HIS 341: The United States, 1941-1974  
Summer Session II, 2017

Instructor: Dr. Miriam Reumann; mreumann@uri.edu  
T/Th 6 – 9:45, Shepard 445; office hours T/Th 4-6

COURSE DESCRIPTION: HIS 341 covers cultural and social developments between 1941 and the mid-1970s, including the World War II home front, postwar families, the Red Scare, teen culture, the civil rights and antiwar movements, the New Left and counterculture, and women’s and gay liberation. Throughout, we will pay attention to the interplay between national political developments, private life, and popular culture, and will focus on issues of class, race, gender, and sexuality. Sources include a study of postwar family life (Elaine Tyler May’s *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*), an overview of the period (David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams*), and a collection of primary documents and essays (Griffith and Baker, *Major Problems in American History since 1945*, 3rd edition). In addition, we will draw on feature and documentary films, music, and a range of primary source materials distributed in class and/or available online. Most of these are NOT listed on the syllabus, but will be handed out in class and posted on Sakai.

Because the semester is compressed, the reading load is heavy: if you fall behind, it will be difficult to catch up. Discussion is an integral part of this class and you are expected to participate - bring in observations and questions about the reading, prepare to participate actively in class discussions and exercises, and always bring your course reader (*Major Problems*) with you, as we will use it in class.

Students will complete four brief papers based on course readings and additional primary source material, as well as an in-class midterm and a take-home final examination.

GENERAL EDUCATION: HIS 341 fulfills the new General Education categories of Humanities Knowledge and Cultural Competency (both full outcomes).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES:
- Attend class and take notes on lecture material. Due to the accelerated summer schedule, missing one class meeting is the equivalent of missing a week and a half of classes during the semester. I strongly suggest that you make advance arrangements with one or more classmates to contact them if you must miss any class.
- In the event of any changes in the reading or assignments, students will be notified via Sakai. Make sure that you regularly check your uri email for any changes or update.
- Complete all assigned readings by the date they are listed on the syllabus. This means reading all material carefully and critically, and taking notes on it so that you come to class prepared for discussion.
- Complete all assigned papers and a midterm and final exam, based on class notes and readings.
- This course incorporates material from a number of websites: ensure that you have access to a reliable connection when needed.
- All readings and assignments are due on the date they are listed in the syllabus. If you have questions about format or proper citation for historical papers, consult a reference work: Mary Lynn Rampolla’s *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (on reserve at the CCE library) is brief and useful.
- You are responsible for keeping copies of all work handed in, keeping track of your progress, and if necessary arranging to see me regarding your course performance.
- If you have documented special needs that entitle you to services such as note-taking assistance or untimed tests, please notify me as soon as possible and provide documentation from Disability Services.

REQUIRED TEXTS: All are available in the bookstore and on library reserve.
David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams*.
Colin Griffith and Paula Baker, eds., *Major Problems in American History since 1945, 3rd ed.* Make sure that you get THIS edition – others will be more expensive and will not include the same material.
Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*.
**GRADING:**
Attendance and Participation = 20%
Four papers = 40%
Midterm Exam = 20%
Cumulative Final Exam = 20%

**STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY:** The URI Student Handbook states that students are “expected to be honest in all academic work.” By placing your name on any written exercise, you provide “assurance that the work is the result of the student's own thought and study, stated in the student's own words and produced without assistance, except as quotation marks, references, and footnotes acknowledge the use of other sources of assistance.” All sources used must be fully and properly cited. I will fail students on any assignment on which I determine that a student has cheated or plagiarized; other sanctions may also apply. If you have any questions, consult the student handbook (Sections 1.4 to 1.10). For information on acceptable use, see Rampolla, A Pocket Guide; or http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READING, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Tues, June 27:**
**Introduction: World War II and the Home Front**

Introduction to the class: books, reading strategies, goals; discuss 1st writing assignment. Topics covered: the WWII home front, effects of WWII in R.I., wartime propaganda.

Film: “Why We Fight: America Goes to War” (dir. Capra, 1945)

**Thurs, June 29:**
**Wartime Propaganda, War’s End, and the Beginning of the Postwar Era**

*MP*, Ch. 1, Brinkley essay.


***Writing assignment #1 due in class. ***

**Tues, July 4:**
**No Class Meeting: Independence Day Holiday**

Recommended: read ahead for Thurs/Fri and begin Writing Assignment #2.

**Thurs, July 6:**
**The Bomb and the Red Scare**

*MP*, Chapter 2, Documents 1-7.

**Friday, July 7:**
**Prosperity and its Discontents: the Suburbs, Teens, and Families in the 1950s**

Reading: May, *Homeward Bound*, Chapters 8–9 and Postscript.
**MP**, Chapter 3, Docs 1-6, Marchand and Schrum essays; Ch. 8, Doc. 1. Music: 1950s rock music, in class.

