

Course Description

HIST 352

The U.S. in the 1960s

Spring 2017 | University of Oregon | 282 Lillis Hall
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-3:20

Instructor: Steven Beda
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Office: 340A McKenzie Hall
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30
and by appointment

Graduate: Patience Collier
Employees: Miles Wilkinson

If you want to understand America in the 1960s, then you really have to turn to one of the greatest ever interpreters of the American experience: Bruce Springsteen.

In a 2010 interview with Tom Brokaw, “The Boss” explained that his life had been significantly shaped by the radicalism of the 1960s. “I embraced a lot of the social changes [of the 1960s],” Springsteen said, “civil rights, and freedom of thought and freedom of speech and the idea of a more diverse society. Those things were important.” We can see that 1960s radicalism in much of Springsteen’s music, in songs like “Long Walk Home,” a diatribe against George H. Bush’s presidency, or “How Can A Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live?,” written in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, or even in Springsteen’s performance at Barak Obama’s first inauguration in 2008, when he sang Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land.”

Yet, at the same time Springsteen’s songs reflect the radicalism of the 1960s, they also reflect the conservatism of the 1960s. Many of his songs mourn the death of the (white) American working-class. Much of his music is nostalgic for pre-1960s America, a time before the country became socially and politically fractured. No surprise, then, that Ronald Reagan chose Springsteen’s “Born in the USA” as the theme song for his 1980 presidential campaign.

In other words, Springsteen’s music embodies many of the contradictions of the 1960s. It was a decade of intense radicalism and intense conservatism. It was a time when unprecedented numbers of people demanded that their rights be recognized and a time when new political movements coalesced in opposition to those rights. The decade saw one of America’s bloodiest wars and one of America’s largest-ever antiwar movements.

This course attempts to understand how and why the 1960s became a decade of contradictions. We will examine civil rights movements and the backlash against those movements. We will discuss the Vietnam War, and the efforts to end that war. We will talk about Nina Simone and Merle Haggard, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, Malcom X and George Wallace. And most important of all, we will talk about why these contradictions were never resolved and how these contradictions continued to shape American life, on up to the present.

Indeed, the major goal of this class is to understand how the America we’re living in today is, in many ways, a product of the 1960s. The presidencies of Barak Obama and Donald Trump are both products of the 1960s. Black Lives Matter and the reaction to Black Lives Matter are both products of the 1960s. Efforts to expand LGBT rights and efforts to restrict LGBT rights are both products of the 1960s. Ultimately, this class aims to give students a better understanding of present day America by examining the history of 1960s America.



Civil Rights Activists on the march for voting rights, from Selma to Montgomery, March 23, 1965.

Learning Objectives

Students who take this course can expect:

- A better understanding of America in the 1960s and, in particular, a better understanding of how the major social movements of the 1960s reshaped the American social and political landscape;
- A better understanding of contemporary politics and social movements and, in particular, a better understanding of the ways that the modern conservative movement, the modern civil rights movement, and the modern movement for LGBTQ equity were shaped by the politics 1960s;
- To hone their reading and interpretive skills through classroom discussions and careful readings of historical sources;
- To hone their writing skills through essay assignments, a take-home midterm, and a take-home final exam.



Members of the Gay Liberation Front march through New York city, shortly after the Stonewall Riots, 1969.

Required Texts

The flowing books are required for this course. They are available for purchase at the U of O Bookstore:

