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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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 Gilbaldi (6th 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, texuality, 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


Required reading for the first essay assignment.

Suggested and Recommended Texts

Articles

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

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.)
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


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.


February 19 [CLASS MEETS FEBRUARY 21]:

Anderson, Chapters 3-4.


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

February 26:  Anderson, Chapters 5-6.


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.”

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.”

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).