



The University of Western Ontario

HISTORY 3326F

Atomic America:

The United States during the 1950s

Fall/Winter 2018-19

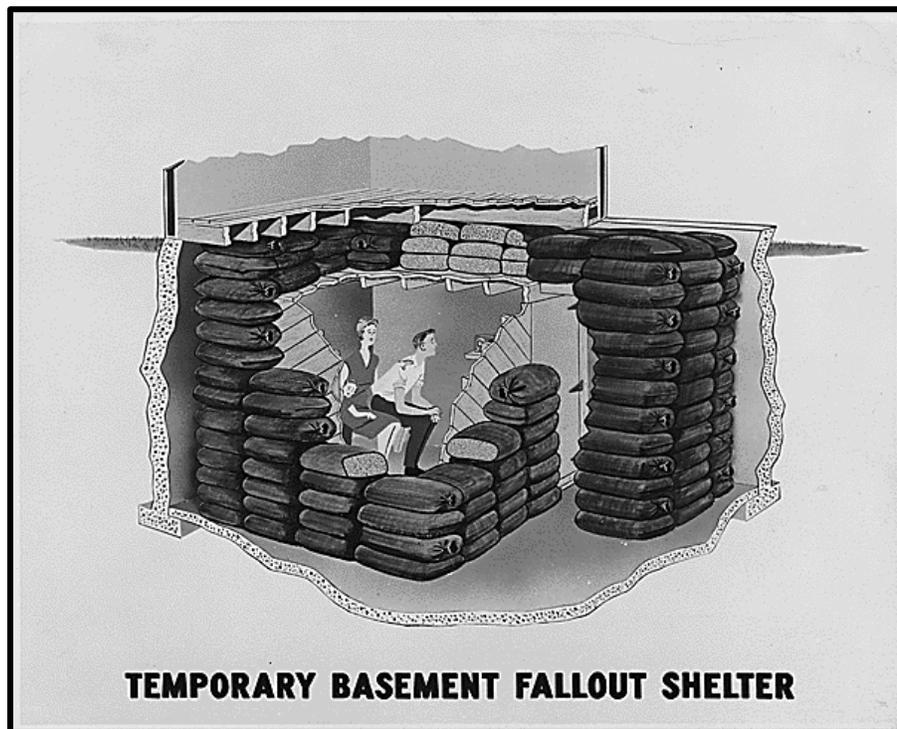
Wednesdays 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Stevenson Hall 1155

Instructor: Professor Aldona Sendzikas

Office Hours: TBA

Department of History, Office: Lawson Hall 1222

Email: asendzi2@uwo.ca



Temporary Basement Fallout Shelter (Artist's Rendition), c. 1957 (NARA 542104)

Course Description:

This seminar examines some key aspects of political, social, and cultural life in the United States during the 1950s. Topics include social classes, urban and suburban growth, family and gender relations, McCarthyism, and civil rights movements. The impact and legacy of events and issues of the 1950s are evaluated.

Prerequisite(s):

1.0 History course at the 2200 level or above.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisite(s):

History 3396F/G if taken in 2011-2012.

Course Syllabus:***Course Content and Objectives:***

Films and television tend to depict the 1950s as “happy days”: a decade of widespread affluence and stability, close-knit families, and a new teen culture which embraced drive-in restaurants, poodle skirts, and sock hops. Other portrayals, however, present the 1950s as a period shaped by anxiety and marked by conformity and hypocrisy. While many Americans enjoyed the benefits of a strong and affluent post-war society, they also struggled to learn to live in the shadow of the newly-developed atomic bomb. It was a decade of new homes and appliances, but also of backyard bomb shelters, blacklists, and worries about Communist expansion. Meanwhile, Americans such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., challenged the racial status quo and inspired a movement for civil rights. American women began to question their role in the nuclear family and in society as a whole. Anti-heroes such as James Dean, Jack Kerouac, and Lenny Bruce who resisted conventional norms of society came to be regarded as role models by American youth.

In this course, we will examine some key aspects of political, social and cultural life in the United States during the 1950s, looking primarily at the state of California as a microcosm of the nation. In California of the 1950s we see striking examples of the best and worst trends and developments of the decade. Rapid urban growth, sprawling suburbia, the freeway system and the car culture, Disneyland, Hollywood, booming aerospace and defence industries, the expansion of education systems, in-migration from other states—all of these suggested the idea of America as the land of the future, the land of possibility. At the same time, however, in 1950s California we see evidence of more negative developments, including the destruction of the environment, the ending of urban street car systems, the intensification of urban ghettos, and the excesses of the anti-Communist fervour.

