

Dr. Todd Boyd

CTCS 510: *1970s America*

Wednesdays 1:00-3:50 & 4:00-6:50/SCA 216/Fall 2015

The 1970s looms as one of the most misunderstood decades in recent American history. Often dismissed as "The Me Decade" or worse, historical memory has tended to undervalue this era largely due to its placement between the ubiquitous images of a more radical 1960s and the dawn of a new conservatism linked with Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. This course looks to reconsider the 1970s and regards the decade as a significant historical period where a cultural foundation was laid that continues to influence contemporary society.

This course offers a detailed cultural history of one of the most spectacular, complicated, contradictory, yet utterly influential decades in recent memory. Set between images of the "liberal 60s" and the "conservative 80s," the 1970s served an important transitional role in helping to reposition America as the nation began to shift from an industrial economy to a society based on technology and information. The corresponding social and economic shifts were often most evident in areas of culture and politics.

*1970s America* looks to assess these social, cultural, and political shifts in an effort to rectify previous misunderstandings about the era and to offer a working definition of the decade as it pertains to contemporary American identity. In this regard, the course will rely on multiple examples from film, television, music, as well as politics, along with an analysis of other social and cultural events from the era to assist in defining and explaining such a confounding, though utterly significant decade. Topics of discussion will revolve around figures/events such as the Manson murders, the kidnapping of heiress Patty Hearst, Jim Jones and the People's Temple, the Roman Polanski case, Vietnam, Nixon and Watergate, Muhammad Ali, Angela Davis, Black Panther Party, Weather Underground, "New Hollywood," "Blaxploitation," among other examples.

Screenings:

8/26 *Easy Riders*, Dennis Hopper (1969)

9/2 *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, Stanley Nelson (2015)

9/2 *The Weather Underground*, Sam Green and Bill Siegel (2002)

9/9 *The Godfather*, Francis Ford Coppola (1972)

9/16 *Taxi Driver*, Martin Scorsese (1976)

9/23 *Guerilla: The Taking of Patty Hearst*, Robert Stone (2004)

9/23 *Free Angela and All Political Prisoners*, Shola Lynch (2012)

9/30 *Jonestown: The Life and Death of People's Temple*, Stanley Nelson (2006)

9/30 *Nixon By Nixon: In His Own Words*, Peter Kunhardt (2014)

10/7 *All the President's Men*, Alan J. Pakula (1976)

10/14 *The Spook Who Sat By the Door*, Sam Greenlee (1973)

10/21 *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*, Marina Zenovich (2008)

10/21 *Inside Deep Throat*, Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato (2005)

10/28 *When We Were Kings*, Leon Gast (1996)

10/28 *No No: A Dockumentary*, Jeff Radice (2014)

11/4 *Wattstax*, Mel Stuart (1973)

11/4 *Richard Pryor: Icon* (2014)

11/11 *Apocalypse Now*, Francis Ford Coppola (1979)

11/18 *Raging Bull*, Martin Scorsese (1980)

11/25 Thanksgiving Break

12/2 *The Last Days of Vietnam*, Rory Kennedy (2014)

Readings:

Berkowitz, Edward, D. *Something Happened: A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Biskand, Peter. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.

Hine, Thomas. *The Great Funk: Falling Apart and Coming Together (on a Shag Rug) in the Seventies*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

Jenkins, Philip. *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press USA, 2006.

Killen, Andreas. *1973 Nervous Breakdown: Watergate, Warhol, and the Birth of Post-Sixties America*. New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2006.

Perlstein, Rick. *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*. New York: Scribner, 2008.