A HISTORY 2413: THE UNITED STATES, 1940-1975

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Hours: M/W 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students have TWO options for completing requirements of this course:

OPTION A

1) Midterm Exam (October 26) (one-third of final grade);
2) Final Exam (December 19) (two-thirds of grade);

OPTION B

1) Midterm Exam: 25% of final grade;
2) Paper Project A OR B: 25% of grade; (see last pages of this syllabus)
3) Final Exam: 50% of grade

ABOUT THE EXAMS

Copies of previous exams—midterm and final—will be made available to all students early in the semester. The exams are demanding.

1. Midterm Exam: October 26 (in class) Short answers and essay (several options);
2. Two-Part Final Exam: December 19 (Monday) 9:00 AM to NOON
   Part A: Short answers (mostly from material since midterm)
   Part B: Essays (covering material developed over entire semester)

Copies of previous midterm and final exams will be made available to all students early in the semester.
CLASSROOM PROTOCOL

The instructor intends to reserve time for questions. He often prefers them at the beginning of the next lecture, after he has briefly summarized the previous one. Laptops and iPhones are allowed. Students who choose to play World of Warcraft, text friends, or check investments should do so quietly, and affect suitably studious expressions. The last row is reserved for these students. Those electronic devices that announce themselves audibly are to be confiscated by a vigilant neighbor and brought to the instructor, who will auction them off and donate the proceeds to whatever charity the class favors.

University policy forbids recording lectures, unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Although no purchases are "required," the list of paperbacks that follows will be read nearly in entirety, and they are for sale at Book Culture, 536 West 112th Street.

Cost-Cutting Advisory: The main text is William Chafe's The Unfinished Journey, which covers the period from 1940 to the present. Because this course does extend beyond 1980, and because most of Chafe's revisions have focused on the past two decades, students are encouraged to save money by buying earlier, cheaper, used editions. Sometimes Chafe has altered the organization of chapters, in which case you may need to adjust your reading slightly to fit the lecture schedule.

Books available at Book Culture:

1. 9780199347995  The unfinished journey: America since WW II (see “cost cutting advisory” above) William H. Chafe, NY: Oxford Univ. Press  (used, price variable)

Recommended:


NOTES ON REQUIRED READINGS

Chafe's Unfinished Journey functions somewhat as a “text” for the course. Chafe has a strong interpretive position; often it differs from that of the instructor. Students are encouraged to challenge Chafe’s views, and those of the instructor, too. In fact, the second—essay—section of the midterm and final examinations, in fact, require students to offer their own opinions on various matters.
Anne Moody’s *Coming of Age* is an autobiography of a black woman’s childhood in the rural South and her later involvement in the civil rights movement. Students will likely read this at a single sitting if only because it is such a powerful story.

Notes on the Recommended List: Tim O’Brien’s searing novel on the Vietnam War—*The Things They Carried*—is a major literary work; it is worth buying, and is probably available in plenty of used formats. One short question on the final exam will focus on this book. For Moody and O’Brien’s books, the details matter less than the overall message.

Several of the other required books offer useful introductions to particular topics; but they also include abundant primary sources. Sometimes these details matter: the precise wording of legislation, the substance of an executive memo, the rhetoric of a position paper. Lastly, several books offer concise biographies of significant figures. In addition to these materials, some lectures include online readings—chiefly of primary source documents. Students can acquire a sense of the instructor’s judgment of which details matter by perusing previous exams for the course.

Many of the lectures also include “required” online readings, which should be read in advance of the lecture. Students who prefer to skip the lectures may consult Mark C. Carnes and John A. Garraty, *The American Nation*, 15th edition (Pearson, 2016), a college text covering the entire span of American history. Chapters 29 through 32 focus on 1940-1980. This course, however, takes a very different approach from the text. History 2413 is not a survey. Nevertheless some materials in the lectures overlap with the text; many others do not.

REGISTER TO VOTE!

This link is to register to vote

https://columbia.turbovote.org

LIBRARY RESERVES

The following books have been placed on reserve at the Barnard library.


