

## HIST 4389: America Since 1945

### Course Description:

This course examines the major political, social, economic, and cultural developments in American history from the end of World War II to the present. We will explore how the United States emerged as a global superpower, confronted the challenges of the Cold War, experienced dramatic social movements and cultural transformations, and grappled with America's role in the world.

**Instructor:** Dr. M. Rhys Dotson

**Email:** mdotson@uttyler.edu

**Office:** CAS 117

**Office Hours:** MWF 10:15 - 11:15 *or*  
by appointment

### Note on emails:

If you reach out to me during the week, I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours. If you contact me on the weekend or during a scheduled university break, I will do my best to respond within 48 hours.

### Required Text:

Brands, H. W., *American Dreams: The United States Since 1945*. Penguin Books, 2010.

### Course Objectives:

Following the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze the major political, social, economic, and cultural developments in postwar American history
- Evaluate the connections between domestic policies and foreign affairs in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras
- Critically interpret primary source documents from the period
- Construct clear, evidence-based historical arguments in writing

### Expectations and Etiquette:

It is expected that everyone in this course, including the instructor, will maintain respect for one another. I encourage you to form your own thoughts surrounding the course material, but please note that not everyone will share ***all*** of your sentiments. It is okay to disagree with someone, but it ***will*** be done respectfully and thoughtfully.

If the instructor determines that your behavior is inappropriate, the appropriate campus administrator and/or the campus police department will be notified.

## Methods of Evaluation:

**Exams (45%):** There will be two major exams in this course: a midterm and a final. Both exams will include a variety of question formats, including, but not limited to, short answer, true/false, multiple-choice, and essay.

**Assignments (20%):** Throughout the course, students will read and evaluate primary documents related to the course content and write a short analytical essay of 400-600 words that responds to specific questions. These essays should demonstrate a close reading of the sources and engagement with course themes.

**Research Paper (25%):** Each student will select a topic that is relevant to the course content. Research papers are due by **11:59 pm on Friday, April 10**. Papers must meet the following parameters:

- You **must** use at least five academic secondary sources. You are encouraged, but not required, to utilize primary sources in your research.
- Papers **must** be properly formatted in the Turabian/Chicago Style. Your paper should be double-spaced and written in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins.
- Papers **must** be between six and ten pages. Please note that the cover page, footnotes/endnotes, and bibliography do **not** count towards the overall page length.
- One letter grade will be deducted for **every** calendar day the paper is late.

**Note: If you have not taken HIST 3300 and/or do not know how to properly implement the Turabian/Chicago Style, it is your responsibility to become familiar with it.**

**Attendance (10%):** Class attendance will be recorded during every formal class meeting. To account for emergencies and/or illnesses, each student receives **six** excused absences. If a student will miss a class due to a university-sponsored event, they **must** notify the instructor **in advance**. Missing class for a university-sponsored event does **not** count towards the excused absences.

Following a missed class, students are **not** required to provide the professor with a doctor's note or any other documentation.

### Grade Scale:

A:  $\geq 89.5$   
B: 79.5 – 89.4  
C: 69.5 – 79.4  
D: 59.5 – 69.4  
F:  $59.4 \leq$

### Key Dates:

January 12: First Day of Class  
March 4: Midterm Exam  
March 9-13: Spring Break  
April 10: Research Papers Due  
TBA: Final Exam

**Note: At the end of the semester, final grades will not be rounded up.**

### **Assignment and Exam Parameters:**

Students are ***not*** allowed to take exams early, unless they are traveling for a university-sponsored event. Students are ***required*** to arrange work, travel, and social events around all assigned due dates. If students fail to complete assignments by the designated due date, a penalty of ten points/calendar day will be applied.

There are ***no*** make-up exams in this course. If a student fails to complete an exam, they will ***automatically*** receive a zero grade. Unless otherwise noted, students are ***not*** allowed to use any resources (internet, textbook, notes, etc.) on exams. If the instructor determines the student has violated this policy, they will ***automatically*** fail the exam. In the event this happens a second time, the student will ***automatically*** fail the course.

### **Class Schedule\*:**

January 12 – Week 1 –Introduction/America at War's End

January 19 – Week 2 – The Cold War Begins

January 26 – Week 3 – Postwar Prosperity and Domestic Anxieties

February 2 – Week 4 – The 1950s: Consensus and Conformity

February 9 – Week 5 – Cold War Crises

February 16 – Week 6 – The Sixties Begin: Kennedy and Civil Rights

February 23. – Week 7 – The Great Society and Vietnam (pt. 1)

March 2 – Week 8 – The Great Society and Vietnam (pt. 2)

March 9 – Week 9 – Spring Break/Campus Closed

March 16 – Week 10 – The Sixties Unravel

March 23 – Week 11 – Nixon, Détente, and Watergate

March 30 – Week 12 – The 1970s: Crisis of Confidence

April 6 – Week 13 – The Reagan Revolution

April 13 – Week 14 – The End of the Cold War

April 20 – Week 15 – America in the 1990s and the New Millennium

April 27 – Week 16 – Final Exam Week

**Note: The instructor reserves the right to alter the above schedule. Please see Canvas for a more detailed description of weekly assignments.**

## **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and This Course:**

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, AI is **not** permitted at all.