

Missouri Western State College, Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism  
Honors 395  
The Sixties: A Slum of a Decade?

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Office Hours: 9:30-11:00 am TR; 2:00 -4: 00 pm Thursday and by  
appointment

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### **Required Texts**

*Takin' It to the Streets*-Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, ed.

*Coming of Age in Mississippi*-Anne Moody

*Slaughterhouse Five*-Kurt Vonnegut

*Stories Done*-Mikal Gilmore

*Portable Sixties Reader*-Ann Charters, ed.

### **Recommended:**

*The Counterculture Reader*-E. A. Swingrover

### **The Journey**

The Sixties were a time of great social and political change; they also were one of the most turbulent times in American History. At the end of the decade. Richard Rovere wrote an article entitled "The Sixties: This Slum of a Decade," which was published in *The NY Times*. The goal of this class is to investigate the idea that the new changes and the culture wrought by this decade created a "slum." Your final in this class will be to support or deny this claim by using specifics from the decade itself. There is no right or wrong answer; you just need to support your argument.

### **Grading Criteria**

Grades will come from the following. Values are approximate, and I reserve the right to alter some assignments.

Journals/journal reviews: 15%

*Stories* Presentation and group work: 15%

Topic Presentation: 15%

Individual paper: 20%

Individual group evaluation: 5%  
Attendance/Participation: 10%  
Final: 20%

*Journals:* We will keep active reading journals. As a standard rule, you should write a minimum one-page entry each week. Keep your journal current at all times. I will not tell you in advance when I will collect or record the entries but will assume that you complete all on time. When I do collect or record entries, or ask you to share them with the class, **you cannot add to them or make them up.** I also may ask you to write in your journals in class, so bring them everyday. Journaling provides practice in applying the skills we are trying to hone in this class, and they may provide prompts for discussion and writing, which in turn will lead you to topics and development of your ideas, so failure to write them may result in lower grades and inferior work.

*Presentations:* Each student will participate in two presentations. One presentation will be a group presentation (groups must consist of between 2-4 people) and will cover one of the sections in the book *Stories Told*. It is up to the group as to how to present the material and what to focus on. The presentations will be conducted in accordance with when the topic fits in the class discussion. Each student will choose the topic of the second presentation from the categories of the book *Takin' It To the Streets* that we DO NOT discuss in class. Each student will choose a specific event/idea and create a question that s/he will answer in the paper. All the students presenting on a specific area will work together to present a synopsis of the topic and their papers to the class. In essence, the group will be teaching the class about its subject. The presentations will be given as a group, but each student will write a paper on his individual topic. In short, each student in the group will become an expert of sorts on his/her chosen topic within the broader subject. These papers are due April 20; all presentations must be completed by April 27, the last day of class.

*Midterm grades:* I submit a "B" for students who have over 90% of the points at midterm, no attendance problems, and all work complete and exceptional; a "C" for students whose work is complete and passing and whose absences are below the limit; a "D" for students whose work is complete but not acceptable or who have attendance problems. I submit an "F" for students whose work is incomplete or unacceptable and/or who have exceeded the absence limit.

## **Attendance, Tardies, Participation**

In addition to the above, attendance and participation will influence your final grade.

*Attendance:* Your constant presence is mandatory for your success. It is imperative since this class meets on once a week. Note most assignments cannot be handed in late, so being absent means losing points. Missing excessive classes, deadlines, and assignments will result in substantially lower grades, in many cases to the point of failure.

An excused absence (participating in a MWSU activity) merely means you may make arrangements to hand in your work at a prearranged time. It does not excuse you from any work or from communicating with the teacher in advance about the absence.

Excessive (more than two) tardies or leaving early disrupt our discussion and will may result in me asking you to leave the class. Two tardies or early exits will equal an absence.

If you do miss, do not expect me to rehash the class. Also, please do not ask me if we "did anything." This question irritates me. If you must be absent, it is your responsibility to find out what we did. Be sure to have a buddy whom you can contact to find out what we did in class. Ask a friend to pick up any handouts for you.

