WORLDS IN COLLISION: 1968 AND ITS CONTESTED LEGACY

This course seeks to complicate commonplaces about an unruly year that remains politically and socially radioactive. It seeks to apprehend what Greil Marcus calls the “moods of rage, excitement, loneliness, fatalism, desire” that buffeted Berkeley and the world in that turbulent year. A half-century later, its legacy is still not well understood. A more subtle sense of what a historical moment contains, as well as its unacknowledged victories and its hidden defeats, is needed. Perhaps such an autopsy won’t mean that the moment of exhausted possibilities is at hand.

Week 1: Monday, Sept. 24:
HELL NO, WE WON'T GO
The era of protest against the Vietnam War was unique; from it emerged a nationwide peace movement on a scale never before seen in American history. Americans took to the streets in record numbers, draft resistance grew, GIs rebelled on scores of bases and ships, some refused orders, significant peace candidates emerged and President Johnson, in the face of the Tet Offensive, was forced to renounce his reelection hopes because of a revolt within his own party in 1968, culminating in the police riot against protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The peace movement mushroomed, prompting a conservative backlash, and the Cold War consensus began to crack.

Week 2: Monday, Oct. 1
(SAY IT LOUD) I'M BLACK AND I'M PROUD
Frustration with the slow pace of civil rights legislation and the increasing gap in justice and equality saw the emergence of more militant organizations, especially the Black Panther Party. The party refused to go along with a narrow cultural nationalism, condemning those who believed, as the saying went, that political power grew out of the sleeve of a dashiki. Tension mounted with the campaign to free its co-founder, Huey P. Newton, charged with killing an Oakland policeman, and in the aftermath of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, the cops were ambushed by Eldridge Cleaver, the party's minister of information, and a cadre of Panthers, leading to the police killing of the party's youngest and first recruit, 17-year-old Bobby Hutton, as he sought to surrender.

Week 3: Monday, Oct. 8
SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL
As the contradictions in popular culture sharpened, and awareness of sexism within the New Left became widespread, a growing critique of patriarchy, misogyny, and the abuse of power generally, became widespread. Consciousness-raising groups were founded—among the earliest was a group in Berkeley. Adopted from a principle tenet of the civil rights movement to “tell it like it is,” these groups encouraged personal storytelling to spotlight sexism in the culture and the power of collective sharing helped to offer support and propose solutions for change. Ultimately, a challenge to race- and class-based critiques of domination emerged, often in tandem with the unabashed and unapologetic embrace of gay liberation and the Sapphic persuasion.
Week 4: Monday, October 15

KISS KISS, BANG BANG
The postwar neorealist films of Italy, the French New Wave of Godard and Truffaut, the cinema of Ingmar Bergman, the movies of revolutionary Cuba, upended the dominant Hollywood studio system, which began to sink into senescence and torpor as a new generation of independent filmmakers mounted an aesthetic and cultural revolt. From George Romero (Night of the Living Dead) to John Cassavetes (Faces) to Lindsay Anderson (If) to Peter Bogdanovich (Targets) to Tomas Gutierrez Alea (Memories of Underdevelopment), among many others, 1968 represented a hinge year in moviemaking and filmmaking. And Berkeley’s own Pauline Kael became its foremost chronicler with her appointment as the New Yorker’s chief film critic.

Week 5: Monday, Oct. 22

DANCE TO THE MUSIC
The explosion of the San Francisco Sound (the Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, Country Joe & the Fish, Creedence Clearwater Revival, the Loading Zone, Quicksilver Messenger Service, among others), the evolution of R&B—see Otis Redding’s 1968 “(Sittin’ On) the Dock of the Bay” and Sly and the Family Stone’s “Dance to the Music”—the continuing British Invasion (Cream's "Sunshine of My Love," the Rolling Stones’s "Street-Fighting Man,"and the Beatles's "Revolution"), provided the soundtrack to the era which continues to reverberate fifty years later.