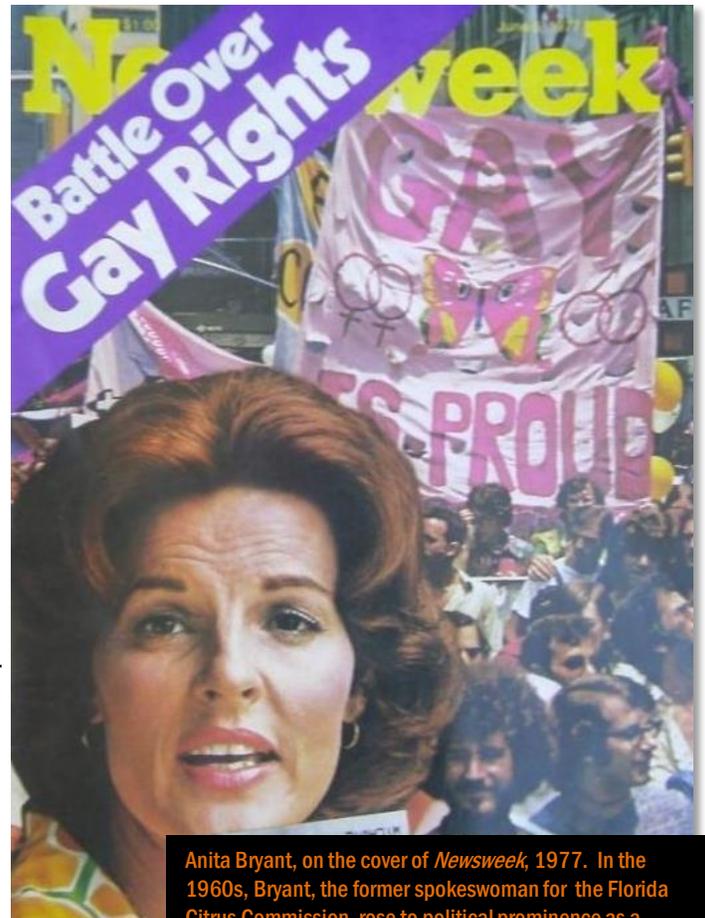
Bill Ayers, *Public Enemy: Confessions of an American Dissident* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2013);

Aaron Dixon, *My People are Rising: Memoir of a Black Panther Party Captain* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012);

David Horowitz, *Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

Course Website

This course uses the Canvas system and you can access the course website via your Canvas front page. The course website contains this syllabus, assignment guidelines, the questions for the take-home midterm and final (when posted), and lecture slides. Please submit all written work online, via the course website. Your Graduate Teaching Fellow and I will comment on and grade your written work directly in the Canvas system.



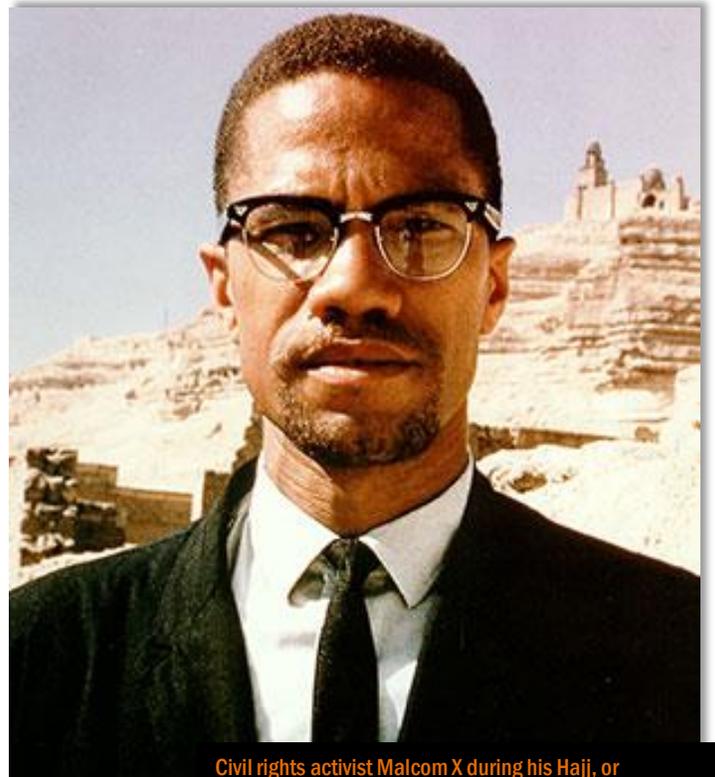
Anita Bryant, on the cover of *Newsweek*, 1977. In the 1960s, Bryant, the former spokeswoman for the Florida Citrus Commission, rose to political prominence as a vociferous opponent of LGBT rights.

