The United States was a nation born in rebellion, an experience that has been the wellspring of democratic revitalization ever since. Yet despite this tradition, American elites quickly developed an aversion to movements that engaged in rebellion or individuals who challenged the status quo. When rebellion threatened fundamental social and political change, when it raised questions of class division and the inequitable distribution of wealth—in short, when it questioned institutions or practices that seemed to prevent the realization of the democratic promise—its advocates often found themselves the targets of state repression or unofficial persecution. We will explore this historical dynamic and consider those moments when rebellion challenged the dominant consensus. Equally important, we will ask the question: what impact did dissent have? What social or political legacy did it leave? No less significant is how frequently repression has followed dissent. This, too, is a key theme of the course. We seek to understand the intellectual content of this tradition of resistance.

Let’s be clear about something from the beginning: the success of this class depends largely on your willingness to read thoughtfully, participate actively, and take detailed notes. If you miss class and ignore readings, you can expect disappointing results. It really is that simple. The good news is you know exactly what you need to do in order to succeed. Even better, I’m sincerely interested in seeing you succeed. Let’s work together to achieve that goal.

**Required Readings**

Stanley Walker, *The Night Club Era*

Kathleen M. Barry, *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants*

Harry Fisher, *Comrades: Tales of a Brigadista in the Spanish Civil War*

**Course requirements**

**Essay:** 25%. Based on Kathleen Barry’s *Femininity in Flight*. It should also range between 8-10 pages and should include at least three additional secondary sources. Each should include proper citations (footnotes or endnotes acceptable, Chicago Manual of Style preferred.) Analyze Barry’s book, explaining its major arguments and assessing its historiographical significance. Use at least three additional sources to expand on some aspect or period that it considers. For example, you might choose to utilize works by Dorothy Sue Cobble and Alice Kessler-Harris to examine how women have used labor unions to achieve social mobility and greater equality. Conversely, you might consider books and articles by David Allyn, Elaine Tyler May, Joanne Meyerowitz, or Beth Bailey to explain challenges to sexual norms and expectations in the 1960s. You might also look at books by Judith Stein and Jefferson Cowie to explain how economic and political change obstructed the efforts of working people, men and women, to achieve justice in the workplace. These are just a few suggestions. Key is: understand the book first; then, use the ancillary sources to expand on some important question it raises or the historical context in which the book is set (and there is more than one.)

**Midterm test, 15%**. (Please note: we will devote a section of the midterm test to Walker’s *The Nightclub Era.*)
**Book commentary:** 15%. On Harry Fisher’s *Comrades*. Focus on the connections that he makes between America in the 1930s and the anti-fascist cause in Spain. Should be 3-4 pages in length.

**Class participation:** 15%. This is based on class attendance, ancillary writing assignments such as lecture and reading summaries, and active participation in class discussions which demonstrate your thoughtful consideration of assigned texts. The remaining portion will be determined by informal presentations and film discussions. Please note also: computers should be used for note taking only; extracurricular use of the computer is not permitted and will not be tolerated.

**Final exam:** 30%. This will cover most of what we have learned, with a few exceptions. *It will rely extensively on class lectures and discussions,* and will take place during the regular exam schedule.

**Assignment due dates and percentages**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm test, 15%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tuesday, October 8th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book commentary 15%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Monday, October 28th (during office hours)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay, 25%</td>
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<td>Friday, November 15th (during office hours)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam 30%</td>
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<td>Exam schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation, 15%</td>
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**Course reading schedule:**
Please note: the links to the electronic versions of readings will be available via Acorn. Some readings will be available only on reserve in the library. Please note: the professor reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments to the reading schedule.

**September 5:** Welcome and course introduction. The tremors of the Gilded Age and its social ramifications; popular movements and dissident intellectuals. Required reading: *Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony, 1916*, pgs. 17-73.

**September 10, 12:** The Industrial Workers of the World, working-class revolt in urban America, mineworkers and companies, dissent and repression during wartime. Required reading: Stephen Burwood, “Debsian Socialism Through a Transnational Lens,” excerpt from “Reds.”


**September 24, 26:** A wave of repression and the rural campaign to take back urban America. Required Readings: Stanley Walker, *The Nightclub Era*, introduction, chapters one-fve (Tuesday); Michael Cowen, “‘The Ku Klux Government’: Vigilantism, Lynching, and the Repression of the IWW”; film excerpt from “Reds.”

**October 1, 3:** Marcus Garvey, the Harlem Renaissance, and the “new negro”; Women and the search for freedom beyond the ballot box; the Algonquin Round Table, the New Yorker,

**October 8, 10:** the turbulent decade—the unemployed organize; labor resurgent, communists and socialists move into the mainstream. Required Reading: Annelise Orleck, “We Are That Mythical Thing Called the Public: Militant Housewives During the Great Depression”; “Chicago and the Little Steel Strike,” (Tuesday); Harry Fisher, *Comrades*, chapters one-seven, film: “Seeing Red” (Thursday.)

**October 15, 17:** The anticommunist deluge—repression and the drive for conformity in postwar America. Required Reading: Fisher, *Comrades*, chapters eight-twelve and epilogue (Tuesday); Landon Storrs, “Left-Feminism, the Consumer Movement, and Red Scare Politics in the United States, 1935-1960.”


**October 29, 31:** The Perils and Possibilities of Change: focus on women, labor, and the challenge to gender and class barriers in mid-century America. Readings: Barry, *Femininity in Flight*, chapter one-four (Tuesday); five-seven and epilogue (Thursday)


**November 12, 14:** The dislocations of America in the age of economic crisis; the Nixon crusade for conformity; the rise of conservatism, the one-sided class war of the 1980s. Readings: Jefferson Cowie, “Dead Man's Town: "Born in the U.S.A.," Social History, and Working-Class Identity.”

**November 19, 21:** The re-discovery of economic inequality: anti-globalization and social protests in the 1990s. Mattson, *Rebels All*, chapter 3 and conclusion.

**November 26, 28:** Alternative music in the age of corporate downsizing and cultural exhaustion. Readings: Harold Meyerson, “If Labor Dies, What’s Next?”; Michael Dennis, “American Youth Activism in the 1990s,” (Thursday.)

**December 3:** Dissent in the age of the National Security State.

*If you are a students with a documented disability who anticipates needing accommodations in this course, please inform me after you meet Jill Davies or Kathy O'Rourke in Disability Access Services, Student Resource Centre, lower floor of the Old SUB (Old Student Union Building). Their contact information is jill.davies@acadiau.ca<mailto:jill.davies@acadiau.ca> 585-1127 or disability.access@acadiau.ca<mailto:disability.access@acadiau.ca> 585-1823*