

DRAFT - NOT FINALIZED UNTIL AUGUST 2014

History 204-601 America in the 1950s
FALL 2014, Wednesday 6 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Instructor: Neil Lanctot, Ph.D. (pronounced "Lank-toe" – French, like "merlot")
e-mail address: nlanctot@comcast.net
Office hours: before/after class or by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVE: Through readings, lectures, videos, discussion, and written assignments, students will achieve a deeper understanding of the major developments of American life in the 1950s.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Stephen J. Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta - The Story of Emmett Till*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism - A Brief History With Documents*. New York: Bedford, 2002.

William W. Savage, Jr., *Commies, Cowboys, and Jungle Queens - Comic Books and America, 1945-1954*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1998.

Nancy Walker editor, *Women's Magazines 1940-1960 - Gender Roles and the Popular Press*. New York: Bedford, 1998.

Fredrik Logevall, *The Origins of the Vietnam War*. New York: Longman, 2001.

Course reader available from University Readers.com

Step 1: Log on to <https://students.universityreaders.com/store/>.

Step 2: Create an account or log in if you have an existing account.

Step 3: Follow the instructions through the rest of the ordering process. Payment can be made by all major credit cards or with an electronic check.

Step 4: After purchasing, you can access a digital copy of the first few chapters (if you select a print format) or all chapters (if you select a digital format) by logging into your account and clicking "My Digital Materials" to get started on your readings right away.

Excerpts from Fredric Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent*, New York: Rinehart & Company, 1954, 83-118. **(On reserve)**

REQUIREMENTS: Final grades will be based upon the following:

1. **Class participation** (25%).
2. **Response paper** (25%).
3. **Research paper** (50%).

Tentative schedule of classes:

August 27 Introduction - The Atomic Bomb/The Cold War begins
Video:
Comrades (1917-1945) (part 1 of *The Cold War*)

September 3 The Cold War
John Lewis Gaddis, "Nuclear Weapons and the Early Cold War," 85-112 (from *We Now Know - Rethinking Cold War History*).

Essays from *The Origins of the Cold War* (traditionalist versus revisionist perspective)

1. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. "Communist Ideology, Stalinist Totalitarianism, and

DRAFT - NOT FINALIZED UNTIL AUGUST 2014

American Universalism," 11-25.

2. Melvyn Leffler, "The Primacy of Security in Soviet Foreign Policy," 205-218.

Video:

Iron Curtain (1945-1947) (part 2 of *The Cold War*) or *Korea (1949-1953)* (part 5)

- September 10 McCarthyism and the domestic Cold War

Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism - A Brief History With Documents*, 107-118, 122-170, 177-189, 197-206, 213-220, 226-228, 229-243, 258-261, 271-277.

Video: *The Atomic Cafe* (part 1)

- September 17 McCarthyism and the domestic Cold War (continued)

Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism*, 244-257.

Excerpts from Griffin Fariello, *Red Scare - Memories of the American Inquisition - An Oral History*, 255-272, 294-305, 315-331, 340-344.

Paul Boyer, "Dagwood to the Rescue: The Campaign to Promote the 'Peaceful Atom'" in *By the Bomb's Early Light - American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, 291-302, 309-313, 409-411.

JoAnne Brown, "A Is for Atom, B Is for Bomb": Civil Defense in American Public Education, 1948-1963, *Journal of American History*, June 1988, 68-90. **(ON RESERVE)**

Video: *The Atomic Cafe* (part 2)

- September 24 The early Civil Rights movement
Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta*, chapters 1-4

- October 1 The early Civil Rights movement (part 2)
Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta*, chapters 5-8.

Video: *Ain't Scared of Your Jails (1960-1961)* (episode 3 of *Eyes on the Prize*)

- October 8 Suburbia, the baby boom, and the changing face of American life

Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier - The Suburbanization of the United States* (chapters 13 and 14), 231-271, 369-376.

David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, 155-172.

Video: *Selling the American Way* or *Let's Play House* (volumes 2 and 3 of David Halberstam's *The Fifties*)

- October 15,22 The Rise of Television

Steve Craig and Terry Moellinger, "So Rich, Mild and Fresh": A Critical Look at TV Cigarette Commercials, 1948-1971," *Journal of Communications Inquiry*, 2001, 55-71. **(on**

DRAFT - NOT FINALIZED UNTIL AUGUST 2014

RESERVE)

William Boddy, "The Honeymoon is Over," The End of Live Drama," in *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics*, 187-213.

Thomas Cripps, "Amos 'n' Andy and the Debate over American Racial Integration," in *American History/American Television - Interpreting the Video Past*, 33-54.

Video: Samples of 1950s television programming

October 29 Teenagers and the music revolution of the 1950s
James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage - America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s*, 11-23, 196-211.

Glenn C. Altschuler, *All Shook Up - How Rock 'n' Roll Changed America*, 35-66, 197-200.

Susan Schmidt-Horning, "Recording – The Search for the Sound," in André Millard, *The Electric Guitar: A History of an American Icon*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, 105-122.

Video: *Renegades* (episode 1 of *Rock & Roll*)

November 5 Youth Culture

Savage, Jr., *Commies, Cowboys, and Jungle Queens*
Excerpts from Fredric Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent*, New York: Rinehart & Company, 1954, 83-118.

November 12 Women in postwar America

Walker, *Women's Magazines 1940-1960 - Gender Roles and the Popular Press*, 56-62, 71-75, 82-85, 86-87, 100-102, 106-107, 116-143, 161-192, 199-203, 211-220, 223-227, 228-242.

Betty Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," (chapter 1 of *The Feminine Mystique*), 15-32.

Optional: Unassigned portion of *Women's Magazines 1940-1960*.

Video: *A Burning Desire* (volume 4 of David Halberstam's *The Fifties*)

November 19 The American path to Vietnam

Logevall, *The Origins of the Vietnam War*

December 3 Catch-up/Discussion of papers in progress