



HSTRY 388: AMERICA IN 1968

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 University of Washington
 Spring 2021

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Office hours: immediately after class on MW, email me to reserve an appointment

This seminar considers an extraordinary single year in American history, 1968. The dizzying series of events of that year—steeply escalating military intervention, a presidential election, assassinations, global protest movements, and accelerating generational transformation—transformed American politics and culture in ways still being felt, and fought over, today. To understand now, we need to understand 1968.

We will meet twice every week for a synchronous discussion/work sessions on **Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30-3:50 PT.**

Readings:

All texts will be available on the course Canvas site and/or as e-books at the UW Libraries. Your only course costs will be renting two streaming films (total cost about \$8), and you are welcome to watch together with class colleagues and share the expense, or the popcorn. Expect to read about 100 pages per week (or multimedia sources that take approximately the same amount of time to consume). To obtain access to all these sources, please make sure you are signed into your computer with your UWnet ID.

Assignments:

1. Class engagement (20%): Thoughtful, historically informed, and courteous engagement in class discussion and group work with class colleagues, reflecting completion of assigned

readings. Contribution of written and oral talking points and questions during synchronous class sessions.

2. Discussion leadership (10%): Co-leading class discussion 2x per quarter.
3. Online posts (45%): Writing a 300-500 word discussion post on Canvas no later than 5PM each Thursday. This post should incorporate your talking points and questions from the two days of class that week as well as further reflections on class discussion that you would like to add. (5% per week for weeks 2-10)
4. Final 12-15 page original research paper (25%), due Thursday of exam week.

Course schedule:

We will be reading selected chapters from the following books, all of which are available in e-book form at the UW Libraries website. Together, they form a “1968 bookshelf” of works you may opt to read in full as you develop your research papers as well as after the end of this term, depending on your particular research interests.

Stefan M. Bradley, [*Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s*](#) (Illinois, 2009)

Dan T. Carter, [*The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the origins of the new conservatism, and the transformation of American politics*](#) (LSU Press, 2000)

Gerard DeGroot, [*The Dark Side of the Moon: The Magnificent Madness of the American Lunar Quest*](#) (NYU Press, 2006)

Elizabeth Hinton, [*From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*](#) (Harvard, 2016)

Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, [*America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*](#) (Oxford, 1999)

Walter LaFeber, [*The Deadly Bet: LBJ, Vietnam, and the 1968 Election*](#) (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)

Lisa McGirr, [*Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*](#) (Princeton, updated edition, 2015)

Donna Jean Murch, [*Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California*](#) (UNC Press, 2010)

Annelise Orleck, [*Rethinking American Women's Activism*](#) (Taylor & Francis, 2014)

Readings will be discussed on day they are listed on the syllabus. All of the chapters are also available in PDF form in the “Files” section of the class Canvas website. Come to class having

read and with one talking point and one question about the reading listed for that day. I'll explain expectations for talking points and questions at our first class session.

Week One – January: The Tet Offensive and the American War in Vietnam

- Monday 3/29: introductions, no advance reading today
 - REFERENCE [“Critical Events During the Long 1960s”](#) (from Isserman and Kazin)
- Wednesday 3/31:
 - READ Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, [“Why Did the United States Fight in Vietnam?,” *America Divided*, Chapter 4](#)
 - READ Walter LaFeber, [The Deadly Bet, Chapter 1](#)
 - WATCH [“Things Fall Apart,” Episode Six of *The Vietnam War \(2017\)*](#) (84 min)
- Thursday 4/1: post an introduction of yourself to class colleagues, and sign up for discussion leadership weeks

Week Two – February & March: McCarthy, Johnson, and the remaking of the Democratic Party

- Monday 4/5:
 - READ Walter LaFeber, [The Deadly Bet, Chapter 2](#)
 - WATCH [Eugene McCarthy on Meet the Press, July 1968](#) (28 min)
- Wednesday 4/7:
 - READ Walter LaFeber, [The Deadly Bet, Chapter 3](#)
 - WATCH Lyndon Johnson, [Address to the Nation, 3/31/68](#) (40 min)
- Thursday 4/8: discussion post 1

Week Three – April: Martin Luther King, Jr., urban uprisings, and racial injustice

- Monday 4/12:
 - READ Donna Murch, [Living for the City, Introduction](#) and [Chapter 5](#)
 - WATCH [Eyes on the Prize: The Promised Land, 1967-68](#) (58 min)
- Wednesday 4/14:
 - READ Elizabeth Hinton, [From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime, Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 4](#)
- Thursday 4/15: discussion post 2

