

**Carleton University  
Winter 2021  
Department of English  
ENGL 3702 A American Culture**

**Precludes additional credit for ENGL 3703 (no longer offered).  
Prerequisite(s): third-year standing or permission of the department.**

**Thursday: 11:35-2:25  
Format: Synchronous  
Instructor: Franny Nudelman  
Email: [franny.nudelman@carleton.ca](mailto:franny.nudelman@carleton.ca)  
Office Hours by appointment**

**United States Culture in the Age of Experiment: 1945-1979**

This course explores the role of experimentation in the culture and politics of the US during the Cold War era. The decades following World War Two witnessed the development of new kinds of warfare; transformative movements for gender and racial equality; the advent of live television; the widespread use of hallucinogenic drugs and other techniques for altering consciousness. In the realm of culture, innovation was afoot as writers, painters, filmmakers, and musicians explored an aesthetic of spontaneity, intensity, and interiority that might adequately represent the strange conditions of modern life. We will consider significant trends in the culture of the era—including abstract expressionism, new journalism, and direct cinema—as well as the social conditions that generated these new forms of cultural expression.

The format of this class will be **synchronous**. **Please note that in order to take this course you will need to be available to meet during the scheduled time.**

**Texts**

**Books**

John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (1946)  
Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (1965)  
Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965)

**Films**

John Frankenheimer, *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)  
Mark Kitchell, *Berkeley in the Sixties* (1990)  
David and Albert Maysles, “Cut Piece” (1966) and *Gimme Shelter* (1970)  
Sol Saks, “Bewitched” (1964)  
William Wyler, *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)

## **Images**

Jackson Pollock, selected paintings

Martha Rosler, "House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home" (1967-72)

## **Listening**

Jimmy Hendrix, "Star-Spangled Banner," live at Woodstock (1969)

Charles Mingus, "Better Git It in Your Soul" and "Fables of Faubus" from *Mingus Ah Um* (1959)

There are three books assigned for the course: John Hersey's, *Hiroshima*, Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, and Sylvia Plath's *Ariel*. These will be available from *Haven Books*. All other materials for the course (film, videos, readings, images) will be available on ARES and/or CU Learn.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION**

### **Class Participation**

We will meet each week on Zoom for a brief lecture and group discussion. Attendance in these sessions is mandatory and you will be expected to have done the reading before our Thursday meeting. Attendance in class and participation in discussion will form an important part of your final grade for the course.

### **Portfolio**

Your assignments for the course will be submitted on CU Portfolio. These will include:

### **Journal**

Each week you will make a single entry in your journal that records your responses to our readings, reflects on key ideas generated by my lectures, and records your developing ideas. The sky is the limit in terms of approach: Your journal may include still and moving images; recorded sound; found materials. It may combine analytical, autobiographical, and creative writing. It may comment on contemporary events in light of the historical events that we study. I will often give you questions and prompts for a given week's entry that you may use if you want to. I will read your journal and give you feedback on it throughout the semester.

### **Reflections**

You will write two short reflection papers (4-5 pages) over the course of the term. Each of these will further develop a journal post of your choosing. I will give more detailed instructions and we will discuss these assignments during class.

### **Self-Evaluation**

I will ask you to write two self-evaluations—one at the beginning and one at the end of the term. These will be included in your portfolio. In the first, you will describe your objectives for the term, identify the grade that you would like to receive, and explain what you plan to do in order to achieve it. Together we will work toward this goal. At the end of the semester, you will reflect on what you have learned and what grade you feel you have earned.

## **Assessment**

My final evaluation will be based on these four things: 1) did you do the reading/viewing regularly and on time? 2) did you attend and participate in weekly discussions? 3) did your journal and your reflection essays demonstrate engagement, polish, creativity, and independent thought? 4) did you meet the goals you established for yourself at the beginning of the semester?

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **Plagiarism**

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include: reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source; submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else; using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment; using another’s data or research findings; failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks; handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

### **Dean’s Statement on Grades and Standing**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

### **Requests for Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

**Religious obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

## JANUARY

14 Introduction

21

John Hersey, *Hiroshima*

Dwight Macdonald, "Hersey's Hiroshima" (1946)

Mary McCarthy, "A Letter to the Editor of *politics*" (1946)

28

William Wyler, *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)

Tom Englehardt, "Triumphalist Despair" (from *The End of Victory Culture*, pp. 3-15, 1995)

## FEBRUARY

4

Jackson Pollock, selected paintings

Hans Namuth, *Pollock Painting* (1951)

Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters" (1952)  
Charles Mingus, "Better Git It In Your Soul" and "Fables of Faubus" from *Mingus Ah Um* (1959)  
Daniel Belgrad, "Introduction" and "The Emergence of an Avant-Garde" (from *The Culture of Spontaneity*, pp. 1-45, 1998)

11  
John Frankenheimer, *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)  
Dwight Eisenhower, "Farewell Address" (1961)

25  
Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*

## MARCH

4  
*Eyes on the Prize*, Episode 1, "Awakening" (1987)  
James Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son" (1955)  
U.S. Supreme Court, *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954)  
Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" (1963)

11  
Sol Saks, "Bewitched," Season 1, Episode 1 ("I, Darrin, Take This Witch, Samantha") (1964)  
Betty Friedan, "The Problem with No Name" (1962)  
Martha Rosler, "House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home" (1967-1972)

18  
Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*

25  
Albert and David Maysles, *Cut Piece* (1966)  
Martin Luther King, and "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break the Silence" (1967)  
Julia Bryan Wilson, "Remembering Yoko Ono's 'Cut Piece'" (2003)  
Mark Kitchell, excerpts from *Berkeley in the Sixties* (1990)

## APRIL

1  
Albert and David Maysles, *Gimme Shelter* (1969)  
Joan Didion, "The White Album" (1979)

8  
Tim O'Brien, "On the Rainy River" from *The Things They Carried* (1990)  
Jimi Hendrix, "*Star-Spangled Banner*" (1969)