Program: CET Beijing  
Course Code / Title: (BJ/HIST 310) The United States in the Post-WW2 Era  
Total Hours: 45  
Recommended Credits: 3  
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: History, Political Science / East Asian Studies, International Relations  
Language of Instruction: English  
Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description
This course is designed as a survey of US history since the Second World War, from the prosperous post-war period of the 1950s to the forty years between the election of JFK in 1960 and the election of Barack Obama in 2008, which mark one of the most turbulent periods in American history. Radical changes occurred during these decades in American political, social, and cultural life, changes which still have repercussions on American society today. Through a variety of readings, seminars, discussions, and research papers, as well as screenings of feature films, documentaries, and musical albums, the course aims at evoking the four decades for the purpose of arriving at a deeper understanding of the major events that took place during the period. A complete understanding of the transformational nature of these events is not possible, however, without placing them within the context of political and social history, and most especially within the framework of the larger interpretive principles of the culture which American Studies offers.

Objectives
Through this course, students gain:
- Knowledge of the social, political and cultural history of the U.S. in the years since World War II.
- An understanding of the meaning of the transformations which occurred during this period in light of some basic principles underlying American culture, most notably: (a) *America as a process culture* (b) *America as a culture of experience* (c) *America as a self conscious society*
- An understanding of how historical analysis is constructed
- The skills necessary to discuss important ideas and concepts that emerged in the period.

Course Requirements
Course readings, averaging 30 pages per session, should be completed before class. Students must attend all classes and are expected to participate actively in all class discussions.

Students take two in-class midterm exams (closed-book, 60 minutes). Both consist of five short essay questions. They are held at the end of Part One and Part Two respectively (see Outline of Course Content for details.)
Syllabus of Record

Students are asked to write a short critique paper (4 pages double spaced) on two assigned articles.

For their final exam, students submit a research paper (10 pages double spaced). Students are expected to show original thinking and independent analysis of the issues in question. A separate guide is circulated in class.

Grading
The final grade is determined as follows:
- Class participation: 10%
- Midterm exams: 40%
- Critique paper: 10%
- Final exam: 40%

Readings


Outline of Course Content

Topic 1 – Truman and Origins of the Cold War

Topic 2 – The Reach toward National Consensus: The Eisenhower Years
- The Civil Rights Movement
- The Affluent Society

Topic 3 – The Kennedy Years: Camelot and the Myth of New Beginnings
- John F. Kennedy: The Reality & the Myth
- Lyndon Johnson and the War in Vietnam
- The Counterculture: The Glory and the Dream
- Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties

Topic 4 – The Road to Watergate
Syllabus of Record

• “Watergate”, in America since 1945 (David Burner)

Topic 5 – Retreat into Narcissism : A Self-Absorbed America
• Christopher Lasch, “The New Narcissism”

Topic 6 – Neo-Conservatism and the Advent of the Reagan Years
• America in the Eighties
• Kids 4 Bush: the First Gulf War

Topic 7 – Backlash. A View from 1994: Looking toward the Beginning of Change
• Reagan / Bush Administration: The Rise and Fall of the Right Wing Conservatives
• Into the Global Millennium: “Yes! We Can! – Obama’s Politics of Change”
• Donald Trump: Making America Great Again