

CID Number: 4521

Dr. Nancy Zey

HIS 379.01: Recent America, 1945 to the Present

Office: AB4 – Room 463  
Office Hours: MW 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. (and by appointment)  
Telephone: 936.294.3853  
Email: nancyzey@shsu.edu

Semester: Fall 2007  
Classroom: AB4 – Room 303  
Class Time: MWF 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
Credit Hours: 3 hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

On August 6, 1945, an American plane dropped a new and deadly bomb on the city of Hiroshima, thus bringing about an end to the Second World War and the beginning of the “atomic age.” How Americans grappled with the ramifications of introducing such weapons to global warfare is one of many themes we shall explore in this course. Much has happened in the past sixty years, too much to cover in a single semester. Cold War, Red Scare, civil rights, war protests, environmental movements, drug use and drug prevention, AIDS, and terrorism—from the bombing of Hiroshima to the attack upon the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, this course aims to acquaint you with some of the key events, trends, and individuals in our nation’s recent history. We shall also examine the lives of ordinary Americans, including their popular culture. By studying our recent past, we will understand more clearly how we became who we are today.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Most people I meet say that they don’t like history. “Too dry,” they say. “Too many dates and facts.” This course will cover a great deal of information, but along the way I hope you will develop a greater interest in learning about the past. Indeed, my personal goal is to change your opinion of the study of history—for the better. You probably have goals of your own in taking this course. Some of you may need it for the history major. Others may need it as an elective. Whatever your reasons for taking the class, I hope that you will view it as something more than a hurdle you have to jump on the way to graduation. This course will help you hone a number of concrete skills, which you will find important as a worker and as a citizen. Over the semester you should:

- Cultivate a greater literacy in the history of the United States since the end of World War II.
- Improve your ability to read closely and analytically.
- Improve your written and verbal communication.
- Strengthen research skills and your ability to manage a complex writing project.
- Strengthen your ability to revise your own writing and the writing of others.
- Sharpen your critical thinking.
- Learn how to interpret and analyze primary historical documents.
- Learn how to interpret and analyze secondary sources.
- Learn how to detect arguments as well as how to craft and support your own.
- Work collaboratively.
- Appreciate the importance of perspective.

You will cultivate these important skills through readings, discussions, in-class exercises, outside projects, and exams. With respect to assignments, keep in mind that this is a writing-intensive course, so be prepared to do a great deal of writing.

### REQUIRED BOOKS AND OTHER READINGS

Believe it or not, good writing comes not only from practice but from careful reading. Don’t be shocked by the long list of books below—all will be covered in reasonable chunks. In putting this list together, I kept several things in mind. First, I wanted to cover as much topical and chronological ground as possible. Secondly, I wanted to you to experience a range of readings, including texts that made quite an impact when they were published in the second half of the twentieth century. Some of the books are “primary sources” while others are “secondary” in nature. Some are “academic” in tone while others reach out to a broader audience; one is a memoir. Finally, I considered length and cost. Nothing too long has been assigned in order to allow you more time to read slowly and carefully, and all of the books are available in paperback. Buy them used and save even more money. **Please note:** It is the responsibility of the student to obtain required books. Make sure you buy them as soon as possible, as the bookstores will be sending back their stock to make way for the next semester.

#### **REQUIRED BOOK CHECKLIST**

- ***Hiroshima* - John Hersey (ISBN-10: 0-679-72103-7; \$6.95)**
- ***The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* - Ellen Schrecker (ISBN-10: 0-312-08349-1; \$16.95)**
- ***Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* - Mary L. Dudziak (ISBN-10: 0-691-09513-2; \$23.95)**

- ***A Rumor of War* - Philip Caputo**  
(Paperback, ISBN-10: 080504695X; \$15.00)
- ***Silent Spring* - Rachel Carson**  
(ISBN-10: 0618249060; \$14.95)
- ***The Fix* - Michael Massing**  
(ISBN-10: 0520223357; \$19.95)
- ***Religion in America Since 1945: A History* - Patrick Allitt**  
(ISBN-10: 0-231-12155-5; \$25.00)
- ***911 Commission Report***  
(Paperback, ISBN-10: 0393326713; \$10.00)

In addition to the books listed above, you will be assigned various documents and articles over the course of the semester. These supplemental readings will be posted online and announced at least one class period before they are due.

