

# THE US SINCE 1945

Spring 2014

WORCESTER  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY

HI 203-01

MWF 10:30 am  
Sullivan 123

Dr. Tona Hangen

LASC: USW +  
WAC + DAC

This is a 3-  
credit course\*

\*See course  
website for the  
university definition  
of a credit hour



## course description and objectives

In this course you will study American history and culture from the end of the Second World War to the present. Topics to be discussed include postwar American life, the Cold War, liberal consensus politics, conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and the Middle East, the civil rights movement and other rights movements, political history, and such themes as the rise of both political and religious conservatism,

post-industrialism, globalization, multiculturalism, and contemporary American culture. We also explore how American governance in Congress does (or doesn't) work. I aim to educate as broadly as possible about this period and to include a multiplicity of voices and perspectives. One of the course's main goals is to destabilize the notion that there is one single American story.

This course **covers** the period of US history since 1945. It also **uncovers** how historians think about and approach the history of the recent past, and is designed to help you navigate the road from "back then" to "right now." It combines lecture, seminar-style discussion, historical simulation, and hands-on research to introduce you to some key sources, themes and problems from the past six decades of American history.

# course requirements

This course involves extensive reading, writing and discussion. You will be expected to read 50-100 pages a week (sometimes more), and to write approximately 20 pages over the course of the term. You will need to put in consistent effort during the whole semester. You'll need to have (or learn) basic computer and library research skills and use the standard conventions of historical writing.

To take advantage of multiple learning styles, and to help create a community of learning in this classroom, I will assess your learning in several different ways. There are a lot of moving parts, so please pay attention to deadlines and expectations.

- **Attendance and participation in class (20%)** – I take attendance in each class session. You should be prompt, present, and ready for discussion each day. I expect class discussion will be lively, respectful, and substantive. There may be periodic, unannounced quizzes or informal writing at the beginnings or ends of class, which will be factored into your A&P grade.
- **Leading Discussion (5%)** - To take greater ownership of your own learning in the course, you will each have a turn at leading discussion and/or making oral presentations. Such assignments will total 5% of your course grade.
- **Exams (30%)** – we will have 4 closed-book hour-long tests. The last test will take place during the final exam period but will be the equivalent of the other three exams. Your

lowest test score is dropped; there are **no makeup exams**. Exams are held Feb 5, Mar 7, April 2 and May 14.

You'll note that over half of your grade involves showing up ready for class, keeping up with and responding to the reading, being involved in discussion, and taking at least 3 of the 4 exams. The rest is based on your original research and group work.

**Research Essay (15%)** - you will research and write one paper (5-7 pages) representing original research using a defined set of primary sources. Due April 9, with a draft due on April 4.

**Congressional Simulation (15%)** – Throughout the semester, we will take frequent breaks from lecture/discussion to run a simulation of Congress. You will receive an assignment to work in committees that reflect actual Congressional committees. Your simulation grade comes from the preparation and participation that you put into each Congress Day.

**Committee Wiki (10%)** – Each committee receives one wiki page on the course Congressional Wiki (<http://us45-14.wikispaces.com>) The page could contain news, links, discussion, plans, documents and their revision, legislation in progress—whatever committee business you deem important. Your wiki page will be periodically assessed to make sure you're keeping it current after each “session of Congress” day. This is a GROUP grade; everyone on the committee receives the same grade, unless there are truly extenuating circumstances. (*cont on p. 3*)

## Vietnam Conflict

While grunts sloggged through Vietnam's rice paddies and jungles, and “hawks” emphasized the need to prevent a Communist domino effect in Southeast Asia, “doves” fought the war on the homefront with protest, marches, and grassroots mobilization. Divisions ran deep in American society, and the rift is still visible in the nation's politics and foreign policy to this day.



Your group will be responsible among itself for dividing up the work fairly.

**Congressional Paper** (5%) – at the end of the term, you’ll write a (4-page) paper considering your committee’s work, and reflecting on the project as a way to learn about recent US history. Due on or before the day of your final exam.

**student learning outcomes (SLOs)** by the end of this course, students will be able to...

Identify and explain major developments and events from the recent American past

Distinguish between and appropriately analyze primary and secondary historical sources

Defly switch gears into historical thinking, employing concepts such as chronology, contingency, causality, pastness, sourcing, and empathy

Create their own living sense of the past and connect it to your own experience, i.e. to perceive themselves as embedded in webs of history

Decipher and join ongoing scholarly arguments about the past

*See the course website for full details about HI 203’s course SLOs*



## Apollo 11 Liftoff

July 16, 1969

Between the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in 1957 and the launch of the Saturn 5 rocket carrying the Apollo 11 moon mission in 1969, the US had undertaken a massive public investment in education, science, research and development to achieve the national goal of taking astronauts safely to the moon and back.

What might policymakers and leaders argue is a comparable goal for our time?

## disability accommodations

If you have a documented disability (learning or otherwise), and you need a reasonable accommodation made for you in this course, please consult with me immediately at the outset of the course so we can design a solution that will help you be successful in the class.

## office hours & contact

My office is Sullivan 327-D and my phone extension is x8688. I hold regularly scheduled office hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. See the “Prof Info” tab on the course website for details and times. Email ([thangen@worchester.edu](mailto:thangen@worchester.edu)) is my preferred mode of contact, though be patient on nights/weekends if I don’t reply immediately.

