This capstone is a course on the counterculture of the 1960s and early 1970s and the changes it wrought in American society. One thing should be made clear at the outset. Although you will undoubtedly learn a good deal of history here, this is not a history course on the 60s. We have no intention of attempting to be exhaustive in detailing all or even the bulk of the memorable events, people, groups, and places of that time. It is a sociological concept (the counterculture) that is our focus in this course. The entirety of our first meeting will be spent trying to get at least a tentative grasp of what cultural sociologists mean when they talk about a culture. What is culture? Where is it? How do we find it? How do we study and understand it? Is a culture a group of people, is it ideas, is it things people do, is it
material objects, is it outside or inside the body or both? The groundwork we lay at
that first meeting is intended to serve as a framework for our study of the
counterculture in the rest of the course.

Our intellectual perspective is that of cultural sociology. We want to understand not
simply e.g., what kinds of people were involved in the ‘60s counterculture and what
they did (although we are interested in this too), but more importantly what the
counterculture was for the people living it, what it meant for them, how those
meanings informed their actions and the actions of others responding to them, and
how those meanings and narratives of belief have trickled down from the time they
were living them into our own times.

We will be keenly interested in using the course material to reflect on the question
that is of central importance in the cultural and social sciences. This is the question
of the relationship between an object and the person/s attempting to investigate and
understand that object. In all forms of knowledge, the relationship between the
knower/subject and the known/object is important to theorize and understand; this
is even more the case in the cultural and social sciences precisely because the
knower is so intimately and inextricably a part of the known (we are all of us
connected to and acted upon by the 1960s counterculture, often in ways we do not
realize). So we will constantly be reflecting on the question of the way in which our
own interests, agendas, perspectives, and pre-existing knowledge affect our
knowledge and understanding of the events and movements of the 1960s and vice
versa. To a fair degree, this question will be highlighted by one of books we will
read. Todd Gitlin clearly positions himself (an activist during the period who later
became an academic sociologist) within the situations he describes and at least
inherently criticizes a facile idea of detachment. We are never really detached, and
the idea of objectivity that is something of a cliché in some circles is an impossibility,
although this does not mean we must or should simply abandon ourselves to our
prejudices and preconceived positions. Accounting for our own position vis-à-vis the
object is an important part of the project of studying the object. We will take this as
basic to what sociology is about and we will approach it throughout the course
using the notion of autoethnography.

**YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS COURSE:**

1) You are expected to be in class every day we meet (and see my note below on
   *being here now* for what constitutes being in class). I come every day and I
   expect the same commitment to our mutual project from you; without this
   commitment on your part, our project fails. If you are not in class any
   particular day, the responsibility for procuring medical excuses and the like
   and getting them to me is yours. You may miss up to 10% of the course
   meetings with no excuse and no penalty; beyond 10%, I will begin deducting
   points from your overall grade.

2) You are responsible for keeping a working journal during the term in which
   you should make daily entries relating to your reading (i.e., this is where you
should take notes on the course reading) and thoughts on the course. This is also the place where you should begin thinking and writing about your term paper project. This journal makes up a considerable portion of your overall grade, so it should be taken very seriously. Note well: if you fail to start your journal at the beginning of the course and/or fail to make regular entries, it will have significant consequences on your grade. I will have a look at your journals at least once during the term to see how you are progressing. In evaluating your journals, I am looking for a) regularity of entries (i.e., if you have long periods in between entries, this is bad); b) volume and substance of entries (i.e., if your entries are regular but only a few lines in length, this is bad); c) discussion of and intersection with course readings (i.e., if you seldom mention course readings in your journal, this is bad); and d) the depth of autoethnography in the journal (we will read about and discuss this concept during the first weeks of the term). I have attached some examples of course journal writing that uses course readings to stimulate autoethnographic thinking and writing that ultimately point toward the term project.