Class Format

This class is organized thematically rather than chronologically. This approach allows us to examine the 1960s from a variety of different angles and more clearly trace the links between the past and present.

We will begin by looking at the history of 1960s civil rights and freedom movements, then examine the Vietnam War and the antiwar movement, and end with a look at the conservative movement.

This class meets twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays. While most class meetings will revolve around lectures, those lectures are designed to be interactive. I will regularly ask questions and ask you to comment on pictures, film clips, or texts. So come to lecture prepared to talk, discuss ideas and themes, and interact with your fellow classmates.



Civil rights activist Malcom X during his Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, April, 1964



George Wallace, c. 1960s. Wallace, the Democratic governor of Alabama supported segregation and ran an independent campaign for the presidency in 1964.

Assignments

There are four writing assignments for this course, one short paper (roughly 5 pages), a medium-length paper (roughly 7 pages), a take-home midterm, and a take-home final.

Both papers will test your comprehension of readings and ask you to interpret those readings. The first paper will ask you to write about Aaron Dixon's *My People are Rising*. It is due on the course website by **12:00 p.m. on Friday, April 21st**. The second paper will ask you to compare/contrast Bill Ayers' *Public Enemy* and Roger Horwitz's *Radical Son*. It is due on the course website by **12:00 p.m. on Friday, June 2nd**. Guidelines and prompts for both papers will be available on the course website.

Both the take-home midterm and the take-home final will be a combination of short-answer questions and essay questions intended to test your comprehension of lectures and readings. The take-home midterm is due on the course website by **12:00 p.m. on Friday, May 5th**, and the take-home final is due on the course website by **2:45 on Wednesday, June 14th**. Questions for both exams will be distributed approximately one week before they are due.

Grading

Grades on each assignment as well as your final grade for the course will be given in points. Here is the point-value of each assignment as well as a breakdown of how each assignment will be used in calculating your final grade:

Paper #1	200 points (20%)
Paper #2	300 points (30%)
Take-Home Midterm	250 points (25%)
Take-Home Final	250 points (25%)

The following table will be use to translate your point score into your final letter grade:

A+	1000-990
A	989-940
A-	939-900
B+	899-870
B	869-840
B-	839-800
C+	799-770
C	769-740
C-	739-700
D+	699-670
D	669-640
D-	639-610
F	609-0



U.S. troops in Vietnam, 1967..

Grading Guidelines

Your GEs and I will follow the guidelines established by the History Department in evaluating your work:

- A+:** Work of unusual distinction;
- A:** Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument;
- B:** Work that satisfies the main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality;
- C:** Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria reasonably well;
- D:** Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards;
- F:** Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or is regard for the assigned question.

For more information on the History Department's grading guidelines, please see:

<http://history.oregon.edu/undergraduate/>



Members of Vietnam Vets Against the War march prepare for an antiwar rally in Santa Barbra, CA, 1969.

Late Work

Late assignments will automatically be deducted half a letter grade (hence, a “B” will become a “B-” or a “C+” will become a “C”). An additional half-letter will then be deducted every 24 hours thereafter.