Anne Moody (1940-2016)---- *Coming of Age in Mississippi* E185.97 M65 (1982)

O’Brien, Tim (1946)---- *Things They Carried* (PS 3565B75T 48)

Other readings are available through online links or through Courseworks.

EXAM PROTOCOL
The following rules, recommended by Columbia University, apply to exams in this course:

1) Students approved by disabilities services are automatically entitled to take exams under the supervision of the disabilities staff at Barnard or Columbia;

2) No electronic devices are allowed in the exam room, except those provided by disabilities services under their terms of supervision;

3) If you bring a coat, bag, or computer, electronic device or other incidentals to an exam, you will be required to leave them at the front of the room during the exam.

Midterm exams will be returned in class; those that are not claimed will be placed in a “Return Folder” on the door of Carnes's office, 902 Milstein. Final exams will not be returned but will be available for perusal. This is university policy.

If you cannot attend the midterm because of illness, make-up exams will be scheduled (with proctors) at two specific times. You must present yourself at one of those times.

**FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, DECEMBER 19: 9:00 AM TO NOON**

All students must take the final exam, scheduled according to university rules, for **Monday, DECEMBER 19: 9:00 AM to Noon.** This exam schedule applies to all university courses, based on the time that classes are held. Insofar as students cannot be enrolled in two courses that meet at the same time, scheduling conflicts should be rare. Most exam conflicts occur when instructors violate the university schedule. In such cases, students should ask those instructors to make provision for rescheduling; an alternative is to ask your dean of studies to corral the wayward instructor. The protocol is for instructors of smaller courses to yield to those with larger courses. It's easier to set up alternative exams in a course with 15 students than for one with 200.

Illness: The Barnard Dean of Studies has posted these rules:

The official exam schedule must be followed unless you have 2 exams scheduled for the same time or unless you have 4 exams within 48 hours or 3 within 24 hours. An instructor is not allowed to change the scheduling of an exam without having received verification of the conflict or overload on the designated Registrar's Office form.

If you are unable to take an exam because of illness or disabling personal or family emergency, you must obtain permission for a deferred exam from your course instructor, as well as a dean in the Dean of Studies Office, on the day of the exam--prior to its scheduled beginning time.

If a deferred exam is approved by both the instructor and dean, you must submit the required form, including an administration fee, to the Registrar's Office.

Deferred examinations for Barnard students (for courses taught both at Barnard and Columbia) will be administered in the beginning of the following semester (exact dates are listed in the academic calendar).
Deferred exams for Barnard and Columbia courses will be administered [at a specific time and date determined by the Barnard Registrar, usually during registration in January].

**LECTURE SCHEDULE WITH READING ASSIGNMENTS**

*NOTE: READING ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE LECTURE*

**PART 1: FOUNDATIONS**

Note: A major issue in this course concerns the systemic foundations of racism. An important element during the 20th century was redlining, a banking practice that profoundly discriminated against African-American neighborhoods (and, to be sure, some other peoples, too). The lectures for the first three classes are fairly light; this is to allow students to plunge into the redlining project. Even if you don’t decide to do the Redlining Project (A, p. 13 of this syllabus), you must:

1) go to the website, *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America*, and look at your home town—and/or other cities you’ve visited.

   [https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58](https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58)

and


To do the Redlining Project, see p. 13.

**(1) September 7 -- 1940: Questions Posed: Beneath the Precipice**

In addition to reading and working on redlining, you should:

Begin reading Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. This is a quick and compelling read. You should finish Part 1, “Childhood,” by September 22, and the remainder by the time of the Midterm.

**(2) September 12 -- Doubts Resolved: Uniting against the Japanese**

Readings: Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, Chapter 1: "The War Years"

Online:

   Executive Order 9066
http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5154

Decision of Justice Davis, *Ex Parte Milligan* (1866)


And continue working on redlining.