### **READING ASSIGNMENTS AND LECTURES**

Professors and students often play a cat and mouse game when it comes to assigned readings. While some students read every word the professor assigns, many skim through the pages and some skip the assignment altogether. As much as humanly possible, strive to be the student who reads everything at least once. Even if you don't enjoy the chapter or book, you need to read the assignment in order to complete coursework and participate in discussions. Quizzes are a common way of encouraging students to read and "getting" those who don't. Though I find them unpleasant to write, read, and grade, I will give them if there appears to be an epidemic of non-reading.

Because this is an advanced history course, there will be less lecture and more discussion and group work. Lectures are designed to help prepare you for the readings, to flesh them out, and to touch upon other themes relevant to the course. You will help me shape my lectures according to what especially interests you and what you find particularly confusing. Reading assignments will be given every class day and posted online, but the following will give you a rough idea of when each of the assigned books will be covered.

<b>WEEK 1</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>Hiroshima</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 2</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>The Age of McCarthyism</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 3</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>The Age of McCarthyism</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 4</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>Cold War Civil Rights</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 5</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>A Rumor of War</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 6</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>A Rumor of War</i></b>	<b>*** Exam 1 ***</b>
<b>WEEK 7</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>Silent Spring</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 8</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>Silent Spring</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 9</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b>(Articles)</b>	
<b>WEEK 10</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>The Fix</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 11</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>The Fix</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 12</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>Religion in America Since 1945: A History</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 13</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>A Rumor of War</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 14</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>911 Commission Report</i></b>	<b>*** THANKSGIVING ***</b>
<b>WEEK 15</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>911 Commission Report</i></b>	
<b>WEEK 16</b>	<b>READING:</b>	<b><i>911 Commission Report</i></b>	<b>*** Exam 2 ***</b>

## **COURSEWORK**

Papers, presentations, exams, and participation in class discussions and group work will help you achieve the objectives I outlined above. Your final course grade will comprise the following:

<b>Exam 1</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b><u>Friday, September 28</u></b>
<b>Exam 2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b><u>Wednesday, December 5</u></b>
<b>Paper</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>To Be Announced</b>
<b>Reading Blog</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Pop Culture Project</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>To Be Announced</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**A = 90-100 points**

**B = 80-89**

**C = 70-79**

**D = 60-69**

**F = 59 and below**

**Exams:** A portion of each exam will be objective (e.g., multiple choice or matching) to test your factual knowledge. However, the majority of the exam will be analytical in the form of short responses and/or essay. Written responses test your factual knowledge, and they give you an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to synthesize and evaluate information. **Please note:** Makeup exams will not be given except for excused University absences. If you miss the midterm, the final exam will count 50% instead of 35%. The final exam must be taken at the time set by the University and will not be rescheduled except for a documented medical emergency.

**Research Paper:** In this assignment, you will choose from a list of major themes covered in the course and consider both continuity and change over the past sixty years. For example, how did Americans view the environment in 1945? What about that view has altered over the years? What has remained the same? Would argue that more has been greater change or continuity in Americans' relationship with the environment? The assignment will be fully explained in a handout given during the first few weeks of the course. It will involve research, multiple drafts, peer reviews, and a clear, thoughtful argument.

**Reading Blog:** To help you read more thoughtfully and analytically, you will keep a Reading Blog on Blackboard throughout this course. Every time I assign a portion of the required books, I will give you a set of questions to think about as you read. Some are factual while others ask you to engage critically with the text and/or document. You will need to post as many times as there are reading assignments for a given week (usually three), but you are allowed to take one week off. Though I do not require a particular length, responses must be "complete"—in other words, you must fully address the question(s) and demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the piece. I encourage you to go beyond my questions and come up with your own. At least twice a week, respond to a classmate's entry by posting your comments on his/her blog. This semester-long assignment will help you become a better reader, writer, and thinker. It should also help you form a stronger class community. **Please note:** The Reading Blog may become a "Reading Journal" (something handwritten rather than posted online) if I can't get Blackboard to cooperate, so stay tuned.

**Pop Culture Project:** I could not find a single good book about recent American popular culture, so I was going to make up the lessons myself when it occurred to me that you would probably have more fun doing this yourself. Popular culture is a vast and important subject—most people abroad know the United States through its exported fashions, art, television, film, food, and so on. Over the course of the semester, each of you will make a presentation to the class on some aspect of American popular culture. You may not be able to choose the decade, but we will work together to come up with a topic. Feel free to bring in "props." In addition to a presentation, you will write up a short paper and include the sources used. More information about the assignment will be given in a handout during the first few weeks of the course.

