

## **The Sixties in American Culture**

**LEH 301 Section 05W**  
**Monday, 1:00-3:30 p.m.**  
**Room: CA 223**  
**Spring, 2007**

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**Office: Carman Hall 385**  
**Hours: Monday, 3:30-4:30 p.m., or by appointment**

### **Course Description**

This course explores the social and cultural movements of the 1960s. The 1960s saw the rise of new ideas, values, and lifestyles concerning human relations, sexuality, and spirituality. This was the era of the invention of the birth control pill, the emergence of “free love” and the sexual revolution, the era of space travel, political assassinations, urban rebellions, happenings, psychedelic music, the student, civil rights, black power, hippie, and women’s movements, urban and rural communes, and the movement against the Vietnam War.

All this took place within a social and cultural milieu in which Motown, the various African American and other musical avant-gardes, and rock and roll provided the soundtrack. Among other topics, this course will look at how music got weird in the 1960s but people danced to it anyway. It will also examine the poetry, visual art, history and literature of the period as a way of examining this exciting and still controversial moment of our recent social and cultural history.

The class will examine several voices from the period, including those of James Baldwin, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Luther King, Jr., Elaine Brown, Diane Di Prima, Bob Kaufman, and Herbert Marcuse.

## Course Requirements

### CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

All papers must be typed double-spaced in 12-pt. font, printed on one side of the paper. Hard paper copies only. Do not turn in email papers or attachments. Headings, printed in the upper left-hand corner of the paper, must contain, in addition to your name, the date, the title and section number of this class, and your email address. Essay titles must be centered above the main body text of the paper. Late papers will not be accepted.

**Because this is a course involving college-level humanities study and research, you are to use professional scholarly materials and style in writing your research papers. This means that you are to exclude from consideration non-scholarly online (and other) sources, including general interest encyclopedias such as Wikipedia. Acceptable sources to support your arguments are those that can be found on the databases available at the Lehman College Library Website, the CUNY+ Library Website, or in the catalogues of the Lehman College Library, other CUNY libraries, other university libraries, or at New York Public Library. However, the injunction against using encyclopedias as sources remains in force.**

**Papers that do not adhere to the instructions in this syllabus will be returned ungraded. Final papers that do not adhere to these instructions will result in a course grade of incomplete. All papers must follow the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.) (or some other academic stylebook) in matters of style. Essays without a proper citation style will be returned for revision. Revised papers must be turned in by the next class meeting. Assignments may also include an occasional short quiz, to be counted toward that portion of your grade based on the writing assignments.**

#### DEADLINES:

Strict adherence to the following deadlines is mandatory.  
Failure to meet these deadlines will negatively affect your grade.

**February 21, 2007:** First response paper, on the rhetorical style of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**March 5, 2007:** Five-page paper on a 1960s popular song is due.

**March 26, 2007:** Five page essay on The Fire Next Time, by James Baldwin, is due.

#### FINAL Paper

**April 16, 2007:** Abstract or prospectus (no more than 350 words) and annotated bibliography.

**May 14, 2007:** Final paper is due.

**Assignments may also include an occasional short quiz, which will be counted toward that portion of your grade based on the writing assignments.**

**Grading: Class participation: 30%; First paper, 10%; second paper, 15%; third paper, 15%; Final paper, 30%.**

## ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

### First Paper

Write a 500-800 word essay (2-3 1/2 pages) responding to the commentaries on the rhetorical style of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., offered by George E. Carter, Keith D. Miller, and Susan Tiefenbrun in the articles cited below. How do their analyses help deepen your own understanding of King's style? What nuances do they uncover? What questions do they leave unanswered? Hyperlinks to transcripts of King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail," and his "I Have a Dream" speech of 1963 are provided in this syllabus. You may, however, use other published transcripts of King's speeches (or excerpts from his writings) for your essay.

This paper is due February 21, 2007.

### Second Paper

Write a five-page (approximately 1,250-word) essay on a popular song from the 1960s. The song must have been recorded and released as a single on vinyl disk to the public in the United States during that decade. The most successful and accomplished essays for this and the following assignments will be those that demonstrate a clear, concise writing style, and that show that the writer has engaged in original archival research. You may use recordings from the library, or recordings your own private phonograph or compact disc collection for this assignment.