Academic Dishonesty

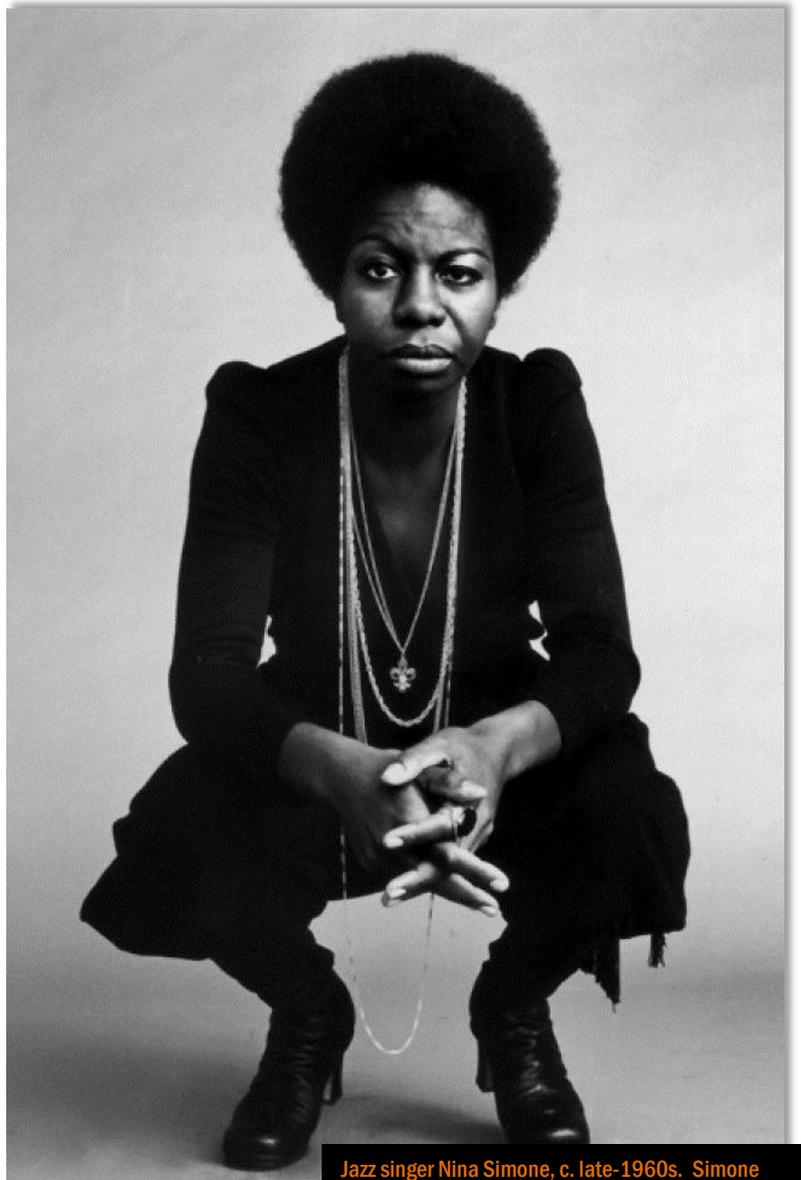
Any form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and students suspected of academic misconduct may face disciplinary action, as outlined in the Students’ Code of Conduct:

<https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx>

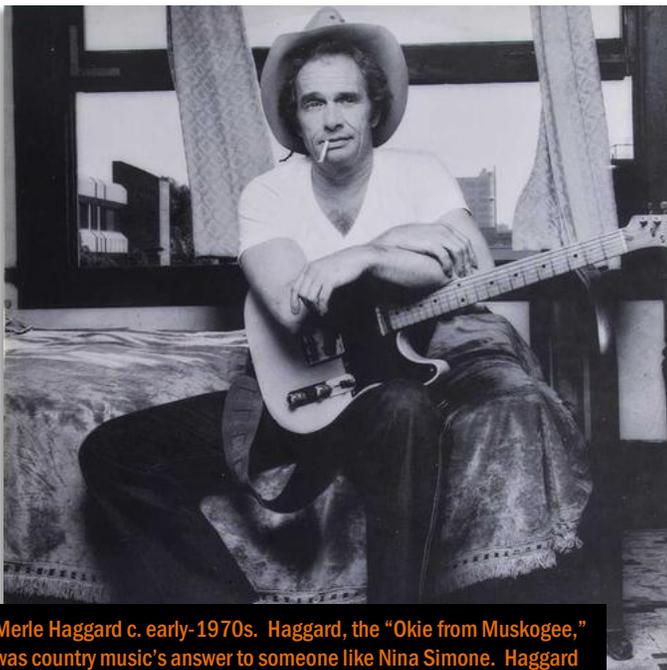
It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with University policies regarding plagiarism and what constitutes academic misconduct:

<http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>

Please come see me or a Graduate Employee if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic misconduct or if you are unsure how to properly cite a source.



