.**

Nelson George, chap. 3, “The New Negro (1950-1965)” in *The Death of Rhythm & Blues* (New York: Pantheon, 1988): 59-93 (e-reserve)

****Tues. 4 Apr.**

Susan Douglas, chap. 4, “Why the Shirelles Mattered” in *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times, 1994): 83-98 (e-reserve)

Thurs. 6 Apr. – Cold War Popular Culture Paper Due / brief presentation to class

****Tues. 11 Apr.**

Penny Von Eschen, chap. 3, “The Real Ambassador” in *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2004): 58-91 (e-reserve)

Spectator Sports: Bodies and Culture

****Thurs. 13 Apr.**

Randy Roberts, “The Wide World of Muhammad Ali: The Politics and Economics of Televised Boxing” in *Muhammad Ali, the People’s Champ*, ed. Elliott J. Gorn (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1995): 24-53 (e-reserve)

Screen “South Pacific” before class on Tues. 18 April

Hollywood Musicals: The “American Way” and the World

Tues. 18 Apr.

Christina Klein, chap. 4, “Family Ties as Political Obligation: Oscar Hammerstein II, South Pacific, and the Discourse of Adoption” in *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-61* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2003): 143-90 (e-reserve)

Thurs. 20 Apr. -- catch-up day

Tues. 25 Apr. Wrap-Up / Final Exam Questions Out

Thurs. 27 Apr. Contemporary Popular Culture Papers due / class presentations

Thurs. 4 May – Take-Home Final Exam due in my office by 4 p.m.

Course Policies

Attendance and participation -- You are expected to come to class prepared for discussion. Your participation includes not only expressing your own ideas, but also the respect and seriousness with which you treat the ideas of your colleagues.

Presentation -- You and a partner or partner(s) are responsible for getting discussion of the day's reading started once during the semester. You should meet in advance and plan the background, issues, passages to examine closely, and questions you want to bring to the class. Presentations will be the first 10 minutes of class, although discussion of questions may run much longer. **You will distribute to everyone a single handout you jointly produce with 4-6 questions for us to address at the start of class.** Classes available for student presenters are marked with a ** on the syllabus.

Reading Question Write-ups – Eight (8) times over the course of the semester, you will hand in a one-page (MAX) typed response to questions about the reading. Goal is to (1) prove you've done the reading; and (2) show some thoughtful consideration of the issues or questions it raises. These are reaction papers vs. more formal writing. If you spend more than 20-30 minutes writing, you are working too hard. I will post prompts on eLearning for each day's reading. You may feel free to add thoughts/questions to these. **You must hand in 4 of these by Tues. 28 Feb. They are due on the day we discuss a reading. Late reading questions will not be accepted. E-mailed and faxed questions will not be accepted. I will not accept questions from students not present in class that day.**

Midterm and Final Exams -- essay exams designed to test your mastery of course readings and class discussion, and your ability to synthesize the material and think critically about it. Midterm is in class on Thurs. 23 Feb. Final exam is a take-home exam due in my office at 4:00 p.m. on Thurs. 4 May.

Cold War Popular Culture Paper (5 pages) -- an analysis of one Cold-War popular text using the terms and approaches from the course. Requires outside research. Detailed handout to be provided. Due Thurs. 6 Apr. at the start of class. Brief presentation to class required.

Contemporary Popular Culture Paper (5 pages) -- an analysis of some contemporary form of popular culture with which you have some engagement. Uses approaches from the course. Detailed handout to be provided. Due Thurs. 27 Apr. at the start of class. Brief presentation to class required.

Grading Policy --Your grade will be based on:

Cold War Popular Culture Paper	20%
Contemporary Popular Culture Paper	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Presentation	10%
Reading Question Write-ups	20%

You must complete all course requirements in order to pass the class (e.g. if you do not hand in a paper, you will fail the class, even if the other grades average out to a passing grade). Attendance and participation will be reflected in your grade (i.e. it doesn't matter how well you do on the other things, if you regularly don't show for class or don't participate). **Anyone missing more than 8 classes (for whatever reason) will fail the course.** Habitual lateness, absences or failure to hand in a paper on time will be reflected in your grade. Please consult me in the event of illness, emergency, or other extenuating circumstances.

A NOTE ON CELL PHONES, SMART PHONES, AND PAGERS—TURN THEM OFF!!! (This includes texting). They are rude, disruptive, and disrespectful to me and to your classmates.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.