

History 3327F
The Rebellious Decade:
Culture and Conflict in the U.S. in the 1960s
Fall 2026

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This is a **draft** outline, and subject to change. Please contact the instructor if you have questions about potential changes. The final version of the syllabus will be posted on the course website on OWL Brightspace.



Young "hippie" standing in front of a row of National Guard soldiers, across the street from the Hilton Hotel at Grant Park, at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, August 26, 1968. Photo by Warren K. Leffler. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: LC-U9-19759-4/4A.

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Course Description

The 1950s in America are often remembered as a time of consensus and conformity. By the 1960s, however, this seeming national unity was disrupted as cultural changes, political rifts, and generational conflicts rocked American society. The 1960s would be a decade marked by fear and uncertainty, as civil rights protests were met with police violence, beloved political leaders were assassinated, and young American men faced the prospect of being sent to a fight and die in a seemingly endless war in a distant land. Yet it was also a decade full of hope, as civil rights advances were made, American astronauts landed and walked on the moon, and young people banded together in a joyous attempt to build a new, peace-based society.

In this course we will examine some of the key social and cultural movements of the 1960s that arose to challenge the status quo, including the civil rights protests, the anti-war movement, and the Counterculture. We will also examine the reactions and responses to these movements. In particular, we will focus on the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, the protests that surrounded it, and the infamous “Chicago Seven” trial that followed: events that encapsulate much of the conflict of the 1960s.

We will also consider the long-range effects of these events and movements of the 1960s, and their connections to the events of the present.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above, any module.

Antirequisite(s): History 2137A/B.

Course Syllabus

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

In this course, students will:

- Develop a detailed knowledge of key events and issues of 1960s/early 1970s American society, from the inauguration of John F. Kennedy to the end of the Vietnam War.
- Familiarize themselves with some of the most seminal books published and read during this period, examine them as primary documents, and assess how they were inspired by, and in turn how they inspired and affected, the social trends and movements of the 1960s.
- Identify, compare, and critically assess differing interpretations of the 1960s.
- Assess the legacy and long term impacts of the social movements of the 1960s.
- Practice locating and analyzing primary documents.
- Practice presentation and communication skills through class discussion and presentations.

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- Practice the skills of research, scholarly writing, and historical analysis through the completion of written assignments.

Course Materials

- Weekly reading will be assigned. These will be available online, either on the OWL course website or through the Western Libraries website.
- One book or novel, published in the 1960s, to be chosen from a list that will be provided in class. (Most of these titles can be borrowed from Western Libraries.)

Methods of Evaluation

- **Class participation:** informed, thoughtful contributions to classroom discussions. **20%**
- **Short paper** (4-5 pages in length) on a musical artist, song or album that you believe accurately and meaningfully reflects or represents some aspect of the conflicts within U.S. society in the 1960s. (Due Oct. 27th) **20%**
- **Short paper** (4-5 pages in length) analyzing the significance of a book or novel that was published in the 1960s. (Due Nov. 24th) **15%**
- **Presentation/discussion** about the 1960s book that you read and analyzed. (Presentations will take place during the second half of the term.) **15%**
- **In-class activities:** response papers and other written exercises, completed during class time, based on the day's topic, readings, and discussion. **30%**

Written Assignments:

The short papers must be submitted by the specified time on the due date. Assignments are to be submitted in Word format to the submission link on the OWL course website. (By using the submission link, your paper will automatically be submitted to Turnitin.com.) A hard (paper) copy must also be submitted to the instructor, at the same time.

Further instructions regarding the above-listed assignments will be provided in class and on the course website.

Note that HIS3327F 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 course, that means that, in addition to receiving an overall passing grade in the course, students must complete and submit both short papers and a minimum of four of the in-class written assignments.

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Absences and Late Assignments:

In the event you must miss a class, due to illness or other reason, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Absence from class (without documentation from Academic Advising) will result in a grade of 0 for participation that day. Partial participation marks can sometimes be made up by completing an additional assignment; please consult the instructor if you want to exercise this option.

Late assignments: a penalty of 2% per day (including Saturdays and Sundays) will be incurred for all written work submitted after the due date and time, excepting the three day “no late penalty” period for the short papers (see “Flexibility in Assessments” section below).

A late penalty will not be waived unless the student has provided documentation from Academic Advising (or an SRA, if applicable) to the instructor. In that case, the student must contact the professor as soon as possible (i.e., within 48 hours of the missed deadline) to discuss an alternate assignment and/or due date.

Late assignments will not be accepted more than 10 days after the due date of the assignment.

Designated Assessments:

Please note that the presentation is a designated assessment, meaning that supporting documentation will be required for any academic consideration. An SRA cannot be used.

Flexibility in Assessments:

Both of the short papers will have a three day “no late penalty” period. Papers submitted after the official due date will be accepted with no penalty during the three days after the due date.

Given this built-in flexibility, requests for further consideration will generally be denied.

Additional Statements

Expectations and classroom behaviour:

- Regular attendance.
- Completion of all assigned readings and active, informed participation in class discussion, based on those readings.
- Courtesy and respect towards all other members of the class.
- Be present! Engage with the class rather than with your electronic devices during class time. Cell phone use is not permitted in class. Laptops may be used to take notes or to refer to online course readings. Use of laptops for other purposes in class, and excessive and/or unrelated laptop use that interferes with class engagement, may negatively affect your participation mark.
- Academic integrity. This includes not using GenAI in completing any of the assignments or other work for this course.

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- You are responsible for all of the information on this syllabus.

Communication policies:

The best way to contact me is by e-mail. (Please write “HIS3327” or “1960s” as the subject of your e-mail.) I may not be able to answer your e-mail immediately, but I will try my utmost to respond within 48 hours. You are welcome (and encouraged) to speak with me in person before or after class, or to drop by my office during Office Hours. You can also e-mail me to request a meeting either in person or on Zoom.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about the course or assignments, review your assignments with you, help you find research sources, review footnoting format with you, or assist you in any way I can. Please don’t hesitate to ask for advice or assistance!

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI):

The goals of this course include learning to think critically, to find and evaluate sources, to use your analysis of these sources to create, organize, and support an argument, and to communicate your argument clearly, in your own words. The use of GenAI bypasses these important learning activities.

Therefore, you may not make use of generative AI tools, such as Chat GPT, in this course (unless specified otherwise in the instructions of an assignment). This includes not using GenAI as a research source. Any use of generative AI tools in this course may be considered a form of academic misconduct and dealt with accordingly.

If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes and/or drafts of assignments, outlines, research notes, and other material used in preparing your assignment. The instructor will meet with you one-on-one to discuss your assignment. Students must keep all notes, outlines, and drafts until after the release of the final grades for the course.

And finally...

Please review the Department of History’s shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.