

Prof. Eduardo Canedo
Email: eduardo.canedo@uconn.edu
Office Hours: Wood Hall 224, Tues. & Thurs.,
10-11 a.m. & by appointment

University of Connecticut
Department of History
HIST 3519
Fall 2015

Contemporary America

U.S. History since 1973

Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30 - 1:45 p.m.
Lafayette Classroom, Tower Residence Halls

This course offers a survey of American politics, society, and economy from 1973 through the present. Characterized as the “Age of Fracture” by historian Daniel Rodgers, the past four decades of American life have witnessed the fragmentation of racial and gender identities, dramatic fluctuations between prosperity and economic crisis, the intensification of partisanship alongside widespread political apathy, and profound uncertainty over the role of the United States in world affairs. As we examine these turbulent years, we will identify key changes and continuities in the American experience. At the same time, we will consider what it means to think historically about the recent past (and the present).

Participation (30% of course grade). Your participation grade will be assessed on the quality and frequency of your contribution to in-class discussion. This, in turn, relies on the careful reading of assigned materials ahead of class meetings.

Paper (35%). You will write one substantial research paper (12-15 pages) in this course that explores a particular event, individual, organization, or theme related to the course by examining outside sources and scholarship. There will be a number of deadlines and submissions throughout the semester that you are required to meet; failure to meet the deadlines will result in points deducted from the final paper grade. The first deadline is October 1, by which date you must submit by email a paragraph explaining your paper topic in some detail.

Midterm Exam (10%). The midterm exam will consist of three short-answer identifications and one lengthier essay question. One week before the exam, you will be given three possible essay questions, of which one will appear on the actual exam. Though you will not have advance notice of possible short-answer IDs, you will be able to select the IDs you wish to write on from a list that appears on the exam.

Final Exam (25%). The final exam will follow the same format as the midterm exam, except that there will be four IDs and two essay questions (one of these will be cumulative and the other will cover material from the second half of the term). As with the midterm exam, you will be given possible essay questions one week ahead of the final exam.

Readings. All readings will be available on our HuskyCT course website.

Academic Integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are the gravest violations of academic conduct. They will be punished to the fullest extent possible, including failure in the course. Plagiarism consists of reproducing or utilizing ideas or text from other sources without proper attribution. For more information, see <http://www.plagiarism.org> and http://www.community.uconn.edu/student_code.html.

Accessibility. To request accommodations for a disability you must first contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (room 204 of the Wilbur Cross Building; <http://www.csd.uconn.edu>). You must have the appropriate forms from this office before we can arrange accommodations.

SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on the course website.

WEEK 1

9/1: America at the Crossroads

9/3: Watergate

WEEK 2

9/8: Vietnam Syndrome

Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality* (2011) excerpt.

9/10: Busing & Affirmative Action

Louis P. Masur, *The Soiling of Old Glory: The Story of a Photograph That Shocked America* (2008), excerpt.

WEEK 3

9/15: Feminism & Sexual Liberation

Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time* (1999), excerpt.

9/17: The Religious Right & the Politics of Family

Phyllis Schlafly, *The Power of the Positive Woman* (1977), excerpt.

WEEK 4

9/22: Environmentalism

Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia* (1975), excerpt.

9/24: Stagflation & the Tax Revolt

Simon Hall, "The Tax Revolt," in *American Patriotism, American Protest* (2011).

WEEK 5

9/29: Deindustrialization & Urban Crisis

Ben Hamper, *Rivertown* (1991), excerpt.

10/1: Free Enterprise, Free Markets

Lewis Powell, "Attack on American Free Enterprise System," Confidential Memorandum to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, August 23, 1971.

Ralph Nader, Introduction to *The Monopoly Makers: Ralph Nader's Study Group Report on Regulation and Competition* (1973).

WEEK 6

10/6: **MIDTERM EXAM**

10/8: Reagan Revolution

Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (2006), excerpt.

WEEK 7

10/13: Wall Street

Michael Lewis, *Liar's Poker* (1989), excerpt.

10/15: From Hippie to Yuppie

Tom Wolfe, "The 'Me' Decade and the Third Great Awakening," *New York*, August 23, 1976.

Hendrik Hertzberg, "The Short Happy Life of the American Yuppie," *Esquire*, February 1988.

WEEK 8

10/20: War on Crime, War on Drugs

10/22: The AIDS Crisis

We Were Here (2011), directed by David Weissman.

WEEK 9

10/27: Individual Meetings on Papers

10/29: The End of the Cold War & the Rise of the New World Order

Lloyd C. Gardner, *The Long Road to Baghdad: A History of U.S. Foreign Policy from the 1970s to the Present* (2008), excerpt.

WEEK 10

11/3: Clinton's Third Way

11/5: Culture Wars

Mike Wallace, "The Battle of the Enola Gay," in *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (1996).

WEEK 11

11/10: Globalization

Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999), excerpt.

Battle In Seattle (2007), directed by Stuart Townsend.

11/12: Dot.com Boom & Bust

Roger Lowenstein, *Origins of the Crash* (2004), excerpt.

WEEK 12

11/17: The Election of 2000 to 9/11

Alexander Keyssar, "The Right to Vote and Election 2000," in *The Unfinished Election of 2000*, ed. Jack Rakove (2012).

11/19: Wars in Afghanistan & Iraq

Mary L. Dudziak, "What is a War on Terror?," in *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (2012).

THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 13

12/1: Financial Excess

George Packer, "Tampa," in *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America* (2013), excerpt #1.

12/3: Crash & Bailout

George Packer, "Tampa" in *The Unwinding* (2013), excerpt #2.

WEEK 14

12/8: Obama's Hope & Change

Paul Starr, "Breaking Through, 2009-2010," in *Remedy and Reaction: The Peculiar American Struggle over Health Care Reform* (2011), pp. 194-238.

12/10: Immigration

Peter Schrag, "They Keep Coming," in *Not Fit for Our Society: Immigration and Nativism in America* (2010).

FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 18, 10:30 am - 12:30 p.m. (to be confirmed later in the term).