3) Each class meeting, one of you will have formal responsibility for taking notes on our discussion and posting those notes to Blackboard for public consumption. These notes must be detailed and substantive, not simply a sketchy outline or a few disjointed points from what has been said. I will illustrate the process for you and give you an example by taking notes myself on the first day of class.

EVALUATION:

Here is the grade breakdown for the course:

- Course journal: 50%.
- Final Paper (including two mid-term installments): 40%.
- Class notes: 10%.

You will each be writing a twenty page (minimum) autoethnographic paper during the term on the following theme:

“*What the counterculture means to me and why.*”

It is due on the date of our scheduled final exam. There will be two mid-term installments of the paper due on the dates indicated below. We will discuss the term paper in our first meeting and throughout the term.

On Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and I treat it very seriously. You should already know what plagiarism is and how not to do it; if you do not, you need to review the Bucknell guidelines.
Clarification about class absences and athletic and other extra-curricular activities:

The only excusable absences in this class are those having to do with medical emergencies and illness. Team practice or an out-of-town event/meet/game/etc. do not constitute excusable absences, even if you notify me far in advance. Job interviews, job fairs, and the like also do not constitute excusable absences. Ultimately, you will have to decide in specific situations when you have time conflicts what you will do and take the consequences.

A note on BEING HERE NOW:

John Lennon was once asked to describe the meaning of the Beatles’ music in a nutshell. “Be here now,” he replied. This is a stunningly simple yet powerful idea: to experience the moments of your life truly, authentically, fully, rather than walking about in a kind of half-present trance, failing to actually live life because one is constantly elsewhere, perhaps dwelling on the past, perhaps anticipating a future that may not even come. Be here now.

Lennon’s idea is one I take as fundamental for the experience we share in our collective meetings in this class. I promise that I will be here now, and I ask you to do the same.

Being here now is not as easy as it might sound, however, perhaps especially in the present age. Much of the communicative technology that now exists in our world, and indeed many other elements of our contemporary culture work hard against being here now. Many people (including many students on this campus) seem almost never to be here now; they are too busy texting and checking Facebook and cell phoning and generally living in a virtual space presented to them by their communicative technology to actually be present in the situations of their lives. Additionally, too frequently, students do not adequately prepare themselves for being here now in the classroom because they do not sleep properly and they wind up half-sleeping through classroom experience.

So, to facilitate being here now, the following is my policy in this class. Laptop computers may not be used unless it is your day as the official class note taker. If you own a cell phone or other small communicative device, I strongly advise you not to bring it to class. If you insist on doing so, it must be turned off. If I see you doing what looks like consulting your cell phone or other such device while we are holding class, or if you appear to be sleeping (i.e., your eyes are closed for more than a few seconds in succession), I will simply take up my attendance book and mark you “not here now,” i.e., absent for that class meeting. As class attendance counts toward your grade, this is a real penalty. I hope I won’t have to apply it.
Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s, eds., Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle

‘Takin’ it to the Streets!’ A Sixties Reader, eds., Wini Breines and Alexander Bloom

The Perfect War: The War We Couldn't Lose and How We Did, James William Gibson

The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage, Todd Gitlin

The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices, ed., Ian Inglis

Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970, Doug McAdam

The Making of a Counter-Culture, Theodore Roszak

Various readings on Blackboard

ORGANIZATION OF COURSE THEMES AND READINGS

All readings to be done prior to the class meeting under which they are listed

Week 1 (January 20):
1) The Notion of Culture, with special reference to the last American half-century and especially the 1960s counterculture; 2) What is Cultural Sociology? What is Autoethnography?