***Writing assignment #2 due. ***

**Tues, July 11:** Civil Rights I, Youth Politics, and JFK

**MP**, Chapter 4, Documents 1-7; Chapter 5, Docs 1-5; Chapter 7, Doc. 1.  
Film: “Eyes on the Prize, Part I: Awakenings”

***Midterm exam, 8 - 9:30 p.m.***

**Thurs, July 13:** Civil Rights, Backlash, and the Making of the Great Society

Reading: **MP**: Chapter 6, Documents 1-5, Patterson essay.

***Writing assignment #3 due. ***

**Tues, July 18:** Struggles in the Sixties: The New Left, the Counterculture, and Black Power

Reading: Farber, Ch. 4 – 5.  
**MP**: Chapter 5, Documents 6-8, Payne and Sugrue essays; Chapter 7, Documents 2-3.

**Thurs, July 20:** The Vietnam War and Popular Protest

Reading: Farber, Ch. 6-7.  
**MP**: Chapter 9, Documents 1-7, Isaacs essay.  
Music: protest songs of the 1960s in class.

***Writing assignment #4 due. ***

**Tues, July 25:** The Rights Revolution and Into the 70s

Reading: Farber, Ch. 8-11 and Conclusion.  
**MP**: Chapter 7, Document 4; Chapter 8, Docs. 2-8, Echols essay; Chapter 10, Document 1; Chapter 6, Lassiter essay.  
Documents from the gay liberation movement will be distributed in class.  
Final exam handed out.

**Thurs, July 27:** No Class Meeting

Prof. Reumann will be out of town at a conference.  
Your take-home final exam will be due via email by noon on Monday, July 31.
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

- All papers are due in class on the date indicated in the syllabus. Late papers will be marked down 1/2 grade per day.
- Papers must be paginated, double-spaced, printed with an appropriate font and margins, and carefully proofread.
- To cite material discussed, you must use Chicago-style footnotes and a list of works cited. For writing and citation assistance, Mary Lynn Rampolla’s *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* is available on reserve.
- Each of these paper assignments is designed to prepare you for class discussion and to hone your skills at observing and interpreting a range of historical sources, placing them in relevant context, and developing a persuasive analysis of them. Therefore, you should focus on developing an argument using evidence, rather than excessive recap.

**Paper #1: WWII Propaganda:** Examine a sampling of WWII posters from one or more of the sites listed below, and write a 3–4 page essay that analyzes a central theme or question and develops an argument about the sources. Consider what groups the posters addressed, what beliefs or activities they encouraged, and how effective you think they might have been and why. Overall, what visions of the nation and its wartime values or mission did these posters offer?

  - Truman Library, view by theme or as slideshow - “Mobilizing for War” at [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/museum/posters/index.html](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/museum/posters/index.html)
  - Poster collection from Northwestern Univ. Library, searchable/viewable by date, topic, title. [http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govinfo/collections/wwii-posters/](http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govinfo/collections/wwii-posters/)

**Paper #2: Youth, Family, and Popular Culture:** Using the Prelinger archive website ([https://archive.org/details/prelinger](https://archive.org/details/prelinger)), search by topic(s) and date and select a film produced between the end of WWII and the early 1960s that addressed some aspect of dating, marriage, adolescence, parenting, and/or family life. Write a 3-4 pp. essay that examines this source and places it in the context of Elaine Tyler May’s ideas about family and gender roles in the postwar United States in *Homeward Bound*. Does the source support May’s arguments, challenge them, or both? What does this source suggest about messages in mainstream popular culture?

**Paper #3 Student Protest in the 1960s:** Protest movements in the 1960s/early 70s were national, but had regional variations. Assess how protest worked at the local level by reviewing the online collection “The Campuses are Gonna Blow: Antiwar Protest at American Colleges and Universities During the Vietnam War” and select at least three items there to discuss in an essay analyzing some aspect of student protest. The exhibit, created by a URI grad student and including many items from the URI archives, is at [http://studentprotestagainstvietnam.omeka.net/home](http://studentprotestagainstvietnam.omeka.net/home). Issues to consider might include what kinds of issues students reacted to, how their location or their tactics differed; and/or how these changed over time.

**Paper #4: National Politics and the Postwar Media:** Write a 3-4 pp. paper that uses campaign ads, along with other sources, to examine patterns in Presidential campaigns and electoral politics between 1952 and 1972. Select commercials from at least 2 different campaigns/candidates at the online exhibit “The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials, 1952 – 2016” ([http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/](http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/)) and use them to examine how parties and candidates presented important issues. You have a range of options here – you might choose to focus on one particularly important election, consider shifts in party politics over time, examine hot-button election issues or voting groups, look at the role of television in campaigns, or explore how the rhetoric of one party changed or how different parties defined themselves in these ads.