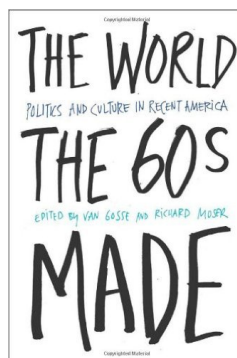
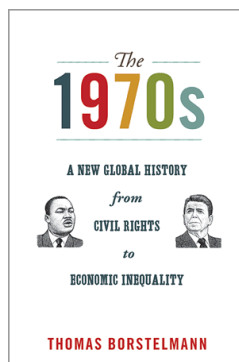


HIST 96.28: The American 1970s

Instructor: Bethany Moreton

This seminar is designed around a research challenge that has received considerable scholarly attention in recent years. While it is rare for actual events and historical processes to unfold according to calendar time—rare for a given decade adequately to contain a given history, in other words—the device can serve as a tool for isolating particular developments. The decade of the 1970s has traditionally been understood as a retreat from the public engagement and impassioned struggles of the 1960s, a moment when Americans gave up on changing the world and instead embraced the cultivation of the self. If the iconic moments of the sixties were the mobilizations against the war and official white supremacy, the seventies' best-known legacies are silly consumer fads like disco and pet rocks. Currently, however, historians are reassessing the 1970s as a decisive period when a new political economy took shape, new concepts of citizenship competed for influence, and new cultural forms emerged. By isolating the rough chronological coincidence of the end of the long economic boom, the ascendance of free-market values and institutions, and the repudiation of formal empires grounded in explicit white supremacy, for example, we can begin to ask useful questions about the relationships among these processes, and about the relationships between them and the social and cultural trends that mark a generational cohort with a shared sense of life's texture—to ask why the 1970s, and not the 1920s, say, produced the movie *Taxi Driver* and the punk album *Horses*, or to ask what changes in consciousness and social organization were enabled by the growth of women's sports, the invention of the VCR, or the occupation of Alcatraz. By shedding light on a significant incident, movement, art form, cultural phenomenon, debate, organization, or development of the era, you will contribute to this ongoing project of historical reassessment.

While each research paper will rely on its own source base compiled in consultation with the instructor and librarians and archivists, shared course materials include the following books, as well as additional scholarly articles, primary sources, documentaries, and music:



Offered: 17S: 2A; 18S: 2A