Jazz singer Nina Simone, c. late-1960s. Simone frequently sang about civil rights.



Merle Haggard c. early-1970s. Haggard, the “Okie from Muskogee,” was country music’s answer to someone like Nina Simone. Haggard sang songs about the tough white working-class and their struggles in the 1960s.

Instructor Contact

I am here to help you. I encourage you to come see me during my scheduled office hours or, if you can’t make those, let me know and I’m happy to find another time to meet. You can come see me to talk about any of the material covered in class, a reading you didn’t quite understand, or if there’s some aspect of history you’d like to know more about. I’m also more than happy to read early drafts of your paper and make suggestions for improvements. Or, you can just stop by just to chat. Email is the best way to get ahold of me. I will respond to all student emails within 24 hours.



Memphis sanitation workers on strike, 1968.

Week 1

- April 3: Beyond "I Have A Dream:" The Radicalism of Martin Luther King
- April 5: The Poor People's Campaign: Class, Race, Civil Rights, and The Great Society

Week 2

- April 10: "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised:" Black Power
- April 12: "We Shall Overcome:" The Music of Civil Rights

READ: Aaron Dixon, *My People Are Rising*

Week 3

- April 17: "*Viva La Raza!*:" Caesar Chavez, the Farmworkers Struggle, and the Chicano Movement
- April 19: "Where White Men Fear to Tread:" The American Indian Movement and Battles for Treaty Rights

PAPER #1 DUE ON COURSE WEBSITE BY 12:00 p.m., FRIDAY APRIL 21st

Week 4

- April 24: "Our Whole Humanity:" The Women's Movement
- April 26: "The First Gay Pride Parade Was a Riot:" LGBT Rights Before and After Stonewall

PART II

“Bring the War Home” Vietnam and the Antiwar Movement



Members of the Vietnam Vets Against the War, 1970.

Week 5

May 1: A New Deal for the Mekong Delta: LBJ's Vietnam

May 3: “I Ain't No Fortunate Son:” Race, Class, and the American Soldier's Experience

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE ON COURSE WEBSITE BY 12:00 p.m., FRIDAY, MAY 5th

Week 6

May 8: Winter Soldiers: GIs, Vietnam Vets Against the War, and the Origins of the Antiwar Movement

May 10: “Bring the War Home:” The Student Antiwar Movement, from SDS to the Weathermen

