

HIST 427 – UNITED STATES HISTORY SINCE 1950

SYLLABUS

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COURSE DELIVERY:

Print-Based Correspondence Course

CREDIT HOURS:

Three Semester Hours

COURSE MATERIALS:

To order textbooks or obtain information about book titles you may go to www.exstudies.adams.edu and click on the “ASC Bookstore” icon.

Use **Section Number: 1088** to order books from Bookstore site.

TEXT

George Donelson Moss, *Moving On: The American People Since 1945, 3rd or 4th Edition.*

Robert Griffith and Paula Baker, *Major Problems in American History Since 1945, Third Edition.*

MONOGRAPHS¹

David Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire.*

Stephen J. Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till.*

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

A study of postwar America and its role in the world since the end of World War II. This class covers the Cold War, the 1960s, the Reagan Era, and events in such areas of concern as the Middle East.

¹ A monograph is a separate dissertation or essay on a single subject or an aspect of it.

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STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- (1) Students shall be able to identify historical content in the context of the times for the period covered in this course.
- (2) Students shall be able to knowledgably discuss the significance of major themes, key concepts, and identifiable terms as related to the social, political, and intellectual history of the period, as demonstrated through the student's writing and examinations.
- (3) Students shall demonstrate appropriate historical writing and analysis skills by producing acceptable essays on the two assigned monographs and in the term paper.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **READING ASSIGNMENTS.** The course is divided into three units. The first covers the Cold War and the 1950s, roughly up through the Kennedy Assassination. The second looks at the 1960s and 1970, while the last unit covers the Reagan era up to the present day. The student should follow the reading as outlined in the week-by-week schedule below. As you read, keep in mind that you are trying to establish a chronology of events onto which you can place your own understanding of events. For the exams, you will be asked to demonstrate that you have developed an understanding of the main events and the significance of the people and events in that era.

This course covers a period of great social and political change. How do the things you are reading about bring about the world of today? You are not simply memorizing dates, although having a knowledge of when things happened is important to develop your overall understanding. What are the key ideas or trends in thinking that are shaping the behavior of the historical players? What are the main conflicts taking place, and how do these conflicts shape the changes taking place? As you read, pay particular attention to the key terms in each chapter. As you move through the readings, see how these key terms are linked together and determine what the significance of each term is. This is not to say that you need to simply learn those terms. Rather, they are mileposts that should guide your way.

Please note that the Moss text provides the basic facts and the narrative of events. The Griffith and Baker book provides many of the primary documents mentioned in the text (such as the Truman Doctrine) and provides much greater depth of the events and issues detailed in the Moss text. Reading the two together will provide you with a much more sophisticated understanding of events, which will translate into better performance on the exams.

At the end of each unit of study are four to six essay questions. You should write essays on each of these, or at least outline them to yourself as they will constitute what you should be learning from the reading.

The important thing to remember is why history is a valuable subject: it teaches critical reading and thinking skills and asks a student to develop good reading and writing skills. Please refer to the rubric at the end of this syllabus for guidance on how to construct an essay response based on (a.) structure, (b.) evidence, and (c.) quality of writing.

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2. **EXAMINATIONS.** There are three units of study in this course, with an examination at the end of each unit. As stated above, each examination will consist of a list of eight identification terms, from which you will chose five. The examination will also include one of the three or four essay questions for which you have already prepared a response.

Each exam is worth 50 points. The essay is worth 35 points (70%). The identification items (significant terms) are worth 3 points each or 15 points total (30%).

The **FINAL EXAMINATION** will be included in the exam for Unit Three and will be worth an additional 50 points. The comprehensive examination section will include an essay question drawn from one of the three units of study (and for which you have previously prepared) and will be worth 35 points. There will be an additional list of identification items drawn from the entire course of study. Again, there will be eight items on this list, from which you will chose five. The comprehensive identification items are also worth three points each for a total of 15 points.

3. **ESSAYS ON MONOGRAPHS.** Each student shall craft a five page essay in response to the following questions: (These essays should be typed-double spaced, no more than 12 point font, one-inch margins all around). A monograph is a separate dissertation or essay on a single subject or an aspect of it

1) The Civil Rights movement had many sources and catalysts. According to Stephen Whitfield, how did the Emmett Till case generate attention and precisely how did it change the movement for Civil Rights in the nation as a whole? What does the author reveal about the social structure of the South during this period, and how does the rest of the country react to this story? Be sure to be specific and avoid overgeneralizations, such as “it had a big impact.” This paper is due at the end of Unit One prior to taking the first exam.

2) Although David Halberstam’s book deals with Vietnam prior to what most Americans consider the true beginning of the war, his work suggests there was little reason to be optimistic about the outcome of American involvement. What were the major problems with the effort of South Vietnamese and Americans in preventing an eventual North Vietnamese takeover of the country? And how did American policy during the Cold War lead to that involvement? This paper is due at the end of Unit Two prior to taking the second exam. Since it deals with the Vietnam War, you may want to read this early on in Unit Two.

4. **TERM PAPER.** Each student shall draft a term paper, and will consult with the instructor on the topic for the paper. It will address a narrowly focused topic on some aspect of US history since 1950. It should include a description of the event or person under study and spend at least part of the paper analyzing the varied opinions offered by journalists, politicians, or historians. It should contain a minimum of ten pages of text and use the endnote citation form described in Turabian, *Manual for Writers*. These must make wholesale use of available primary sources and address a controversy in the

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scholarship in the recent era. You must obtain my informal approval for a topic by **Lesson Fifteen**, submit a prospectus describing what you are going to argue and what source materials you will use by **Lesson Seventeen**. You must submit your final draft by **Lesson Twenty**. This, of course, can be done at any time during the course. I would encourage you to find a topic in which you have been particularly interested and write on that topic. I am always available to help you on this.

All papers will be submitted to a website to check for plagiarism.

NOTE ON RESOURCES: The Moss text contains excellent essays at the end of each chapter that will help you on your term paper, as they summarize the critical books and suggest different interpretations. They also suggest possible websites for primary sources.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND SCALE:

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|----------------|-----------|-----|------------|
| Test one | 50 | A = | 270- -300 |
| Test two | 50 | B = | 240 - 269 |
| Final | 100 | C = | 210 - 239 |
| Book essay one | 25 | D = | 180 - 210 |
| Book essay two | 25 | F = | below 180. |
| Term Paper | <u>50</u> | | |
| Total points | 300 | | |

ADA STATEMENT:

Students who need special accommodation to complete this class should contact the instructor and the Office of Student Affairs, 719.587.7221 as soon as possible.