This paper is due March 5, 2007

### Third Paper

Write a five-page (approximately 1,250 word) essay on The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin. Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate The Fire Next Time in terms of the literary, political and cultural conditions in the United States at the moments of its publication, considering, first, its publication as a pair of magazine articles, and then in book form. Your essay should use both primary and secondary sources to address issues of style, meaning, significance, language, character, plot, textuality, genre, periodization, politics, or morality and ethics.

This paper is due March 26, 2007.

### **FINAL Paper**

You are to read a periodical from the 1960s and write a ten-page portrait of that periodical's voice within the context of the 1960s. For this assignment, you are to read a significant portion of the output of this periodical, but base your essay on a finite time frame, to be determined as follows: for daily periodicals, write about one week; for weekly periodicals, write about two months; for monthly periodicals, write about six months; for quarterly periodicals, write about one year. Further instructions, along with a list of suggested periodicals, will be made available during the course of the semester.

This paper is due on May 14, the last day of class.

### **Required texts**

#### Books

- Anderson, Terry H. The Sixties, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007.
- Baldwin, James. The Fire Next Time. New York: Vintage, 1963.
- Brown, Elaine. A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story. New York: Pantheon, 1992.
- Di Prima, Diane. Revolutionary Letters. San Francisco: Last Gasp, 2006.
- Ginsberg, Allen. "Wichita Vortex Sutra." 1966. <http://www.allenginsberg.org>.
- Kaufman, Bob. Cranial Guitar: Selected Poems. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1996.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. Lucy. New York: Plume, 1990.
- Marcuse, Herbert. An Essay on Liberation. 1969. Boston: Beacon Press, 2000.

#### Required reading for the first essay assignment.

- Carter, George E. "Martin Luther King: Incipient Transcendentalist." Phylon 40.4 (1979): 318-324.
- King, Martin Luther. "Letter From Birmingham Jail." Birmingham, Alabama, April 16, 1963, <<http://www.thekingcenter.org/prog/non/letter.html>>.
- King, "I Have a Dream." Washington, D.C., August 28, 1963. <<http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html>>.
- Miller, Keith D. "Composing Martin Luther King, Jr." PMLA 105.1 (1990): 70-82.
- Tiefenbrun, Susan. "Semiotics and Martin Luther King's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail.'" Cordozo Studies in Law and Literature 4.2 (1992): 255-287.

### **Suggested and Recommended Texts**

#### Articles

**Unless otherwise noted, all articles are available online at the  
Lehman College Library Website, in the JSTOR archive.**

- Baskerville, John D. "Free Jazz: A Reflection of Black Power Ideology." Journal of Black Studies. 24.4 (Jun., 1994): 484-497.
- Brackett, David. "James Brown's 'Superbad' and the Double-Voiced Utterance." Popular Music. 11. 3. (Oct., 1992): 309-324.
- Gates, John M. "People's War in Vietnam." The Journal of Military History, 54.3. (1990): 325-344.
- Harris, Jessica Christina. "Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party." The Journal of Negro History 85.3 (Summer, 2000): 162-174.  
(At the time that this article was published, the author was an undergraduate student at Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana.)
- Jarraway, David R. "'Standing by His Word': The Politics of Allen Ginsberg's Vietnam 'Vortex.'" Journal of American Culture, 16.3 (1993): 81-88.  
(This article is available at the Academic Search Premier database at the library website.)
- Joseph, Branden W. "John Cage and the Architecture of Silence." October 81 (1997): 80-104.
- Lindner, Vicki. "I Was a Comandante in the Sexual Revolution." Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies, 15:2 (1994), 87-96.
- McAdam, Doug and Yang Su. "The War at Home: Antiwar Protests and Congressional Voting, 1965 to 1973." American Sociological Review 67.5 (2002): 696-721.
- Nabers, Deak. "Past Using: James Baldwin and Civil Rights Law in the 1960s." The Yale Journal of Criticism, 18.2 (2005): 221-242.
- Nielsen, Aldon Lynn "'A Hard Rain': Looking to Bob Kaufman." Callaloo 25.1 (2002): 135-145
- Oczkowitz, Edyta. "Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy: Cultural 'Translation' as a Case of Creative Exploration of the Past." MELUS, 21.3 (Autumn, 1996): 143-157.
- Olzak Susan; Suzanne Shanahan; and Elizabeth H. McEneaney. "Poverty, Segregation, and Race Riots: 1960 to 1993." American Sociological Review, 61.4. (1996): 590-613.
- Rachal, John R. "The Long Hot Summer": The Mississippi Response to Freedom Summer, 1964." Journal of Negro History 84.4 (1999): 315-339.
- Spilerman, Seymour. "The Causes of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of Alternative Explanations." American Sociological Review. 35.4. (1970): 627-649.
- Stewart, Alexander. "Funky Drummer': New Orleans, James Brown and the Rhythm Transformation of American Popular Music." Popular Music. 19.3 (Oct., 2000): 293-318.