In examining some of the key events, trends, and developments of this period as they took shape in the state of California, we will consider their relevance to and effects on the nation of a whole. Finally, we will compare the California of the 1950s with the California of today in an attempt to determine the legacy of the 1950s.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will have:

- developed a detailed knowledge of key events and issues of 1950s American society
- assessed the legacy and long-term impacts of the events of the 1950s

- familiarized themselves with several significant primary documents of the period and evaluated their historical value and significance, alone and in relation to other primary sources
- critically analyzed various historical interpretations of the decade
- examined some of the cultural artifacts of the period and learned to understand their significance (*egs.*: music, poetry, media coverage)
- developed a research question and answered it in a written assignment, integrating both primary and secondary sources in formulating the argument
- developed both presentation and communication skills through class discussion and presentations

Course Materials:

- Kevin Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963* (Oxford University Press, 2009) (This book is required, and will be available for purchase at the Western Bookstore. In addition, four copies will be placed on one-day loan at Weldon Library.)
- Weekly online readings, available on the internet or on the OWL course website.
- Each students will also choose and read two books and complete assignments based on these books. (See details below.) These books can be borrowed from the Weldon Library.

Methods of Evaluation:

Grading

- Short paper (3 pages in length) and short presentation on an influential individual associated with the 1950s, based on the reading of a biography chosen by the student (due October 17th) 15%
- Facilitating class discussion on one of the weekly books and submission of written bibliography (students will sign up for dates for this assignment) 20%
- Written proposal for research essay (to include: thesis statement or question to be addressed; outline to show how the paper will be structured; preliminary bibliography) (due October 31st) 5%
- Research essay (12-15 pages in length) on a topic of the student’s choosing, in consultation with the instructor (due December 5th) 40%
- Class participation 20%

Written assignments

Written assignments must be submitted in paper form to the instructor at the start of class on the due date, and in electronic form via the submission link on the OWL course website by the same time. (By using the submission link on the course website, your paper will automatically be submitted to Turnitin.com.)

Further instructions regarding the above assignments will be provided in class.

Late assignments: A late penalty of 5% for the first day, and 2% for each day after the first day (including Saturdays and Sundays) will be incurred for all written work submitted after the due date and time. Papers submitted on the due date but after the due time (*i.e.*, 10:30 a.m.) will be considered late and will be penalized 2%. Late papers should be submitted at the History Department (Lawson Hall 2201) drop box, as well as electronically via the course website. Keep a copy of each of your written assignments until you receive the grade for it.

Please note that HIS 3326F is an essay course. According to Western's Academic Handbook, an essay course "...must be so structured that the student is required to demonstrate competence in essay writing to pass the course." In this class, that means that a student must submit a minimum of 12 pages of written work in order to pass the course.

Expectations:

- Regular attendance.
- Completion of all assigned readings and active, informed participation in class discussion, based on those readings.
- Courtesy and respect towards other members of the class.
- Be present: turn off cell phones and other electronic devices, and engage with the class. Laptops are allowed if they are used to take notes or to refer to online course readings. Use of laptops for other purposes in class may negatively affect your participation mark.

Participation:

Each week, beginning on September 26th, 3 students will be tasked with evaluating the participation of their fellow students. Instructions and evaluation forms will be provided in class. Your participation grade for the course will be a combination of the results of these peer evaluations and the instructor's evaluation of your contributions to class discussion.

Policy on Absences and Extensions:

If you require an extension or other type of academic accommodation, for either medical or non-medical reasons, contact Academic Counselling. Students are reminded that academic accommodation on medical grounds can in most instances only be granted if supported by a University of Western Ontario Student Medical Certificate. This form can be accessed at the Social Science Academic Counselling website: <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/>, or can be picked up at the Academic Counselling Office in the student's home faculty. (For Social Science students: SSC 2105.) Further detail on this policy can be found at this same website.

Pressures of work or computer/printer difficulties do not constitute acceptable reasons for an extension.

Students should familiarize themselves with the university's Policy on Accommodation for Illness (http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf).

Additional Statements

Academic Offences:

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Medical Issues

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to:

https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf

to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be

included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Heidi Van Galen, Administrative Officer, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84963 or e-mail vangalen@uwo.ca.