## Some fine print & things to remember

**Regarding plagiarism:** On papers and exams, doing your own work is absolutely essential. In ALL papers, you **must** cite the sources of any information, quotations or ideas which are not your own work, using standard citation styles (Chicago Style). Let me be very clear. You cannot clip and paste text from the internet into your papers and pass it off as your own writing. You cannot turn in a paper someone else has written or that you have bought online. Plagiarized work or exam cheating will automatically get a zero on the assignment and may cause you to fail the class, at my discretion.

**I take such violations very seriously.** Please familiarize yourself with and follow the college policy on Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

**Technology policy:** We will be busy in every class session, and we don’t need any technological distractions. Silence your cell phones before you enter the classroom. If you choose to bring a laptop to class, I expect that you will be using it **only** for taking notes, accessing course documents, or as a resource during group work and Congressional simulation days. Do not use your laptop in class to surf the internet, check your email, update your Facebook status, etc.



## Nixon Resigns

President Nixon, resigning office on August 8, 1974 after the Watergate investigation and subsequent threat of impeachment.

# syllabus & course schedule

**MO = Moving On** (unless otherwise noted, this book can stay @ home)

**HOT = History of Our Time**

(you should bring this one to class when its chapters are assigned)

Date	#	Topic/ Reading
W 1/22	1	Course Intro /
F 1/24	2	The US in 1945 / MO 1
<b>M 1/27</b>	3	The Atomic Age / HOT 1
W 1/29	4	Wars Cold, Hot and Political / MO 2-3
F 1/31	5	<b>Congress Day #1</b> (Committee Assignments)
<b>M 2/3</b>	6	The Affluent Society / MO 4 + HOT 2
W 2/5	7	<b>Exam #1 (MO 1-4 and HOT 1-2)</b>
F 2/7	8	<b>Congress Day #2</b>
<b>M 2/10</b>	9	Consumer Culture / MO 5
W 2/12	10	1950s Men & Women / Evans "Cold War and Feminine Mystique" (PDF)
F 2/14	11	<b>Congress Day #3</b>
<b>M 2/17</b>		<i>No School, President's Day</i>
W 2/19	12	Age of Consensus / MO 6
F 2/21	13	Age of Consensus: What, Are You Kidding Me? / HOT 3
<b>M 2/24</b>	14	New Frontiers and Great Society / MO 7-8 up to p. 133
W 2/26	15	Vietnam / MO 8 from p. 133 to end of chapter + HOT 4
F 2/28	16	<b>Congress Day #4</b>
<b>M 3/3</b>	17	Rebellion and Counterculture / MO 9 + HOT 5
W 3/5	18	The 1960s in Review
F 3/7	19	<b>Exam #2 (MO 5-9 and HOT 3-5)</b>
<b>M 3/10</b>	20	America Under Nixon; Watergate / MO 10 + HOT 6
W 3/12	21	Nixon and the World / MO 11
F 3/14	22	<b>Congress Day #5</b>
3/15 - 3/23		<i>Spring Break</i>
<b>M 3/24</b>	23	Era of Limits: Interpreting the 1970s / MO 12 + HOT 7
W 3/26	24	Social and Cultural Transformations of the 1970s / MO 13
F 3/28	25	<b>Congress Day #6</b>
<b>M 3/31</b>	26	The Reagan Years, New Conservatism / MO 14 + HOT 8

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Date	#	Topic/ Reading
W 4/2	27	<b>Exam #3 (MO 10-14 and HOT 6-8)</b>
F 4/4	28	<b>Peer Review Day - Bring Research Paper Draft to class</b>
<b>M 4/7</b>	29	Right, Left, Liberal, Conservative / Reading TBA
W 4/9	30	Film Day: <i>The Eyes of Tammy Faye</i> <b>Research Paper Due</b>
F 4/11	31	No Class (Prof. H out of town) - <i>Congress Groups Should Meet on their Own for a Work Session</i>
<b>M 4/14</b>	32	1980s Foreign Policy / MO 15
W 4/16	33	Social Tensions and Culture Wars / MO 16
F 4/18	34	<b>Congress Day #7</b>
<i>M 4/21 No School, Patriot's Day</i>		
W 4/23	35	<b>Your Bill is Due - Bill Workshop Day</b> (No assigned reading)
F 4/25	36	<b>Congress Day #8</b>
<b>M 4/28</b>	37	Post-Cold-War America and the World / MO 17 + HOT 9
W 4/30	38	America and Americans in the New Millennium / MO 18 + HOT 10
F 5/2	39	<b>Congress Day #9</b>
<b>M 5/5</b>	40	Epilogue: History in Our Time / MO 19 - <b>Bring a document to class for discussion</b>
M 5/14		<b>Exam #4 at 8:30 am (MO 15-19 and HOT 9-10) - Congress Paper Due</b>

## grading scale

Attendance & Participation	20%
Discussion Leading / Discussion Questions / Oral Components	5%
Exams (lowest is dropped) - 2/5, 3/7, 4/2, 5/14 @ 10% each	30%
Research Paper - Topic 3/10, Draft 4/4, Final Draft 4/9	15%
Congressional Simulation - Preparation & Participation	15%
Committee Wiki (GROUP grade)	10%
Congressional Paper/ Course Reflection - due 5/7	5%
TOTAL	100%

last updated 1/9/2014