

History 089
From Woodstock to Reagan: America in the 1970s
John L. Townsend III FYS in History, Fall 2010
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:15, Hamilton Hall 423

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10 AM to 12 PM
and by appointment



Course Description

Many Americans remember the 1970s as a hazy hangover from the 1960s—a time of ugly clothes, disco, and general boringness. In the 1993 movie *Dazed and Confused*, one character put it this way: “The Fifties were boring, the Sixties rocked, and the Seventies...oh God...well, they obviously suck!”

In reality, however, Americans in the 1970s witnessed tumultuous and vitally important changes in politics, culture, society, and the economy. As one author claims, this was “The Decade That Brought You Modern Life (For Better or For Worse).” So what really happened in the years when, as another author wrote, “It Seemed Like Nothing Happened”? The major goal of this First Year Seminar is to find out!

At the same time, this course is designed to introduce you to studying history at the college level. We will analyze primary sources (and discuss what that means), including films and music clips, as well as news footage, leaked documents, interviews, and literary reviews, and we will read works by prominent historians. Along the way, you will learn about the central tools that historians use to make sense of the past and draw lessons for the present. You will learn how to ask historical questions about how politics and society changed over time, as well as how memory (especially our parents’ memories!) can conflict with the historical record.

Reading

Like all college history courses, this class will involve a significant amount of reading. Assignments are listed clearly in this syllabus and you are expected to do the reading thoughtfully and carefully before each class meeting. Reading for college history classes means reading *actively*: take notes, underline, mark up your copies, think of questions to ask in class. Your ability to participate in class discussion will depend on how well you do the readings.

This course uses a Coursepack and one assigned book (Bruce Schulman's *The Seventies*), both of which are available at the Student Stores. You might be able to find a cheaper version of the Schulman book online, and I encourage you to look.

Asterisks (**) in the syllabus indicate that a reading assignment is posted on Blackboard.

Graded Assignments

This course is designed not only to introduce you to the themes and problems of the history of the United States in the 1970s, but also to teach you the skills of historical analysis more generally. We will work throughout the semester on analyzing both primary and secondary sources (the distinction between which we will discuss at length) and communicating that analysis both aloud and in writing. The graded components of the course are as follows:

In-Class Quizzes: Throughout the semester, we will have three short, essay-style quizzes to check in on how well you've done the assigned reading. These are not intended to trick you and shouldn't require huge amounts of cramming; rather, if you are keeping up with the material and paying attention in class, they should be pretty straightforward.

Primary Source Presentations: Early in the semester, students will choose a partner with whom to prepare a 10-minute oral presentation to the class on a primary source that you will identify and analyze (with input from the course instructor). There will be three "primary source presentation" days during the semester, each related to a unit theme—we will decide early on who will present on what theme. Three pairs will present on each day, and then field questions from the rest of the class during a discussion period after each presentation. (For non-presenters, the discussion period will count toward your participation grade.)

Article Review: On **September 13**, we will visit Davis Library and learn about locating scholarly articles through UNC's "e-resources." In the following weeks, each student will locate a scholarly article on a topic of her or his choice (with input from the course instructor) and write a 2–3 page review, due on **September 29**. Details and guidelines will be provided in class.

Book Review: On **November 22**, students will submit a 2-3 page review of a historical monograph (which will be defined in class) on the same topic as the article they reviewed earlier. Books will be chosen in consultation with the course instructor.

Final Essay: In lieu of a final exam, students will write a 6 – 8 page written essay, due to the instructor by 2 PM on Friday, **December 17**. We will discuss the specifics of this essay in class, and you certainly don't need to worry about it until later in the semester. It will draw on the earlier writing assignments and involve reading at least one new book and one primary source (of your choosing).

A Crucial Statement on Plagiarism

Plagiarism means any attempt to pass off someone else's idea or words as your own without attribution. It is an extremely serious offense, it is thoroughly dishonest, and it has no place in higher education. We will talk in this course about how to cite sources and how to avoid academic dishonesty. **The Internet** has greatly improved access to information and has helped scholars enormously, but it also has created new ways for people to cheat and plagiarize. As a general rule, to avoid plagiarism, **never cut and paste from an online source**. Take notes and always rewrite things in your own words.

Attendance Policy

This is a seminar and class discussion is a vital part of the course. All students are expected to be at all class meetings. Unexcused absences will count against your class participation grade.

Honor Code

The University of North Carolina's Honor Code will be vigorously enforced in all aspects of this course, and I expect you to sign the pledge on every assignment you turn in.

Grading Breakdown

Class Participation and Attendance	20%
In-Class Quizzes (3@5% each)	15%
Primary Source Presentation	15%
Article Review	15%
Book Review	15%
Final Essay	20%



COURSE SCHEDULE

Introduction: Images of the 1970s

Wed. Aug. 25 **Remembering the 70s**

Introduction to Course

Mon. Aug. 30 **The 60s v. the 70s**

Assignment: Ungraded Diagnostic Take-Home Quiz (to be distributed)

Reading Assignment:

- 1) Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*, “Introduction: The Sixties and the Postwar Legacy,” pp. 1–20
- 2) David Frum, *How We Got Here: The 70s—The Decade that Brought You Modern Life (For Better or For Worse)*, “Introduction,” pp. xv–xxiv.

