

SYLLABUS

RLST 5820, sec. 001
The Sixties: Religion, Culture, and Politics

Spring, 2008
Prof. Ira Chernus

INTRODUCTION

The course will focus primarily on the values, ideas, and sentiments of the 1960s counterculture. A lot of the reading will be a blend of political and psychological and social theory, which was central to the self-understanding of the counterculture. It will feel more like intellectual history than anything else. Religion issues will be highlighted throughout, including the growing influence of “Eastern religions” and changing interpretations of Christianity. But the main goal will be to see how the popular books of the counterculture created a new “myth” that served as an ideal for social change. However the course will NOT focus on social or political history -- communes, sexual liberation, racial conflict, etc. -- although those issues will get some consideration, especially how the new values and ideas impacted the blending of the peace movement and counterculture.

Graduate students will do additional reading on the ‘60s and a research project to suit the individual student’s academic program.

The SASR component will involve a study of four major theorists of religion who were active as professors or students at the University of Chicago in the late 1960s and early 1970s: Mircea Eliade, Charles Long, Jonathan Z. Smith, and Bruce Lincoln. We will examine how the theories of each reflects different aspects of the new political, social, and spiritual movements of the ‘60s, as a case study in understanding how all theory is rooted in and shaped by the cultural trends of the era in which emerges.

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday 2:00 - 3:00 and Wednesday 1:00 - 2:00 or by appointment, in HUMN 284
phone: 492-6169; email: chernus@colorado.edu

I will be glad to make appropriate accommodations for any student with any kind of special needs for enhancing your education.

REQUIRED READINGS

Title: *The Sixties* Author: Todd Gitlin

Title: *I Have A Dream* Author: Martin Luther King, Jr., ed. James M. Washington

Title: *Steppenwolf* Author: Herman Hesse

Title: *Journey to the East* Author: Herman Hesse

Title: *The Making of a Counterculture* Author: Theodore Roszak

Title: *The Wisdom of Insecurity* Author: Alan Watts

Title: *The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are* Author: Alan Watts

Title: *Eros and Civilization* Author: Herbert Marcuse

Title: *Love's Body* Author: Norman O. Brown

Title: *Leaves of Grass* Author: Walt Whitman

Title: *The Sacred and the Profane* Author: Mircea Eliade

Title: *Significations* Author: Charles Long

Title: *Death, War, and Sacrifice* Author: Bruce Lincoln

The required books are available at the LEFTHAND BOOKSTORE, 1200 Pearl Street (just east of Broadway, south side of mall, lower level). They are usually open 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM Monday through Saturday and noon - 6:00 PM Sunday; call 443-8252 to check exact hours.

Some of the readings are on reserve in Norlin Library.

In addition to these books, there will be some web-based reading. You will find links to all of this reading in the online syllabus: <http://www.colorado.edu/ReligiousStudies/chernus/sixties/index.htm>.

Please rely on the online syllabus, rather than this print version, because some of the readings are accessible only from the online syllabus, and the syllabus may change during the course.

SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

Jan. 23: THE 1950s BACKGROUND

GITLIN 1 - 77; Godfrey Hodgson, "[The Ideology of the Liberal Consensus](#)" (from *America in Our Time*, middle of 74 - top of 90 (= 13));

Allen Ginsberg, "[Howl](#)" and "[Footnote to Howl](#)"; you can listen to part of "Howl" at <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/singlePoem.do?poemId=1550>;

Allen Ginsberg, "[America](#)," "[Sunflower Sutra](#)," "[A Supermarket in California](#)"

Jan. 30: THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE EARLY WHITE RADICALS

GITLIN 81 - 192;

Ira Chernus, "[Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)"; KING, *I Have A Dream*;

The Port Huron Statement

http://lists.village.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html

(the condensed version is "[selections from The Port Huron Statement](#)")

Feb. 6: THE NATURE OF BOURGEOIS SOCIETY

ROSZAK, *The Making of a Counterculture*, Preface, Chapters I and VII, Appendix ;

Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven*, Chapter 2: "In the House of the Lord" (Norlin reserve or e-book: see <http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/how/ebooks.htm> for instructions on accessing e-book)

Feb. 13: BEYOND THE BOURGEOIS SELF

HESSE, *Steppenwolf* and *Journey to the East*

Feb. 20: THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ALTERNATIVE

WATTS, *The Book*, Chapters 1 - 3; WATTS, *Wisdom of Insecurity*, Chapters I - IV;

Alan Watts, "[Psychedelics and Religious Experience](#)" (*The California Law Review*, January, 1968)

