

HIST 321 American Culture Since 1945

Fall 2018

Monday-Wednesday 16:15-5:30, H-607

Professor Elena Razlogova

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Office hours: Monday-Wednesday 14h-15h, or by appointment

This course examines different forms of artistic expression in the U.S. since World War II. Attention is given to changing aesthetic styles and technological developments, as well as to the role of culture as an expression of American identity at home and abroad.

Required Reading

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried: A Work of Fiction* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), at Concordia Bookstore.

All other readings will be available through moodle or Concordia Library databases.

Bring the readings and your notes to class

Assignments

In-class Midterm Exam: You will take an in-class midterm, consisting of five short questions and one essay question, on **Oct. 22**

Term Paper: You will write a 7-page paper, due **Nov. 26**, analyzing a cultural work of post-1945 US Culture in its historical and aesthetic context. Guidelines and further information will be posted on the course Moodle site. *I will not tolerate any form of plagiarism.*

Final Exam: A cumulative take-home, open-book final exam will be distributed via Moodle on **Dec. 5**, due **Dec. 12**, via Moodle, in electronic copy, by 11:59 pm.

Grading

* Attendance and Participation 10%

* Midterm exam 30%

* Term Paper 20%

* Final exam 40 %

Late Submissions

Papers submitted less than one week late will be penalized at my discretion. Papers submitted more than one week late (except by prior agreement with me) will not be marked. Take-home finals are not papers but exams due at an exact date and time and therefore cannot be submitted late. Work counts as "submitted" only when I can access it in a complete and readable form where it is due (i.e. if your paper is due on Moodle, emailed or printed copy does not count).

Schedule

Sept. 5. Introduction

Sept. 10-12. Paranoid Cultures

Hofstadter, Richard. "The Paranoid Style in American Politics." *Harper's Magazine*, November 1964. <https://harpers.org/archive/1964/11/the-paranoid-style-in-american-politics/>

Victor Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: the Viking Press, 1980), excerpt. <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/mccarthy/navasky.htm>

See one of these films at home:

D.O.A. (1950) https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=3fMDJ6pwSfo

Plan 9 from Outer Space (1959), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ln7WF78PolA>.

Night of the Living Dead (1968), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXuE-CyYsQ>

Sept. 17-19. Youth Cultures

Wald, Elijah. *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'n' Roll: An Alternative History of American Popular Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, excerpt.

John Clellon Holmes, "This is the Beat Generation" *New York Times Magazine*, November 16, 1952

Sept. 24-26. Cold War Cultures

Lasch, Christopher. "The Cultural Cold War." *Nation*, September 11, 1967.

Saunders, Frances Stonor. "Modern Art Was CIA 'Weapon.'" *Independent*, October 22, 1995.

Penny M. von Eschen, "Enduring Public Diplomacy," *American Quarterly* 57 (June 2005), 335-343.

Oct. 1-3. Comics Cultures

October 1. Election Day

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1994, excerpt.

Fredric Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent (1954)*, selections.

Oct 8-10. TV Cultures

October 8. Thanksgiving--No Class.

Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), excerpt.

In class: *Mad Men*, Pilot + discussion

Oct. 15-17. Print Cultures

Menand, Louis. "It Took a Village." *New Yorker*, January 5, 2009. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/01/05/it-took-a-village>

McMillian, John. "'Our Founder, the Mimeograph Machine': Participatory Democracy in Students for a Democratic Society's Print Culture." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 2, no. 2 (2009): 85-110

Oct. 22-24. War Cultures

Oct. 22. In-Class Midterm

Oct. 24. Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried: A Work of Fiction* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998).

Oct. 29-31. Sound Cultures

Jennifer Stoeber-Ackerman, "Splicing the Sonic Color-Line: Tony Schwartz Remixes Postwar Nueva York," *Social Text* 28, no. 1 (2010): 59-85.

Keir Keightley, "'Turn It Down!' She Shrieked: Gender, Domestic Space, and High Fidelity, 1948-1959," *Popular Music* 15, no. 2 (1996): 149-177.

Nov. 5-7. Protest Cultures

Nov. 5. Last day for academic withdrawal (DISC) from fall-term courses.

Ruth Feldstein, "'I Don't Trust You Anymore': Nina Simone, Culture, and Black Activism in the 1960s," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005), 1349-1379.

Robin D. G. Kelley, "Kickin' Reality, Kickin' Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Postindustrial Los Angeles," in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, edited by William Eric Perkins (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 117- 158.

Nov. 12-14. Consumer Cultures

Thomas Frank, Chapter 1, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Jane Cover, Emails sent during WTO protests in Seattle, December 1999.

John Marks, Personal account of WTO protests in Seattle, December 1999.

Nov. 19-21. DIY Cultures

Bernard Gendron, "New York: From New Wave to No Wave," in *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2002).

Michael Azerrad, *Our Band Could Be Your Life: Scenes from the American Rock Underground 1981-1991* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2001), introduction and any other chapter.

Nov. 26-28. Food Cultures

Nov. 26. Term Paper Due

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. Boston: Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012, excerpt.

Bryant Simon, "Introduction," *Everything but the Coffee: Learning About America from Starbucks*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

Dec. 3 Digital Cultures

“Where the Counterculture Met The New Economy: The WELL and the Origins of Virtual Community.” *Technology and Culture*, Vol.46, No.3 (July, 2005), pp. 485-512.

Lisa Nakamura, “Indigenous Circuits: Navajo Women and the Racialization of Early Electronic Manufacture,” *American Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (2014): 919–941.

Octavia Butler, “Speech Sounds,” *Azimov Science Fiction Magazine*, 1983, <https://www.unl.edu/english/docs/englishweek17/engl200-speechsounds.pdf>.

Take-Home Final

This assignment is a timed exam. I will distribute it on Moodle on Wednesday, **Dec. 5**, the first day of exam period. The exam is designed to be completed in three days. You will have a week to complete the exam. Please submit the completed exam on Moodle by Wednesday, **Dec. 12**, 11:59 pm. Late exams will not be accepted.