**3) September 14-- The Manhattan Project: Unloosing the Genie**

Continue working on redlining: Do readings, and then go to the website, *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America* (see detail on Project A) (p.13)

https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58

**PART 2: CONSENSUS!**

**4) September 19: -- The Ideological Foundations of the Cold War**


Online Readings:

Munich Pact (1938): http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/munich1.asp

Atlantic Charter (1941): https://avalonlaw.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp

Truman Doctrine (1947): http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp


Readings: Chafe, *Unfinished*, "Chapter 3: Truman and the Cold War"

Online: Marshall Plan speech:

https://www.marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/marshall-plan-speech/

George Kennan (Mr. X) article, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”

http://www.historyguide.org/europe/kennan.html

Soviet response: Novikov Telegram:

http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110808.pdf?v=a8c1bf9f79f04aa2227394087a767c2a

**6) September 26 – Korea: The Cold War Grows Hot, 1950-1953**

Readings: “United States Objectives and Programs for National Security: NSC-68”
You should read the entire 66-page typewritten document. The first link (which follows, and may take some time to load) takes you to the actual photocopy of this document. You should at least read a few pages of this, to see what “top secret” documents looked like in 1950:


But you will find it easier to read the entire document by looking at it in modern graphics: A

http://www.citizensource.com/History/20thCen/NSC68.PDF

While reading, keep in mind that this is a top secret, in-house policy document for the entire defense community. In what ways does it strike you as unusual?


Online Readings: Acheson/Lilienthal Report


Note: This report, though technical, is important: it is the first call for UN supervision of “weapons of mass destruction”. The issues resonate with debates today over the proposed treaty with Iran, in which the United States would lift economic sanctions in return for guarantees—including inspections—that would inhibit Iran’s production of fissionable material for atomic bombs. The entire document is 61 pages long. You should read the first 8 pages, which outlines the need for international control and supervision of fissionable materials. Read also the introduction to Section III: Security through International Cooperative Development. President Truman did not accept the conclusions of the Acheson/Lilienthal Report.

(8) October 3 -- Eisenhower, Dulles and Massive Retaliation

Online: Eisenhower’s “military-industrial” speech, 1961

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisenhower001.asp

(9) October 5 -- McCarthyism and the Peril Within

Readings: Schrecker, Age of McCarthyism, Chapter 5. “Communist Spies in the State Department: The Emergence of Alger Hiss” (This chapter is available on Courseworks for this course in the FILES section of Courseworks).

(10) October 10 -- Delineaments of Consensus

Continue reading: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (all): this must be completed by the midterm exam.

**11 October 12 -- Systemic Racism: 20th Century Foundations (Project 1 Due)**

**Mini-Lecture:** Deep Foundations: A History (part 1)

**Presentations of (optional) Paper Project A (Redlining):** 5 minutes per team. (See p. 12 of syllabus for details.)

Readings:

Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, Chapter 4: “The Other Half of the Walnut: Social Reform and Activism in the Postwar Years.”

In addition to the assignment for Project 1, complete the “Childhood” section of *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. Moody’s book helps explain how racism drove many African Americans from the rural South; the first project shows the problems many confronted in moving to cities—whether in the South or elsewhere.

**12 October 17 — Systemic Racism: 20th Century Foundations**

**Mini-Lecture:** Deep Foundations: A History (part 2)

**More Presentations of (optional) Paper Project A (Redlining):** 5 minutes per team. (See p. 12 of syllabus for details.)

**13 October 19 -- Seeking Consensus: Thurgood Marshall and the Assault on Segregated Education, 1941-1974**

Readings: Chafe, *Unfinished*, Chapter 6: “The Civil Rights Movement” (beginning up to the section entitled, “The Montgomery Movement”. (Note: Different editions of Chafe approach this material differently. For this class, you should read the sections that pertain to the NAACP's legal fight against Jim Crow segregation. The class on October 20th will focus on MLK and the Direct Action campaigns, beginning with the Montgomery bus boycott.

Online:

Thurgood Marshall, “Argument before the Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education” (1953)


Online: *McLaurin* decision:

Brown decision:


(14) October 24--Martin Luther King and JFK: The Challenge of Direct Action

Readings:


Online:

MLK: “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (1963)

http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

MLK: “I Have a Dream” speech (1963):

https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/i-have-dream-address-delivered-march-washington-jobs-and-freedom

(15) October 26: MIDTERM EXAM

PART 2: CONSENSUS!