Week Four – May: Youth movements and the counterculture

- Monday 4/19:
 - READ Isserman and Kazin, [“The Making of a Youth Culture,”](#) Chapter 8 of *America Divided*
 - READ Joan Didion, [“Slouching Towards Bethlehem”](#)
 - LISTEN to a popular album from 1968 of your choice, come to class ready to discuss your album and its most salient tracks (for inspiration, see the [Billboard Top 200](#))

- Wednesday 4/21:
 - READ Stefan Bradley, [Harlem vs. Columbia University, Chapter 3](#)
 - WATCH [“In Pursuit of Social Justice”](#) (58 minutes)
- Thursday 4/22: discussion post 3

Week Five – June & July: Nixon’s makeover, Wallace’s rage, and the changing Republican Party

- Monday 4/26:
 - READ Lisa McGirr, [Suburban Warriors, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6](#)
 - WATCH Ronald Reagan, [Speech in Support of Barry Goldwater, October 1964](#) (29 min)
- Wednesday 4/28:
 - READ Dan Carter, [The Politics of Rage, Chapter 10 and Chapter 11](#)
- Thursday 4/29: discussion post 4

Week Six – August: “The whole world is watching”

- Monday 5/3:
 - READ Isserman and Kazin, [“The New Left,”](#) Chapter 9 of *America Divided*
 - READ [“The Port Huron Statement”](#) (1962)
 - WATCH [“The Battle of Michigan Avenue”](#) (1969) (12 min)
 - WATCH [“The Democratic National Convention in Chicago”](#) (1968) (2 min)
 - WATCH [Dan Rather on covering the 1968 Democratic National Convention](#) (13 min)
- Wednesday 5/5:
 - READ Richard Nixon, [“What Has Happened to America?”](#) (1967)
 - WATCH [Richard Nixon accepts the 1968 Republican Presidential Nomination](#) (24 min)
 - WATCH [1968 campaign advertising](#) at the Living Room Candidate portal: watch at least four ads featured on this page and come prepared to discuss them with your classmates
- Thursday 5/13: discussion post 5

Week Seven – September: The revolt against “progress”

- Monday 5/10:
 - WATCH [“To New Horizons”](#) (1940) (23 min)
 - READ Raymond Mohl, [“Stop the Road: Freeway Revolts in American Cities”](#)
 - READ Steven Conn, [“Back to the Garden: Communes, the Environment, and Antiurban Pastoralism at the End of the Sixties”](#)
- Wednesday 5/12:
 - WATCH [The Fog of War](#) (2003, 107 min) – available on multiple streaming services for rent (\$3-4)
- Thursday 5/13: discussion post 6

Week Eight – October & November: The broader fight for liberation

- Monday 5/17:
 - READ Annelise Orleck, [“Raising Consciousness, Venting Anger, Finding Sisterhood”](#)
 - READ Georgia Paige Welch [“‘Up Against the Wall Miss America’: Women’s Liberation and Miss Black America in Atlantic City, 1968”](#)
- Wednesday 5/19:
 - READ Jason Peterson, [“A ‘Race’ for Equality: Print Media Coverage of the 1968 Olympic Protest by Tommie Smith and John Carlos”](#)
 - READ Oscar Rosales Castaneda, [“The Chicano Movement in Washington State, 1967-2006: Part 1”](#)
- Thursday 5/20: discussion post 7

Week Nine – December: Merry Christmas from the Moon

- Monday 5/24:
 - READ Gerard DeGroot, [Dark Side of the Moon, Chapter 12](#)
 - LISTEN Gil Scott-Heron, [“Whitey on the Moon”](#) (3 min)
 - WATCH *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) – available to rent on multiple streaming platforms
- Wednesday 5/26:
 - WATCH [Douglas Engelbart demonstrates computer mouse and networked computing](#), December 1968 (5 min)
 - READ Margaret O’Mara [“In 1968, computers got personal”](#)
 - LISTEN [“The Mother of All Demos”](#) (25 min)
- Thursday 5/27: discussion post 8

Week Ten – The legacies of 1968

- Monday 5/31: MEMORIAL DAY; NO CLASS
- Wednesday 6/2:
 - READ Isserman and Kazin, [“Conclusion: Winners and Losers,”](#) from *America Divided*
 - READ Thomas J. Sugrue, [“Stop comparing today’s protests to 1968”](#)
 - READ Rick Perlstein, [“How much can 1968 tell us about 2020?”](#)
 - PRESENT AND SHARE: one slide summarizing your research paper topic, guiding questions, sources (upload your slide to our shared Google Slide document [link on Canvas] by 2PM on 6/2)
- Thursday 6/3: discussion post 9

Week Eleven – Exam Week

- Thursday 6/10: final research paper due (upload on Canvas) by 11:59PM

Class policies, accommodations, grade scale all can be found on the course Canvas page.