

Carleton University
May/June 2022
Department of English
ENGL 4709A/5708S
Studies in American Literature II
Tu/Th 2:35-5:25
Format: Online, Synchronous
<https://carleton-ca.zoom.us/j/91099532569>
Instructor: Franny Nudelman
Email: frannynudelman@cunet.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, hard bop, and confessional poetry—as well as the social conditions that generated these new forms of expression.

The format of this online 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)

<https://www.havenbooks.ca/products/hiroshima>

Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (1965)

<https://www.havenbooks.ca/products/ariel>

Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965)

Films

John Huston, *Let There Be Light* (1946)

John Frankenheimer, *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)

Raoul Peck, *I Am Not Your Negro* (2017)

David and Albert Maysles, *Cut Piece* (1966)

Sol Saks, Episode 1 of *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 at *Haven Books*.

All other materials for the course (film, videos, readings, images) will be available on ARES and/or Bright Space.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION**Class Participation**

Discussion is vital to this seminar. We will hammer out and develop ideas together with an emphasis on collaboration and collective inquiry. To that end, I expect you to come to class prepared to share your responses, thoughts, and questions about the assigned readings.

Each of you will be asked on occasion to develop prompts and discussion questions for the class and to lead discussion.

Reading Journal

You will write 4 entries in a "reading journal" due before class on the assigned day (see schedule below). Think of these as a cross between journal writing and a short (2-3 page) essay. Your entries do not need to present a thesis; they can be exploratory, take risks, and make free use of the personal voice. At the same time, they should deal closely and rigorously with our texts and **work towards** a coherent argument. They will be posted to CU Portfolio.

Essay

At the end of the term you will write a final essay that either 1) expands a single journal entry through further research and thought or 2) combines more than one entry into a single essay that focuses on a single issue or problem and develops by way of further research. This 6-8-page essay is due on Friday, May 17.

Grading and Assessment

My final determination of your grade will be based on the following questions 1) Did you do the reading/viewing regularly and on time? 2) Did you participate in discussions in a generous and generative way? 3) Did your writing demonstrate engagement, polish, creativity, and independent thought?

With these questions in mind, your grade will be based on your participation (50%) and your writing for the class—both journal entries and essay (50%). These percentages are, however, not written in stone and when determining your final grade, I will keep individual

circumstances in mind. You should feel free to check in with me about your grade at any point during the term.

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.” According to the Department examples of plagiarism include the following:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- 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;
- 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the [Pregnancy Accommodation Form](#).

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 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 will 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>

Schedule

May

5

Introduction

John Huston, "Let There Be Light" (we will watch and discuss in class)

10

John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (1946) and "A Short Talk with Erlanger," *Life Magazine* (October 29, 1945)

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

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

12

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

Tom Englehardt, "War Story" (pp. 1-65 and 305-11) from *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (1995)

Reading Journal #1 Due Before Class

17

Jackson Pollock, "Guardians of the Secret" (1943), "Gothic" (1944), "Galaxy" (1947), "Full Fathom Five" (1947), "Number 1A" (1948)

Hans Namuth, *Pollock Painting* (1951)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cgBvpjwOGo&feature=emb_logo

Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters" (1952)

Daniel Belgrad, "The Emergence of an Avant-Garde," Ch. 1 from *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America* (1998)

19

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

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7hoX7golZI&list=PLiN-7mukU_REK9zBMvZoNERNvhovxnsE5&index=1

Scott Saul, "Introduction: Hard Bop and the Impulse to Freedom" (1-25) and Ch. 5, "Outrageous Freedom: Charles Mingus and the Invention of the Jazz Workshop" (147-179) from *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (2003)

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Where Do We Go From Here," Ch. XI from *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (1958)

24

James Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son" (1955)

U.S. Supreme Court, *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954)

Raoul Peck, "I am not Your Negro" (2017)

Reading Journal #2 Due

26

John Frankenheimer, *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)

Dwight Eisenhower, "Farewell Address" (1961)

Monica Kim, "War and Humanity," Introduction to *Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War* (2019)

31

Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*

Reading Journal #3 Due**June**

2

Sol Saks, "Bewitched," Season 1, Episode 1 ("I, Darrin, Take This Witch, Samantha") (1964)

Betty Friedan, "The Problem with No Name" from *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)

7

Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*

9

Martha Rosler, "House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home" (1967-1972)

Joan Didion, "The White Album" from *The White Album* (1979)

Albert and David Maysles, "Cut Piece" (1965)

<https://vimeo.com/106706806>

Reading Journal #4 Due

14

Martin Luther King, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break the Silence" (1967)

Jimi Hendrix, "Star-Spangled Banner" (1969)

16

Last Class

Final Essay Due Friday June 17