Feb. 27: THE WESTERN BUDDHIST ALTERNATIVE

WATTS, *The Book*, Chapters 4 - 6; WATTS, *Wisdom of Insecurity*, Chapters V - IX; ROSZAK, *The Making of a Counterculture*, Chapters II and IV

Mar. 5: FREUD AND MARX

Ira Chernus, "[Herbert Marcuse: A Critique of Consumer Society](#)";

MARCUSE, *Eros and Civilization*, Introduction and chapters 1 - 5;

"[SUMMARY OF NORMAN O. BROWN, LIFE AGAINST DEATH](#)"

BROWN, *Love's Body*, Chapters I - VII

Mar. 12: FREUD AND MARX

MARCUSE, *Eros and Civilization*, chapters 6 - 11;

BROWN, *Love's Body*, Chapters VIII - XVI

Mar. 19: *Woodstock* (We will watch the film on Tuesday, March 18, 6 - 10 PM, place to be announced.)

ROSZAK, *The Making of a Counterculture* Chapter III;

Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven*, Chapter 3, "The New Spiritual Freedom"

Chernus, "[Religion as a Cultural System: The Theory of Clifford Geertz](#)"; Clifford Geertz, "[Religion as a Cultural System](#)"

Apr. 2: RELIGIOUS STUDIES

TILLICH, *Dynamics of Faith*;

ELIADE, *The Sacred and the Profane*; Mircea Eliade, "[Waiting for the Dawn](#)"; Mircea Eliade, "[Literature and Fantasy](#)"

Ira Chernus, "[The Neurosis of Modernity](#)," 47 - 56 and "[The Meaning of the End of the World](#)," 193 - 203 (from *Nuclear Madness*)

Apr. 9: DRUGGIES, SHAMANS, AND CHRISTIANS

ROSZAK, *The Making of a Counterculture*, Chapters V and VIII;

"[Toward a Hidden God: Is God Dead?](#)", *Time Magazine*, April 8, 1966

Walt Whitman (from *Leaves of Grass*) read at least: "Song of Myself," "I Sing the Body Electric," "Song of the Open Road," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking," "Passage to India" (Full online text of *Leaves of Grass* is at <http://www.princeton.edu/~batke/logr/>)

(Optional reading: Ira Chernus, "[Henry David Thoreau](#)," Thoreau, *Walden*, chapter 2, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," <http://eserver.org/thoreau/walden02.html>)

Bob Dylan (read and listen):

"Gates of Eden" <http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/gates.html>,

"Ballad of a Thin Man" <http://bobdylan.com/songs/thinman.html>,

"Subterranean Homesick Blues" <http://bobdylan.com/songs/subterranean.html>,

"It's Alright Ma" <http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/itsalright.html>,

"Like a Rolling Stone" <http://bobdylan.com/songs/rolling.html>,

"Visions of Johanna" <http://bobdylan.com/songs/visions.html>

LONG, *Significations*, read at least Chapters 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11

Apr. 16: THE MOVEMENT: TO CHICAGO

GITLIN 195 - 260, 285 - top of 327 (261 - 282, 327 - 338 optional)

Jonathan Z. Smith, "[When the Chips Are Down](#)," "[The Wobbling Pivot](#)," "[Map Is Not Territory](#)," "[A Pearl of Great Price and a Cargo of Yams](#),"

"[The Bare Facts of Ritual](#)," "[The Unknown God](#)"

Apr. 23: THE MOVEMENT: BEYOND CHICAGO

GITLIN middle of 338 - 380, 409 - 438 (bottom of 380 - 408 optional)

LINCOLN, *Death, War, and Sacrifice* (read at least Foreword, Preface, chapters 1, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20); "[Introduction](#)" (from *Discourse and the Construction of Society*)

Apr. 30: STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Everyone is responsible for coming to class well prepared to discuss the reading.
2. You will write three reflection papers of about four pages each. The paper will discuss one of the daily reading assignments. You are not to summarize the day's reading. You are to identify one interesting question arising from the reading. State the question clearly, then give your answer and your reasons for your answer in a logical argument. You should also prepare a brief (1 page) summary of your paper, to be presented in class. (A sign-up sheet will be circulated for presentations.)
3. A mid-term essay exam will be due on March 19.
4. A book review of any book related to the course material, to be submitted any time during the semester.

5. The major writing responsibility is a research paper analyzing one specific topic relevant to the course material.

DEADLINES for research project:

February 13: research topic approved

March 12: preliminary outline and bibliography

April 18: rough draft

May 7: final paper due