

**The Fifties: Did You Love Lucy? Did You Like Ike?
Class Syllabus as of 12-7-2020**

When: Wednesday mornings, March 22 – May 31 (10 weeks). 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Where: Zoom; a link will be furnished to class participants the day before each class session.

Coordinators: Richard Brush

Mark Guyer

Course description: Remember Ethel Mertz, *Howdy Doody*, Elvis Presley, Betty Furness? While popular culture characterizes the decade of the 1950s as “happy days” or even boring, David Halberstam argued in *The Fifties* that while “the fifties appear to be an orderly era with a minimum of dissent...[in fact] the era was a much more interesting one... that would enable a vast and surprisingly broad degree of dissidence.” Remember Matthew Ridgeway, Emmett Till, Robert Oppenheimer, Jack Kerouac? Using Halberstam’s book and our own personal experiences as the bases for discussion, we will revisit the fifties to look at how events helped to shape the succeeding eras of the Sixties through today, as well as consider how formative those events were for us as individuals.

Class Calendar:

(Week) Date	Topic	Presenters	Potential Presentations	Chapters in Halberstam
(1) 3/22	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW2 ends, the GIs return home; the GI Bill 	Mark/Dick Dick/Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GI Bill • The difference in the way that Black and White veterans were treated 	1,2
(2) 3/29	The Domestic Scene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The suburbs • The automobile 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	8,9,32
(3) 4/5	The Domestic Scene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cold War starts • The Election of 1952; Eisenhower 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-1950 events: • the Berlin Airlift • Truman’s election 	2, 16-17, 23, 45
(4) 4/12	The Cold War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The USSR as enemy • The Atomic threat 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Nations • Oppenheimer & Teller • Atomic testing • Spies 	2
(5) 4/19	The Cold War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect on foreign affairs • The Korean War 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marshal Plan • The end of colonialism/The rise of the “Third World” • Douglas MacArthur • The French war in Indo-China 	4,5,7

(6) 4/26	The Cold War • McCarthyism • The Eisenhower Administration		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUAC • The Hollywood Ten • John Foster Dulles • The CIA • The U-2 incident 	3,18
(7) 5/3	The Domestic Scene • Consumerism • Television		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discount stores/ shopping malls • Advertising • Television as a social force 	10-15, 17, 33-34, 42-44
(8) 5/10	Arts & Literature		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Beats • Rock and Roll • Jazz in the 50s • Classical music in the 50s • Movies 	22
(9) 5/17	The Movements • Civil Rights • The sexual revolution • Women		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supreme Court • <i>The Kinsey Report</i> • Birth Control • Tranquilizers/Thalidomide 	28-30, 36, 44 20-21, 39-40
(10) 5/24	The Space Race My favorite books/movies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. and USSR missile development • Sputnik 	

Resources/Expenses: Text: *The Fifties* by David Halberstam, Villard Books, 1993. The book is available new (\$15 - \$25) or used (\$5 and up) in either hardcover or softcover (ISBN 0-449-90933-6) editions at many different booksellers, including your local independent bookstore.

The History Channel had an eight-part presentation about the decade. It was entitled *The Fifties*, and David Halberstam was involved in its production. It is available on youtube.com, and class members may enjoy watching (although it should not be used as a substitute for reading the book, as it doesn't cover as many issues as the book does)

The coordinators have also prepared a number of documents for your use as resources. These include a chapter-by-chapter summary of *The Fifties*; a selective list of important (including coordinators' favorite) non-fiction books, fiction books, movies; an episode-by-episode guide to the History Channel series. These will be sent in a couple of weeks

Format: Each session will involve two 55 min discussions (we will try for 10:00 to 10:55, a short break, and then 11:05 to 12:00). Each class member will be expected to lead a discussion on a topic of his or her choosing, guided by the syllabus, or to suggest a different topic. The presenter should assume that the class members have read the relevant sections of the Halberstam book and design the discussion/presentation to go beyond the text. There is also the possibility of using one class session for meeting with an outside speaker.

Guidelines for Member Presentations: Each hour of class will be led by one class member, who will be responsible for the format of the class. If two class members wish to collaborate on leading the discussion, feel free to do so. The session leader(s) may organize the class in any number of ways – addressing a set of questions distributed before class, a short presentation on a specific subject, an introductory video, or a dramatic reading. Please allow 35-40 minutes for discussion; thus, any slide or video presentation should not last longer than 15-20 minutes.

If you would like the other class members to read some material beyond the Halberstam book, or to think about some questions or to do any other preparation before the class, please be sure to give them at least a week's advance notice.

Presentation Topics: The Course Calendar includes many suggestions for presentation topics - many more topics and ideas than we could cover in any one session. These suggestions are meant to give you ideas, but make sure to choose a topic that is interesting to you. If you have an idea for a topic that we haven't suggested, please let us know and we will find the most appropriate place to schedule it.

Technology: This is a Zoom video conferencing class. Zoom accommodates screen sharing for members who want to use PowerPoint, Keynote or Google Slides or to show some images. If you'd like to practice screen sharing in advance, we're happy to set up a Zoom meeting a couple of days before the class so that you can do that. Also, if you do not feel comfortable with screen sharing, you can send us your presentation so that we can advance the slides for you.

If you need assistance with creating your PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation, the LLC Technical Committee is ready to help you!

As noted above, we will send the Zoom link for the class the day before each session.

Guidelines for Presentations

Your presentation should be no longer than 15-20 minutes in length, allowing for at least 35-40 minutes for questions and discussion.

There are many different formats you may use for your session.

- You are welcome to do the presentation without visual aids
- or with a slide presentation
- or to use handouts (if they can be sent out by the Monday before your presentation).
- You may wish to point the class ahead of time to an article or video that helps to illustrate your topic, and then manage a discussion of it.
- You may wish to send some discussion questions out to the class ahead of time.

Please use relevant research material from a variety of sources—not just a Wikipedia article. Use your own words. And please try not to read your presentation. It's fine to work from notes but be sufficiently familiar with the material that you can take a breath and make eye contact with the class!

Please have a plan for involving the class, and stimulating discussion, whatever format or topic you've chosen. If you want to send material to the class ahead of time, you can send it yourself, or you can send it to Mark and he will forward it to the class. If you plan to do this, please try to get this information to your classmates as early as possible (ideally at least 5-6 days ahead but no later than the Monday before the class)

Audiovisual support (whether it's video, photographs, drawings, maps, musical recordings, etc.) will help to tell your story.

Please consult LLC's guidelines for session leaders which you can find on this page:

<https://www.lifelonglearningcollaborative.org/resources-for-class-members-session-leaders/>

On Zoom, there are two features that we will strictly use to facilitate discussion:

- **Mute.** Please keep yourself muted when you are not talking. This will eliminate distracting noises (such as ringing phones, barking dogs, squeaking chairs, etc.) while someone else is trying to make a point. When it's your turn to speak, you can unmute. And when you've finished speaking, you can mute yourself again.
- **Electronic hand raising.** Zoom has a feature that allows you to electronically raise your hand if you wish to speak*. Those with electronically raised hands will be identified on screen in the order in which the hands were raised. This allows the presenter or coordinator to recognize people systematically and gives everyone a chance to participate. The presenter will not recognize anyone who don't use this feature and tries to catch the presenter's attention by waving your hand or other attention-grabbing activity.

*At the bottom of the Zoom screen, there is a command bar with several buttons. One of the buttons is labeled "Reactions." If you click on the button, you will see a row of five emojis, and under those is a button labeled "raise hand." Simply click on that and your hand will be raised and you will be put in line to speak. When finished speaking, please use the "lower hand" button.