Course Overview:
The course will allow for an in-depth introduction to the primary themes and shifts that have characterized U.S. society since the end of the Second World War. Some of the primary themes addressed include the emergence of mass consumer society in the post-war era, the social and political implications of the Cold War, the African-American Freedom Movement and other post-1945 social movements. The class also reflects a new dynamic going on in similar classes across the United States in exploring the decade of the 1970s as a major period of American political and cultural change.

Required Texts:
David Farber, Taken Hostage: The Iranian Hostage Crisis and America’s First Encounter with Radical Islam, Princeton, 2005.

Selected Readings Reserved in Reeves Library and on line.

Course Requirements:
Participation/Preparation: 10%
Each student is expected to read all assigned material closely and critically and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings thoughtfully. Each week, students will be provided with “Focus Questions” to help aid in the extensive amount of readings assigned. It is expected that students will be able to respond to these questions in depth; however, students will be expected to go beyond these questions and be able to discuss connections to course material and related reading and presentations. Please note that these focus questions will also provide a foundation for the mid-term and final exams, but that additional questions involving student analysis and synthesis will also be presented on all exams. It is imperative that each student be present and on time so that they may contribute to discussions. Excessive absences and/or lateness will necessarily affect your final grade. If you anticipate that you will be late or absent, please inform the professor via e-mail or telephone. While such notification will be appreciated and understood as courtesy, it will not be viewed as excusing the absence or lateness. The class will also view several movies which will be scheduled for specially arranged evening class
meetings. Please note that these movies are not listed on the syllabus, but will be announced in class. While every effort will be made to accommodate schedules, each student is responsible for viewing the film on their own if they are unable to attend the scheduled viewing.

Mid-term exam: 30% (15% each)  
This class will have two in-class examinations, one on February 20 and another on March 27.

Final Exam: 25%  
A cumulative final examination will be held at a time and place designated by the College Registrar.

Analysis Essay on the American Diner: 10%  
Students will write a 4-5 page paper analyzing Andrew Hurley’s article on the transformation of the diner restaurant in the post-war period. The assignment will require students to visit and reflect on their experiences at an actual diner of their choosing. Details on this project will follow.

Historiographic Paper: 25%  
Each student will be required to write a ten (10) page paper focusing on how historians have interpreted a specific issue related to the period under study. I will provide a selection of possible topics to choose from in the first week of class. Students are encouraged to begin research on this project as soon as possible, as they may want to take advantage of interlibrary loan services in securing the necessary secondary source materials (books, articles). The paper must be appropriately documented according to MLA guidelines, it must adhere to the rules and principles of Standard American English (grammar, spelling, usage, and rhetoric), and it must use a minimum of eight (8) scholarly sources. Additional information will follow. Out of justice to the class, all late papers will be downgraded one letter grade for each day of lateness. An exception to this would be serious illness verified by a physician. Also, cases of plagiarism will result in an “F” grade.

There will be several films screened in this class. For each viewing, I will do my best to arrange a time and date which will meet the needs of the majority of the class. However, in the likely case that some are unable to attend these screenings, please note that most of the films are available in Reeves Library for viewing, and that all films are easily available through local rental establishments or through Netflix. All are responsible for viewing these films, as they make up a central component of our class.

Note: All of the course requirements listed above must be successfully completed to pass the course.
Topics and Readings (Tentative)

The following provides a week-by-week schedule detailing topics and reading assignments. Daily topics listed for our class meetings provide a general sense of the topic of lecture and discussion for that day, although material covered may shift according to the needs of the class. *A note on the assigned readings:* Reeves Library owns electronic copies of the *Journal of American History*, and all articles listed from that journal can be accessed on-line through the library web page. (Please note however that the first assigned reading from *JAH*, the Grundy article, is photocopied and on hold in the library.) Other readings have been placed on reserve in the library, and are indicated below.

**Week 1: Background: Twentieth Century U.S. Historical Trends**
August 28-30
Reading: Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, Chapter 1.

**Week 2: Into the Cold War**
September 4-6

Guest in class, September 6: Bill Ayers

**Film: Good Night and Good Luck. (2006)**

**Week 3: Uneasiness at Dawn: Domestic Trends in the Early Post-War Years**
September 11-13
Reading: Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, Chapter 3.

**Week 4: The Rise of Suburban America**
September 18-20
Reading: Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, Chapter 4.

**Paper Bibliography due in class September 18.**
**Week 5: The 1950s: The Other Side of the Picture Window**  
September 25-27

Reading: Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, Chapter 5.  
*Essay on Hurley’s article due in class, Thursday, September 27.*

**Week 6: Midterm Week**  
October 2-4

**October 2: Mid-Term Exam**  
October 4: Looking ahead to the 1960s

**Week 7: The Kennedy Era: The Cold War Heats Up**  
October 9-11

October 9: *Fall Break, No Class*  

**Week 8: The Civil Rights Movement**  
October 16-18

Reading: Boyer, *Promises to Keep*, Chapter 8.  

**Week 9: The Vietnam War and the Response at Home**  
October 23-25


**Week 10: The Social Changes of the 1960s.**  
October 30-November 1


**Week 11: Midterm Week, plus The Sexual Revolution**  
November 6-8

November 6: *2nd in-class exam.*  
November 8: Beth Bailey, “Sexual Revolution(s),” (on reserve)
Week 12: *The Late 1960s: 1968 and the Return of Richard Nixon*  
November 13-15


Film: *Easy Rider* (1969)

Week 13: *The Watergate Scandal*  
November 20-22


Film: *All the President’s Men* (1976)

Nov 22: Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: *The “Me Decade” Continued*  
November 27-29

Finish Farber, *Taken Hostage*.  

Final research papers due in class November 29.

Week 15: *Only Yesterday: The 1980s, 90s and Today*  
December 4-6


Final exam to be scheduled by the Registrar’s Office.