## Class Schedule

**(Readings must be completed before the date assigned for class discussion of those readings, which are the dates indicated below.)**

### Part One: History

January 29: Introduction

February 5: Anderson, "Introduction," Chapter 1.

King, Martin Luther. "Letter From Birmingham Jail." Birmingham, Alabama, April 16, 1963, <http://www.thekingcenter.org/prog/non/letter.html>.

King, "I Have a Dream." Washington, D.C., August 28, 1963.  
<http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html>.

Miller, "Composing Martin Luther King, Jr."

Carter, "Martin Luther King: Incipient Transcendentalist."

Tiefenbrun, "Semiotics and Martin Luther King's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail.'"

February 12 [**CLASS MEETS FEBRUARY 15**]:

Anderson, Chapter 2.

Rachal, "The Long Hot Summer": The Mississippi Response to Freedom Summer, 1964."

February 19 [**CLASS MEETS FEBRUARY 21**]:

Anderson, Chapters 3-4.

Stewart, "'Funky Drummer': New Orleans, James Brown and the Rhythmic Transformation of American Popular Music."

Brackett, "James Brown's 'Superbad' and the Double-Voiced Utterance."

**First response paper (2-3 pages, on the commentaries on King's rhetoric.)**

February 26: Anderson, Chapters 5-6.

McAdam and Su, "The War at Home: Antiwar Protests and Congressional Voting, 1965 to 1973."

Gates, "People's War in Vietnam."

March 5: Anderson, Chapters 7-8. [**Song paper is due (five pages)**].

**Part Two: Voices**

March 12: Cranial Guitar

Nielsen, “‘A Hard Rain’: Looking to Bob Kaufman.”

Baskerville, “Free Jazz: A Reflection of Black Power Ideology.”

Joseph, “John Cage and the Architecture of Silence.”

March 19: The Fire Next Time

Nabers, “Past Using: James Baldwin and Civil Rights Law in the 1960s.”

March 26: “Howl,” & “Wichita Vortex Sutra.”

Jarraway, “‘Standing by His Word’: The Politics of Allen Ginsberg’s  
Vietnam Vortex.”

**The Fire Next Time paper is due (five pages).**

**Spring recess, Monday April 2—Tuesday, April 10.**

April 16: A Taste of Power

Harris, “Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party.”

**Abstract (or prospectus) and tentative bibliography for  
final paper is due.**

April 23: “A City on Fire.”

Spilerman, “The Causes of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of  
Alternative Explanations.”

Olzak, Shanahan, and McEneaney, “Poverty, Segregation, and Race Riots:  
1960 to 1993.”

April 30: Lucy

Lindner, “I Was a Comandante in the Sexual Revolution.”

Oczkowicz, “Jamaica Kincaid’s Lucy: Cultural ‘Translation’ as a Case of  
Creative Exploration of the Past.”

May 7: An Essay on Liberation

May 14: Revolutionary Letters

**May 14, Last day of class. Final paper due (10-12 pages).**