Wed. Sept. 1 **The Me Decade**

Reading Assignment:

** Tom Wolfe, “The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening,” *New York Magazine*, August 23, 1976 (on **Blackboard**)



Mon. Sept. 6: LABOR DAY—NO CLASS

Unit One: Vietnam and its Legacy

Wed. Sept. 8 The War in Vietnam

Reading Assignment:

- 1) Walter LaFeber, "Introduction," in William Appleman Williams et al., eds., *America in Vietnam: A Documentary History*, pp. 215–233.
- 2) "Timeline of Vietnam War" on PBS Frontline's Vietnam Online
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/timeline/index.html#a>
(Nota Bene: This timeline is provided to give you an overall sense of the Vietnam War; you should read over it carefully, but you do not need to memorize it.)

Mon. Sept. 13 Class Visit to Davis Library

Meeting with Librarian Robert Dalton on Electronic Resources and Finding Articles.

Wed. Sept. 15 Four Dead in Ohio: Kent State and Student Protest

Reading Assignment:

Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, "*Takin' It To the Streets*," "Kent State and Jackson State," pp. 476–493.

Mon. Sept. 20 The Pentagon Papers

Reading Assignment:

- 1) ** Neil Sheehan, "Vietnam Archive: Pentagon Study Traces 3 Decades of Growing U.S. Involvement," *New York Times*, June 13, 1971 (available on **Blackboard**)
- 2) George C. Herring, ed., *The Pentagon Papers: Abridged Edition*, "Introduction," "McNamara's November 1965 Assessment of the War," "McNamara's Early Doubts," and "McNaughton Hints at a Compromise," pp. xiii–xxii; 134–140.

Wed. Sept. 22 The End of the War and the Rise of Détente

Reading Assignment:

Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, Chapter 2, "Détente and Its Discontents," pp. 48–72.

Reading Comprehension Quiz 1

Unit Two: Watergate

Mon. Sept. 27

Film in Class: *All the President's Men* (First Half)

Wed. Sept. 29

Film: *All the President's Men* (Second Half)

Article Review Assignment Due in Class

Mon. Oct. 4 The Investigation

Reading Assignment:

- 1) Edward Berkowitz, *Something Happened: A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies*, Chapter 1, "Nixon, Watergate, and Presidential Scandal," pp. 19–31.
- 2) ** "President Nixon Discusses the Watergate Break-In with Aide H.R. Haldeman, 1972" (on **Blackboard**).

Wed. Oct. 6 The Pardon

Reading Assignment:

Gerald Ford, *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald Ford*, Chapter 1, "Uncertain Days," in, pp. 1–41.

Mon. Oct. 11 The State of Richard Nixon: The Imperial Presidency

Reading Assignment:

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Imperial Presidency*, Selections from Chapter 8, "The Revolutionary Presidency: Washington," pp. 216–218; 227–235; 255–277.

Wed. Oct. 13 Primary Source Presentations I

Unit Three: Energy and Economic Crises

Mon. Oct. 18 OPEC and the Energy Crisis

Reading Assignment:

Edward Berkowitz, *Something Happened*, “Chapter 3: Running Out of Gas: The Economic Downturn and Social Changes,” pp. 53–70.

Wed. Oct. 20 Stagflation and Jimmy Carter

Reading Assignment:

Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies*, “Jimmy Carter and the Crisis of Confidence,” pp. 121–143.

Reading Comprehension Quiz 2

Mon. Oct. 25 The Culture of Malaise

Class Trip to Ackland Art Museum: Visual Culture in the 1970s with Dr. Robert Colby

Wed. Oct. 27 Primary Source Presentations II



Jimmy Carter in a Cardigan



Lining up for gasoline, 1973

Unit Four: Race and Class

Mon. Nov. 1 Race, Class, and Anxiety

Reading Assignment:

Thomas Sugrue and John Skrentny, “The White Ethnic Strategy,” in Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer, eds., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, pp. 171–192.

Wed. Nov. 3 Race and Ethnicity in Popular Culture

Reading Assignment:

Background on *All in the Family*:

<http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=allinthefa>

In-class Screening: *All in the Family*, “Sammy’s Visit”

Mon. Nov. 8 The Busing Crisis

Reading Assignment

J. Anthony Lucas, *Common Ground*, Chapter 14, “The Judge,” pp. 222–251.

Wed. Nov. 10 Primary Source Presentations III



Archie and Edith, c. 1971



Boston Anti-Busing Rally, 1976

Unit 5: Ronald Reagan and the Conservative Ascendancy

Mon. Nov. 15 The Rise of the Religious Right

Reading Assignment:

- 1) Matthew Lassiter, "Inventing Family Values," in Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer, eds., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, pp. 13–28.
- 2) "Interview with Jimmy Carter," G. Barry Golson, ed., *The Playboy Interview*, pp. 464–488.

Reading Comprehension Quiz 3

Wed. Nov. 17 Film Screening: *Network* (part one)

Mon. Nov. 22 Film Screening: *Network* (part two)

Book Reviews Due

Wed. Nov. 24 THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS

Mon. Nov. 29 The Iran Hostage Crisis

Reading Assignment:

Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*, "Tuesday, January 20, 1981," pp. 3–14.

Wed. Dec. 1 The Election of 1980

Reading Assignment:

Schulman, *The Seventies*, Chapter 8, "The Minutemen are Turning in Their Graves," pp. 193–217.

Mon. Dec. 6 The Reagan Years

Reading Assignment:
Schulman, *The Seventies*, Chapter 9, “The Reagan Culmination, pp. 218–252.

Wed. Dec. 8 That 70s Class

Reading Assignment:
Louis Menand, “That Seventies Show: What Did the Decade Mean?,” *The New Yorker*, May 28, 2001 (on **Blackboard)



Friday, December 17: Final Essay Due at 422 Hamilton Hall by 2 PM