Week 6: Monday, Oct. 29

BE REALISTIC: DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE
Throughout the world, upheaval was the order of the day: from New York to London, Paris to Prague, Mexico City to Tokyo, Berlin to Berkeley, the zeitgeist seemed to be one of extraordinary possibility. Bourgeois sensibilities were everywhere mocked as was solemnity; a spirit of ribald anarchy was in the air and traditional strictures governing postwar life began to fray. The search for authenticity was ubiquitous. Conventions fell. The nature of the drama that was engulfing whole societies became a subject for media frenzy and individual quest. Making history became an individual imperative and a mass intoxication. The personal became political and vice versa. Passivity and complacency were out; activism and participation were in. We will endeavor to tease out some lessons from a year whose many tumults and contradictions still lie buried beneath a mountain of cliches.
GUEST SPEAKERS

HELL NO, WE WON'T GO
Monday, Sept. 24:

Clara Bingham is the author, most recently, of *Witness to the Revolution: Radicals, Resisters, Vets, Hippies, and the Year America Lost Its Mind and Found Its Soul*. Her other books include *Class Action: The Landmark Case That Changed Sexual Harassment Law* and *Women on the Hill: Challenging the Culture of Congress*. She is a former *Newsweek* White House correspondent, and her writing has appeared in *Vanity Fair, Vogue, The Washington Monthly, Ms.* and other publications.


(SAY IT LOUD) I'M BLACK AND I'M PROUD
Monday, Oct. 1:

Marty Price was born during the Second World War to an interracial couple who met in the Kaiser shipyards and were active in local civil rights struggles, especially the 1948 effort to get Safeway and Lucky's to integrate their hiring practices. Both were labor activists whose children became active themselves in sit-ins in the Bay Area and in Los Angeles. Marty Price worked with Mark Comfort's Oakland Direct Action Committee in 1965, where he led pickets at the *Oakland Tribune* and Montgomery Ward, taking relief supplies to SNCC in Alabama and bringing the Panther emblem back to Oakland. Later, Price became active in the Poor People's Campaign and went on to become a member of the first national organizing committee of the Venceremos Brigade, seeking to demonstrate solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. He went on to become assistant principal at Oakland Technical High School, his alma mater. He lives in Oakland and is the proud father of four sons and seventeen grandchildren.

Bobby Seale, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, is the author of several books, including *Seize the Time, A Lonely Rage*, and, most recently, with Stephen Shames, *Power to the People: The World of the Black Panthers*.

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL
Monday, Oct. 8:

Susan Griffin, a longtime Berkeley resident and veteran of the Free Speech Movement, is the author of many books, including her groundbreaking first book, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, credited with founding the ecofeminist movement, which the late poet Adrienne Rich called "perhaps the most extraordinary nonfiction work to have emerged from the matrix of contemporary female consciousness." Griffin is

Ruth Rosen, emerita professor of history at UC Davis and UC Berkeley, is the author, among other works, of *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. She lives in Berkeley.

KISS KISS, BANG BANG
Monday, Oct. 15:


DANCE TO THE MUSIC
Monday, Oct. 22:

Joel Selvin was a music critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1972 to 2009. He is the author of numerous books, including *Altamont: The Rolling Stones, the Hells Angels, and the Inside Story of Rock's Darkest Day* and, most recently, *Fare Thee Well: The Final Chapter of the Grateful Dead's Long, Strange Trip*. He was born in Berkeley and lives in San Francisco.

BE REALISTIC: DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE
Monday, Oct. 29:

READING LIST

It would be helpful to read the following, esp.
Todd Gitlin in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Review of Books*; Charles Kaiser; Ruth Rosen; Digby Warde-Adam; Alan Wolfe; Daniel Cohn-Bendit; and Tariq Ali:


Hayden, Tom. *The Long Sixties*,
(Boulder: Paradigm, 2009)
pp. 58-73.


O'Brien, Geoffrey. *Dream Time: Chapters from the Sixties*,
(Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002),
pp. 94-194.


Tariq Ali talks to David Edgar, "That Was the Year That Was," *London Review of Books*, May 24, 2018: https://www.lrb.co.uk/v40/n10/tariq-ali/that-was-the-year-that-was

**ABOUT THE TEACHER**

Steve Wasserman, publisher of Heyday Books, is former editor of the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*. He grew up in Berkeley and organized the first demonstration against the Vietnam War in 1965 among junior high school students, and co-led a student strike in 1968 at Berkeley High School that established the first black history and studies department at an American public high school.