READ: Bill Ayers, *Public Enemy*

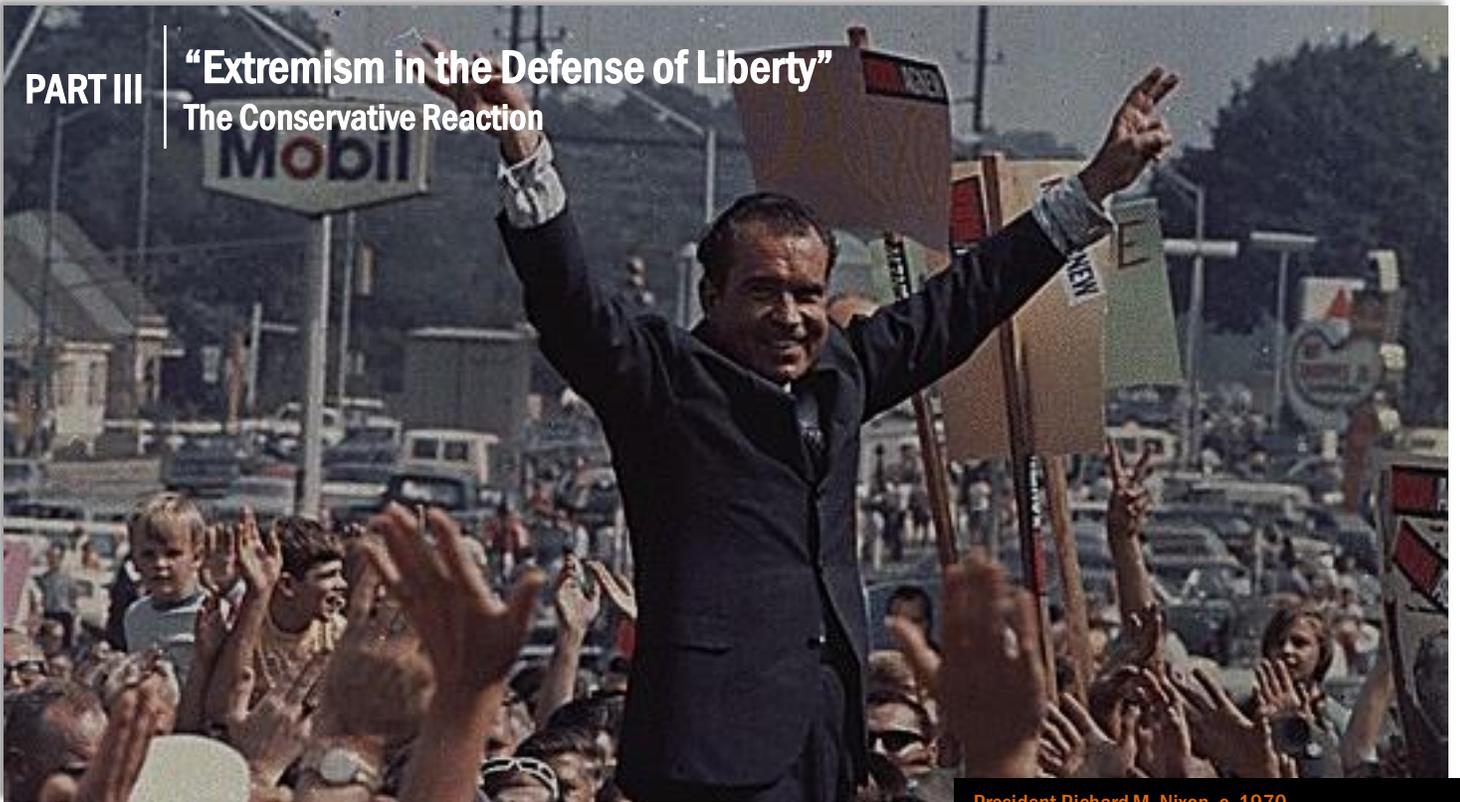
Week 7

May 15: “Got to Revolution:” The Music of the Antiwar Movement

May 17: In Class Film: *The Weather Underground* (2002)

PART III

**“Extremism in the Defense of Liberty”
The Conservative Reaction**



President Richard M. Nixon, c. 1970.

Week 8

May 22: “Segregation Now, Segregation Forever:” George Wallace, Barry Goldwater, and the Conservative Reaction

May 24: The Okie from Muskogee: Merle Haggard and the Culture of Conservatism

READ: Roger Horowitz, *Radical Son*

Week 9

May 29: **NO CLASS—Memorial Day**

May 31: “The Family Will NOT Be Bused:” Schools, Civil Rights, and the White Working-Class

PAPER #2 DUE ON COURSE WEBSITE BY 12:00 p.m., FRIDAY, JUNE 2nd

Week 10

June 5: Nixon’s Blue Collar Strategy

June 7: Barak Obama and Donald Trump: The Legacies of the 1960s

FINAL DUE ON COURSE WEBSITE BY 2:45 p.m., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14th