(16) October 31--Prologue to a Tragedy: Vietnam and the Failure of Containment, 1945-1954

Readings: Chafe, *Unfinished*, “Vietnam—the Early Years”

Also: begin reading Tim O’Brien's *The Things They Carried* (1990): finish in two weeks

Online: Geneva Accords (1954):


(17) November 2-- Act I: Curses in Camelot, JFK


Also: Continue reading O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*

Online: Audio: JFK plotting to depose Diem.

http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB101/index.htm#audio
The audio clip is listed in conjunction with Document 18. Click on it. In this snippet JFK is briefed by intelligence officers who argue that, with covert U.S. support, South Vietnamese generals will likely succeed in driving Diem from power. Much of the discussion concerns military plans for implementing the coup. Robert F. Kennedy, JFK’s brother (and Attorney General), raises the question of whether Diem’s Presidential Guard units will be able to stop the coup; the CIA analyst notes that a nearby tank unit, commanded by supporters of the coup, would deal with the Presidential Guard units “handily”. There is no discussion of what would happen to Diem after the coup. The subsequent murder of Diem and his brother, Nhu, were never part of the plan.

ELECTION BREAK NOVEMBER 7-8: NO CLASS November 7


Online: Civil Rights Act of 1964


(19) November 14 -- Students and the Great Mandella

Readings:


Watch the documentary video of the student takeover of Columbia University in 1968, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUcYLuGl_s

(20) November 16 – Consensus Shattered: From Malcolm X to 1968

Readings:


Online: Civil Rights Act of 1964
Also: Malcolm X, as an alternative to MLK and integration:

Malcolm X: God’s Judgment of White America (The Chickens Come Home to Roost)—speech following assassination of JFK

http://www.malcolm-x.org/speeches/spc_120463.htm

Malcolm X was a powerful speaker: razor-sharp and witty. Of those talks that have survived, most were merely audiotaped. Sample from the following:

https://archive.org/details/Malcolm_X

Especially consider “Revolution” (4:27), a powerful call for violent revolution, and “Put Them To Bed,” a wickedly clever rendering of the same theme.

(21) November 21 -- NOW and the Ascent of Feminism

Readings:

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), (any edition): Chapter 1--“The Problem that has No Name,”—is available in the FILES section of Courseworks. Only this chapter is required for the course, but you should sample some others as well.

Online: *Roe v. Wade*


NOVEMBER 23: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY BEGINS: NO CLASS

(22) November 28– Act III: Nixon and Watergate


Online: https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/index.php/watergate-trial-tapes

NB: Particularly listen to Conversation #668.8 *March 21, 1973: “Cancer on the presidency”:

An email will be distributed offering special guidance on the Watergate audiotape.

Also: Finish reading O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*
(23) **November 30 – Nuclear Armageddon? Missiles in Cuba: 1957-1975:**

No readings:

(24) **December 5 -- Postwar Work, the Economy, and the Stagflation of 1973**

Chafe, *Unfinished*: Chapter 14: “New Rules, Old Realities” or, in recent versions of Chafe “An Era of Political Malaise” (the title of the chapter has changed over time)

(25) **December 7-- Post 1973: Recession and the Assault on Feminism**

Phyllis Schlafly, “What’s Wrong with Equal Rights for Women”


(26) **December 12: Connecting: Making It Personal—History and You**

No Readings. Prepare for Final

**Study Days: December 13-15**

**FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 19  9:00 AM to NOON**
PAPER PROJECTS: A AND B

PROJECT A: SYSTEMIC RACISM 101: REDLINING

REDLINING: A FOUNDATION OF 20TH-CENTURY SYSTEMIC RACISM: PROJECT DUE ON OCTOBER 12!!!!

This (optional) assignment allows you to explore, in nearly any major American city of your choice, the details of redlining, a practice where federal officials rated neighborhoods on their credit-worthiness, nearly always to the detriment of racial and ethnic minorities.

This project will culminate in:

1) a paper (7-8 pages) and in

2) an (optional) 5-6 minute presentation to the entire class (October 12)

This assignment is also collaborative: (This is unusual in undergraduate education, but not in the real world: lawyers, medical doctors, tech entrepreneurs, and researchers in all branches of knowledge commonly work on teams.) So you must form a team composed of from 3 to 5 members of this class.