**Regardless of the reason for your absences, or if you contact me or not, you are responsible for all work no matter whether you are in class or not.**

Note the INSTITUTIONAL ATTENDANCE POLICY: In order to improve student learning as well as to achieve compliance with federal financial aid policies, Western has a mandatory attendance policy for all 100-level and 200-level classes. (Excused absences are those in which the student is serving as a representative of the college and provides written proof of doing so from the faculty/staff supervisor prior to the event.) The maximum number of unexcused absences allowed for a Tues. / Thurs. class before the midterm report ( March

12) is THREE (3). With the 4th absence, I must report you to the Registrar's Office and you will be automatically withdrawn from this class. The Financial Aid Office will then reduce your financial aid as appropriate.

Since we meet only once a week, I will consider **more than two** absences a violation of the above policy.

*Participation:* A student is participating when s/he completes all the writing assignments, presentations, attends class regularly, attends and comments on classmates' presentations, and can discuss and write about the readings in a thoughtful and timely manner. Just showing up is not participating. As you might suspect, the topics build on each other in this class, so making connections is an important part of the class. As described above, weekly journaling, brief, in-class writings and unannounced quizzes about the assigned readings and videos are an important part of participation. Most of these will receive a plus or minus mark, but some will receive points. You have signed up for a course of instruction and not just an independent study; coming to class enables this goal. Coming to class allows you to:

1. learn what others think about readings
2. have other students listen and comment on what you have to say face to face.
3. view videos or films selected for this course
4. receive help for papers, hear explanations for assignments, and ask questions

**Please Note:** If a student's grade is on the border, I will weigh factors such as effort, participation, attendance, and attitude to determine a final grade.

### **Late Work and Make-up work**

**It is nearly impossible to make up work in this class.** Class discussions cannot be recreated, nor can in-class writing or group work. If something should happen that prevents you from submitting your work on time, you must make arrangements with me **before** the paper is due, not afterwards. At this time, we will plan a date by

which the work will be completed. Should you fail to contact me, I will not accept the work. **Daily work, journal entries, or reflections will not be accepted late. Late work is anything that is not handed to me before or at the beginning of the class time it is due.** I do not accept work during or after class or in the hallway. I reserve the right to refuse any late work, and I most likely will unless the student has discussed the situation with me **prior** to the due date.

Often we may need to make changes, and even locations, so it is imperative that you keep in sync with the class. Excessive absences will prevent you doing so. You should note, however, that mere attendance does not mean you will pass the course. You must perform tasks adequately and show initiative in completing the course requirements.

If I should be unable to meet class, a secretary, fellow instructor, or a note on the classroom door will notify you. If possible, I also will communicate by campus email. Any assignments will be due upon my return.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is claiming another's words, writing structure, sounds, images, words, or ideas as your own. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and may result in your failing the assignment or the course or being suspended or dismissed from the college. Please note carefully the statement on plagiarism on the departmental website, found at <http://www2.mwsc.edu/eflj/plagiarism.html>

### **Classroom behavior**

I expect you to respect everyone in this class. Learning to read, think, and write well means exploring ideas. We will be discussing some volatile subject matter, and there will no doubt be people who have ideas different than yours. One of our goals is to learn to understand and respect different ideas. Remain open-minded; you may even change your own ideas. Understanding and developing ideas is a natural outcome of the listening, reading, and writing, and therefore of this class, and thus I consider these an accomplishment and evidence that you are becoming an educated and mature thinker, listener, reader, and writer which in turn will lead you to write an effective final in this class.

I also expect you to behave respectfully in class. This means: do not interrupt, walk in front of anyone who is talking, enter the room or a workshop late, or leave your seat or the room while class is in session

unless it is an emergency. It also means that you turn off cell phones, i-pods, i-phones, and any electronic devices before you enter the classroom, and that they remain off until you have exited the classroom. Likewise, texting or reading texts, even under your desk, is not appropriate.

### **Academic Support**

The Center for Academic Support, located in LRC 213, offers assistance with reading or with papers at any stage of the game. Contact the Center at 271-4624 or Coral Dawson, the Writing Director, at 271-4531. I highly encourage you to use this free service regardless of your abilities.

### **Important Note**

I reserve the right make changes in the syllabus or course schedule and assignments as necessary.

### **Beginning readings:**

For Jan. 26:

Read Rovere article "Slum of A Decade." Journal entry due for this article; be really to discuss its main thesis and how you feel about it as well as how it relates to anything in the film we watched on Jan 19. In *TTS*, read the Prologue on pp. 1-13 and begin War section on pp. 153-92. Write a journal entry for this material.