

History 379: Recent America, 1945 to Present (3490)

3 Credit Hours, Spring Semester, 2008

Professor Jeff Crane

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Office Hours: Monday: 10:30-11:30; 2-3

Wednesday: 10:30-11:30, 2-3; Friday: 10:30-11:30

Note-these are only official office hours, I will frequently be in my office and you can arrange appointments. Students are welcome to drop by with questions or to visit

Readings:

Promises to Keep: The United States Since World War II, Paul S. Boyer, 9780618433834

In Pharaoh's Army: Memories of the Lost War, Tobias Wolff, 0679760237

Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era, Elaine Tyler May, 0465030556

The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It, Jo Anne Gibson Robinson, 0870495240

The Iran-Contra Scandal: The Declassified History, Peter Kornbluh, 978156584078

The Bonfire of the Vanities, Tom Wolfe, 9780553275971

*I reserve the right to pass out additional writings such as essays, reviews, or original documents.

Course Description: The era in American history from 1945 until the end of the Cold War is often described as “the Atomic Age” because of the prominence of nuclear weapons and foreign policy and fear based on that threat. Beyond the constant presence of the atomic bomb, this was an era of remarkable economic growth, government expansion, and tensions and conflicts related to expanding political rights and protests against government. The Civil Rights movement, environmentalism, anti-war protests, and the rise of the conservative ascendancy are all topics that we will examine, among others. Popular culture was also quite dynamic in this period and this course will examine some developments and changes in music, literature, and film.

Course Objectives: You will gain a clear understanding of the important of this era in American history. Besides understanding the key events and transformations in American society in the post-WWII years, you will also be able to explain the processes that drove these changes. In addition to factual and conceptual knowledge, students will further develop their skills in expressing themselves orally and in writing. Finally, students who take this course should leave with a stronger ability to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Course Information: This is a 3 credit class, meeting in the spring semester of 2008 in Academic Building 4, Room 303, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9:00 a.m. until 9:50 a.m.

Evaluation:

Reviews: 20%

Quizzes: 20%

Participation: 20%

70s Night Event: 10%

Iran-Contra Project: 10%

Final Exam: 20%

Reviews: You will review two of the four following books: *Homeward Bound*, *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*, *In Pharaoh's Army*, and *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. Your primary goal in the review is to provide a basic description of the book, analysis of the book, and finally your opinion in regards to its usefulness and quality. Your review will be four-five pages in length and needs to discuss the content of the book, particularly how the historical information and ideas contribute to our understanding of America in the second half of the twentieth century.

Quizzes: You will be given six pop quizzes over the course of the semester. The best five grades will be kept for your final grade. Quizzes will be based on questions that are assigned for that week.

Participation: Participation is an essential part of this class. Your participation grade will be based on attendance, preparation for class, and your contributions to discussions in class.

70s Night Event: This is an event that will be both historical and fun and organized and ran by the students and professor. It will include researching and presenting music, popular culture, and historical events. More details will be provided in class.

Iran-Contra Project: The class will research and debate the Iran-Contra scandal, using resources in the assigned text, material provided by the professor and research conducted by students.

Final Exam: There will be one test in this class, a final exam. The test will be composed of essay questions and you will be given a study guide for the test.

Academic Dishonesty: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Classroom Rules of Conduct: Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

Disability Accommodation: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Service for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Religious Holidays: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

“Religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Attendance Policy: Regular and punctual attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University.

Instructor Evaluations: Students will evaluate the professor and course near the end of the semester.

Late Policy: You may not turn in anything late without prior permission or without a strong excuse such as illness or family emergencies. If you miss a test without prior permission and without a major crisis you will not be allowed to retake the test.

Schedule

January 16: Syllabus and Course Introduction

January 18, 23, 25: Chapter 1 of *Promises to Keep*

January 28, 30, February 1: Chapter 2 of *Promises to Keep*

February 4, 6, 8: Chapters 3 and 4 of *Promises to Keep*

February 11, 13, 15: *Homeward Bound*. Review is due on February 15th

February 18, 20, 22: Chapter 5 of *Promises to Keep*

February 25, 27, 29: Chapter 6 of *Promises to Keep*

March 3, 5, 7: Chapter 7 of *Promises to Keep*

March 10-14: Spring Break

March 17, 19, 24: *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*. Review is due on March 24th

March 26, 28: Chapter 8 of *Promises to Keep*

March 31, April 2, 4: Chapters 9 and 10 of *Promises to Keep*

April 7, 9, 11: Chapter 11 of *Promises to Keep* and *In Pharaoh's Army*. Review of *In Pharaoh's Army* is due on April 11

April 14, 16, 18: Chapters 12 and 13 of *Promises to Keep*

April 14, 16, 18: Chapter 14 of *Promises to Keep*

April 21, 23, 25: *Bonfire of the Vanities*. Review of *Bonfire of the Vanities* is due on April 25

April 28, 30, May 2: *The Iran-Contra Scandal: The Declassified History*

May 5, 7: Chapter 15 of *Promises to Keep*