A preliminary and tentative syllabus, subject to change  
History 75700  
Aftermaths: World War, Postwar, Cold War  
Fall, 2015  
Mondays, 2-4  

“Math”: the old-English term for harvest. When the cutting is done and the field is barren, there arises a new growth, stunted, near deformed, but alive and reaching upwards for the light. This is the aftermath.

We shall together explore and investigate the violent transformations wrought by the Second World War and the attempts of Americans and Europeans to make sense of their recent pasts and begin the difficult, but necessary work of social reconstruction, economic reconversion, and political reintegration.

**Writing:** There may be a few brief writing assignments during the semester. My initial thought for final papers is to ask students to prepare and write a lecture in which they introduce advanced undergraduates to the issues, themes, and dilemmas associated with the study of the immediate postwar period. I may provide other options for a final project.

**Reading:** There will be common readings assigned each week (the first book listed). Each student will also, in the course of the semester, be asked to read and briefly report on at least two works of fiction, one memoir, and two films.

**Weekly assignments:**

**“Getting to Know You:” Introductions and Assignments**

August 31:  
No reading assignment, though students are advised to read one of the first two books listed for September 10.

**The War Ends, but Not the Suffering:**

September 10:  
Fiction: John Hersey, *Hiroshima*
Coming Home:

September 21:
Thomas Childers, *Soldier From the War Returning*. (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009) and/or
Alan Allport, *Demobbed: Coming Home after the Second World War*. (Yale, 2009)
FILM: *The Best Years of Our Lives*
MEMOIR: Henriette Roosenburg, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*

But You Can’t Go Home Again

September 28:
Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Aftermath of War* (Seagull Books, 2008), selections
MEMOIR: Primo Levi, *The Reawakening*
MEMOIR: Göran Rosenberg, *A Brief Stop on the Road from Auschwitz*

October 5:
FILM: *The Bicycle Thief*

Working Class Dreams? Nightmares?

October 19:
George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Illinois, 1994)

To the Suburbs

October 26:
Kevin Kruse, Thomas Sugrue, *The New Suburban History* (Chicago, 2006), selections
FICTION: Laura Hobson, *Gentlemen’s Agreement*

New York, New York in war and peace

November 2:
Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Aftermath of War* (Seagull Books, 2008), selectio
November 9:

**DOUBLE V**

November 16:
FICTION: Chester Himes, *If He Hollers, Let Him Go*

November 23:
FICTION: Ann Petry, *The Street*

**The Cold War Cometh**

November 30:
Arnold Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945-1953* (Stanford, 2002).
FILM: *The Third Man*

December 7:
Susan Carruthers, *Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape, and Brainwashing* (California, 2009)
FICTION: George Orwell, *1984*
FICTION: Albert Camus, *The Plague*

**Women in War and Postwar**

December 14:
FILM: *Brief Encounter*
FICTION: Graham Greene, *The End of the Affair*