- Readings: BLACKBOARD (Alexander and Smith, “The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology”; Ellis, “The Call of Autoethnographic Stories”)

Week 2 (January 27):
The Background to the Emergence of the Counterculture: The Baby Boom in Suburbia

- Readings: BLACKBOARD (McAdam, “America on the Eve of Freedom Summer”; Jones, “Great Expectations”; Gitlin, chapter 1
- Video: MAKING SENSE OF THE SIXTIES, pt. 1
Week 3 (February 3):
The Black/White Question in American Culture: The Effect of the Civil Rights Movement on the Counterculture

- Readings: McAdam, pp. 1-116; Gitlin, pp. 136-170; Breines and Bloom, pp. 15-38
- Video: MAKING SENSE OF THE SIXTIES, pt. 2

Week 4 (February 10):
Black Nationalism/Radicalism and the Counterculture

- Readings: McAdam, pp. 117-180; BLACKBOARD (Jackson, "Soledad Brother"; Cleaver, "Interview"); McAdam, pp. 181-234; Breines and Bloom, pp. 103-135
- Video: EYES ON THE PRIZE (Freedom Summer and Power, section on BPP, and Nation of Law, first half)
Week 5 (February 17):
The University as Cultural Problem: Crisis over Higher Education and The Student Movement

- Readings: Gitlin, chapters 4-6; BLACKBOARD (Lipset and Altbach, “Student Politics and Higher Education in the United States”); Breines and Bloom, pp. 49-61, 81-102
- Video: MAKING SENSE OF THE SIXTIES, pt. 4
- MIDTERM PAPER INSTALLMENT DUE THIS WEEK

Week 6 (February 24):
The Culture of War and Anti-War: The Conflict in Vietnam in American Culture

- Readings: Gibson, chapters 1-4; Breines and Bloom, pp. 153-174
- Video: VIETNAM: HOMEMFRONT USA
Week 7 (March 3):
The Culture of War and Anti-War: The Conflict in Vietnam in American Culture II

- Readings: Gibson, chapters 5 and 6; Gitlin, chapters 7, 10-11; Breines and Bloom, pp. 174-226
- Video: THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND

Week 8 (March 10):
The Counterculture I: Origins, Precursors, the American Context

- Readings: Gitlin, chapters 2-3, 8-9; BLACKBOARD (Brake, “Comparative Youth Culture”)
- Video: MAKING SENSE OF THE SIXTIES, pt. 3

Week 9 (March 24):
The Counterculture II: The Attack on the Technocracy and the Search for Authenticity

- Readings: Braunstein and Doyle, chapter 13; Roszak, chapters 1 and 2
- MIDTERM PAPER INSTALMENT DUE THIS WEEK
Week 10 (March 31):
The Counterculture III: Rock and Roll as Cultural Critique

- Readings: Breines and Bloom, pp. 237-246; Braunstein and Doyle, chapters 5 and 7; Inglis, chapters 1, 3, 6 and 9
- Video: excerpts from WOODSTOCK, ISLE OF WIGHT, and GIMME SHELTER

Week 11 (April 7):
The Counterculture IV: Drugs and Living Poetically

- Readings: Breines and Bloom, pp. 254-264; Braunstein and Doyle, chapter 1; Roszak, chapters 5, 7 and 8

Week 12 (April 14):
The Counterculture V: Leaving America Behind, Literally: The
Communes, Sexuality, and the Family

- Readings: Breines and Bloom, pp. 254-264; 387-434; Braunstein and Doyle, chapter 12; Gitlin, chapter 16
- Video: COMMUNE

Week 13 (April 21):
1) The Counterculture VI: Religion in the Counterculture; 2) 1968, Year of the Barricades, End of the Sixties? Events in the US and Abroad and their Meanings

- Readings: Breines and Bloom, pp. 246-254, 331-382, 476-493; Gitlin, chapters 12-15, 18
- Video: MAKING SENSE OF THE SIXTIES, part 5

Week 14 (April 28):
Second Thoughts and Reflections: What did the Counterculture mean? How has it affected us? What did it change?

- Readings: BLACKBOARD (Morgan, "The 60s Experience," Collier and Horowitz, "Second Thoughts: Former Radicals Look Back at the Sixties"); Gitlin, chapter 19

FINAL PAPER DUE ON DATE OF OUR SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM