Prof. Eduardo Canedo
Email: eduardo.canedo@uconn.edu
Office Hours: Wood Hall 224, Tues. &
Thurs., 10-11 a.m. & by appointment

University of Connecticut
Fall 2014

HIST 3519 CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

Tues. & Thurs., 12:30 - 1:45 pm
Wood Hall 4B

This course offers an overview of American politics, society, and economy from 1973 through the present. Characterized as the *Age of Fracture* by historian Daniel Rodgers, the past four decades of American life have witnessed the fragmentation of racial and gender identities, dramatic fluctuations between prosperity and economic crisis, the intensification of partisanship alongside widespread political apathy, and profound uncertainty over the role of the United States in world affairs. As we examine these turbulent years, we will identify key changes and continuities in the American experience. We will also consider the challenges and rewards of thinking historically about the recent past and present.

Participation (20% of course grade). Your participation grade will be assessed on the quality and frequency of your contribution to in-class discussion. This, in turn, relies on the careful reading of assigned materials ahead of class meetings.

Papers (40%). You have two options for fulfilling this component of the course. Consult the course website for more information (including due dates). You must email Prof. Canedo by September 12, 12:30 p.m., to commit to either option #1 or option #2.

> Option #1: Write three short papers (4-6 pages each) based on assigned course readings. No outside reading is expected. At least one paper must be submitted before and after the midterm exam.
>
> Option #2: Write one longer research paper (10-13 pages) that explores a particular event, individual, organization, or theme related to the course by examining outside sources and scholarship.

Midterm Exam (15%). The midterm exam will consist of three short-answer identifications and one lengthier essay question. One week before the exam, you will be given three possible essay questions, of which one will appear on the actual exam. Though you will not have advance notice of possible short-answer IDs, you will be able to select the IDs you wish to write on from a list that appears on the exam.

Final Exam (25%). The final exam will follow the same format as the midterm exam, except that there will be four IDs and two essay questions (one of these will be cumulative and the other will cover material from the second half of the term). As with the midterm exam, you will be given possible essay questions one week ahead of the final exam.

Readings. The following books are available for purchase at the Co-op bookstore and are on reserve at Babbidge Library:

> Ben Hamper, *Rivethead: Tales from the Assembly Line* (1992).
> Larry Kramer, *The Normal Heart* (1985).

James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (2004).

All additional readings will be available on our HuskyCT course website. These readings are marked with an asterisk (*) in the course schedule below.

Academic Integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are the gravest violations of academic conduct. They will be punished to the fullest extent possible, including failure in the course. Plagiarism consists of reproducing or utilizing ideas or text from other sources without proper attribution. For more information, see http://www.plagiarism.org and http://www.community.uconn.edu/student_code.html.

Accessibility. To request accommodations for a disability you must first contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (room 204 of the Wilbur Cross Building; http://www.csd.uconn.edu). You must have the appropriate forms from this office before we can arrange accommodations.

SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on the course website.

WEEK 1
8/27: America at the Crossroads
8/29: Watergate

WEEK 2
9/3: Busing & Affirmative Action
9/5: Vietnam Syndrome
James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans* (2004), Introduction, 1-78.

WEEK 3
9/10: Feminism & Sexual Liberation
* Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time* (1999), excerpt.
9/12: The Religious Right & the Politics of Family
* Phyllis Schlafly, *The Power of the Positive Woman* (1977), excerpt.

WEEK 4
9/17: Environmentalism
* Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia* (1975), excerpt.
9/19: Stagflation & the Tax Revolt
* Simon Hall, "The Tax Revolt," from *American Patriotism, American Protest* (2011).

WEEK 5
9/24: Deindustrialization & Urban Crisis
Ben Hamper, *Rivethead* (1991), 1-14, 26-116, 143-170.
9/26: Free Enterprise, Free Markets
* Lewis Powell, "Attack on American Free Enterprise System," Confidential Memorandum to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, August 23, 1971.
* Ralph Nader, Introduction to *The Monopoly Makers: Ralph Nader's Study Group Report on Regulation and Competition* (1973).

WEEK 6
10/1: Reagan Revolution
James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans* (2004), 79-149.
10/3: Wall Street
* Michael Lewis, *Liar's Poker* (1989), excerpt.

WEEK 7
10/8: From Hippie to Yuppie
* Tom Wolfe, "The 'Me' Decade and the Third Great Awakening," *New York*, August 23, 1976.
* Hendrik Hertzberg, "The Short Happy Life of the American Yuppie," *Esquire*, February 1988.
10/10: **MIDTERM EXAM**

WEEK 8
10/15: War on Crime, War on Drugs
10/17: The AIDS Crisis
Larry Kramer, *The Normal Heart* (1985).

WEEK 9
10/22: The End of the Cold War
James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans* (2004), 150-197.
10/24: New World Order
James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans* (2004), 198-233.

WEEK 10
10/29: Clinton's Third Way
10/31: Culture Wars
* Mike Wallace, "The Battle of the Enola Gay" from *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (1996).

WEEK 11
11/5: Globalization
* Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999), excerpt.
11/7: Dot-com Boom & Bust
* Roger Lowenstein, *Origins of the Crash* (2004), excerpt.

WEEK 12
11/12: The Election of 2000 to 9/11
11/14: Wars in Afghanistan & Iraq
James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans* (2004), 234-372.

WEEK 13
11/19: Financial Excess
* George Packer, *The Unwinding* (2013), excerpt #1.
11/21: Crash & Bailout
* George Packer, *The Unwinding* (2013), excerpt #2.

11/26: *NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK*
11/28: *NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK*

WEEK 14

12/3: Obama's Hope & Change

* Lawrence R. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol, "Hard-Fought Legacy: Obama, Congressional Democrats, and the Struggle for Comprehensive Health Care Reform," from *Reaching for a New Deal* (2011).

12/5: Latino Immigration

* Roberto G. Gonzales, "Left Out but Not Shut Down: Political Activism and the Undocumented Student Movement," *Northwestern Journal of Law & Social Policy* (Spring 2008).

FINAL EXAM: to be confirmed later in the term.