**Participation:** You'll get much more out of lectures and readings—and, thus, the course—if you contribute to discussions and engage in group work during class. Not only will you learn more about the material, you will come to find valuable study partners and proofreaders among your fellow students. Participation also includes your performance on in-class writing exercises and workshops. Though I will be evaluating your participation throughout the semester, the final grade will also depend on your own assessment. Therefore, at the end of every class, you will be given time to jot down notes about how you contributed to the class that day. Make a note whenever you seek outside help, contact classmates, or do anything else that demonstrates participation. We'll check in with each other periodically to make sure we're on the same page. At the end of the semester, full credit will be given to those students who make informed comments, ask thoughtful questions, demonstrate preparedness, and actively involve themselves throughout the semester. Full credit also depends on consistent civility—please see "Classroom Rules of Conduct" below.

## **STUDY TIPS**

Consider finding one or more study partners in class at the beginning of the semester. Study buddies can be a valuable resource in preparing for exams. In addition to drawing on your classmates and seeking help from the instructor, you may wish to take advantage of other resources available to you on campus. The SAM Center (located in AB4 210) provides

academic advising and mentoring to students of all levels. In addition, the Reading Center (located in Farrington 109) can help you master skills necessary for working through the assigned texts.

### **CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT**

Students must to adhere to the SHSU Code of Student Conduct, which can be found at <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. And within this classroom, students must also demonstrate **civility** at all times. In other words, do not come in late, leave early, text message, sleep, whisper, do Sudoku, or anything else that disrupts the class or distracts me. Civility must also be maintained in all communications with me and with other classmates whether online or in person. Keep in mind that this class is a community, and the community cannot function if we don't all show basic courtesy and respect and devote our full attention to each other during the time we're together. Students who commit acts of incivility may be asked to complete additional assignments and/or leave the classroom.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

The University expects all students 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.

5.31 The University and its official representatives, acting in accordance with Subsection 5.32, may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.

"Cheating" includes the following and similar actions:

- (1) Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs.
- (2) Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
- (3) Collaborating, without authorization, with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work.
- (4) Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test.
- (5) Substituting for another student, permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit.
- (6) Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test.
- (7) Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of the rough and/or final versions of an assignment by a professional typist.

5.32 "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea into one's own work offered for credit.

5.33 "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit.

5.34 "Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.

5.35 "Academic work" means the preparation of an essay, dissertation, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade.

### **2. PROCEDURES IN CASES OF ALLEGED ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

2.01 Procedures for discipline due to academic dishonesty shall be the same as in disciplinary actions specified in The Texas State University System *Rules and Regulations* and Sam Houston State University *Student Guidelines* except that all academic dishonesty actions shall be first considered and reviewed by the faculty member teaching the class. The faculty member may impose failure or reduction of a grade in a test or the course, and/or performing additional academic work not required of other students in the course. If the faculty member believes that additional disciplinary action is necessary, as in the case of flagrant or repeated violations, the case may be referred to the Dean of Student Life or a designated appointee for further action. If the student involved does not accept the decision of the faculty member, the student may appeal to the chair of the appropriate academic department/school, seeking reversal of the faculty member's decision.

2.02 If the student does not accept the decision of the chair of the academic department/school, he/she may appeal to the appropriate academic dean. The chair of the academic department/school may also refer the case directly to the academic dean if the case so warrants.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Either you or some kind third-party is paying a lot of money for you to be enrolled in this course. Divide the amount paid for the course by the total number of times we meet, and write that amount down every time you miss class. That was money spent for no return benefit. And the class loses out, too, by not having your contributions that day. Make the course a success and make the most of your investment by coming to every class. Attendance is required and will be taken at the start of class—anyone arriving after attendance has been taken will be counted absent. Of course, there are times when you won't be

able to come because of illness or other matters. If you have to miss class for any reason, please send me an email as soon as possible letting me know of your situation. **Please note:** Students who miss more than three classes may receive a grade reduction at the end of the term. Students who miss more than six classes will be recommended to drop the course altogether.

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. SHSU policy 861001 provides the procedure to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to the instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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 Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with the instructor in order that accommodations can be made to assure 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 you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **Please note:** no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

### **VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted to the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

### **INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS**

At the end of the semester, students will be asked to complete an evaluation of the course, but I welcome feedback about readings, assignments, and my instruction throughout the semester. Let's work together to make this a successful and rewarding learning experience.

### **CHANGES TO THIS SYLLABUS**

This syllabus is your contract for the course. The instructor will not change the nature of the course, the number of assignments, or the grading system. However, the instructor reserves the right to update the course schedule and reading assignments throughout the term.