The teams will have the option of making a brief presentation in class (October 12 or October 17). The best presentation will receive a bonus that will be applied to either the midterm or final exam.

Procedure:

First, read at least the initial section of the following essay on the evolution of home financing during the mid-20th century, which explains how it discriminated against African Americans and, often, immigrants (available on JSTOR).


Then go to the website, Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America.

https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58

From the main map, click on any city—ideally one with which you are already familiar or that you can visit. You will see that all cities are divided into four color-coded zones, ranging from Grade A “best” (green) to Grade D “hazardous” (red). Most cities will be divided into dozens of these four zones. When you click on a particular zone (say, D2), you will see additional map detail along with a descriptive column to the left. (Always click to see “more”.) Read the detail carefully. Also note that,
at the top of the descriptive column, you can change from one district to another: such as going from D2 (“Hazardous District 2”) to D3 (“Hazardous District 3”).

Note interesting details—from the maps themselves and from the descriptions provided. Write down some of the street names in that zone. Check out several other zones, including those of different grades. Note the similarities and differences. And write down the names of the interesting streets, along with your observations. (Note: For some cities, the descriptive accounts were lost or otherwise unavailable to the team that put together this website. Those cities will be a bit less interesting for this reason.)

Then go to Google.com/maps and look up the streets you singled out from Mapping Inequality. Click on Street View (lower left corner) to see what the housing (and even the neighborhood) looks like today. You can advance down many streets (clicking the forward arrow) and can rotate to get a 360 degree view of the street. (It's even better, of course, to check out the streets in person.)

Write down your observations, and compare these to what you saw about the same neighborhoods in the 1938 study. What has changed since 1938? Did the descriptions of the housing enumerators in 1938 plausibly influence what happened in the subsequent 80 years? Generate a thesis—an argument, based on your observations of the neighborhoods you chose, that might illuminate the complex foundations of systemic racism in the United States. Because you don’t have enough time (or pages!) to complete a thorough research project, you will be entitled to a wide range of speculation.

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PROJECT B: PERSPECTIVES ON PROTEST: COLUMBIA, 1968 AND THE PRESENT

The year 1968 was an extraordinary one. The nation was deeply divided by a bloody, inconclusive war; and political divisions were intensified by disputes over race, gender, and culture. An upsurge in race riots, which began in the summer of 1964, peaked after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968. Several weeks later protests erupted at Columbia University, culminating in the student takeover of Low Library, Fayerweather, and Hamilton and their subsequent bloody removal by New York City police. In May similar student protests erupted in France, Germany, Britain and elsewhere. Antiwar protests intensified during the next three years.

In some ways, the Black Lives Matter protests in recent years, and the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, in some ways resemble the spate of protests during the spring of 1968 and subsequent years. But historical analogies are often misleading. This (optional) paper is an attempt to compare, carefully and critically, some aspect of the 1968 protest at Columbia with a current protest. You will do so by focusing on a single primary source from 1968, a 50-minute, student-produced documentary on the takeover of Columbia University, which was released in 1969.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUcYLuGil_s

You should select a video of any protest within the past fifteen or so months.

In your 5-page paper, you should generate a thesis based on your comparison of these primary sources. (Primary sources are historical materials produced by historical participants themselves: such as letters, published reports, photographs, or—as in this instance—films of and by actual participants or observers of historical events.) You are free to focus on whatever you find to be illuminating or revelatory: this could range from issues of video production (camera angles, editing
strategies, use of music) to social or racial relations among college students to political efficacy and consequences, and on and on. In short, you have immense interpretive latitude: your job, simply put, is to generate an interesting a revelatory argument from your two “primary sources.”

This paper is due on Monday, December 1.

Additional sources:

History Channel provides context and historical perspective:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LDX3TEel-U.

For the overall context, including a long tradition of student protests at Columbia, see Robert McCaughey, “Riding the Whirlwind: Columbia 1968,” in his book, Stand Columbia! (Columbia University Press). The chapter is available through JSTOR:

Vanity Fair, on the 50th anniversary of the protest, collected a number of interviews with participants: https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2018/03/the-students-behind-the-1968-columbia-uprising.