How the 1960s Changed America

Junior Year Common Experience: How the 1960s Changed America
Honors 390EH

CHC offers this interdisciplinary course especially for juniors—just when most are starting to focus on their majors. It is designed to bring honors students together, offering a common academic experience and a chance to stay connected with honors college peers with different academic interests.

Many of the things we accept as modern social, political, artistic, and scientific movements have their roots in the 1960s. This course acquaints students with several different perspectives on the 1960s, all of which illuminate aspects of the US social, political, economic, and cultural systems of that time and the interaction among these systems.

Course structure

This course features a series of twelve lectures, each delivered by a dynamic professor who is an expert in topics such as:
Vietnam War
Student Activism
Health Care
Space Program
Civil Rights Movement
Counterculture Movements
Environmentalism
Architecture
Black Power and
Women’s Rights

Each lecture is 1.5 hours, including a question and answer period. Weekly discussions are led by graduate students in various departments, and are 50 minutes long.

**Why the 1960s?**

The topic of the 1960s provides an entry point for students to examine their own social and cultural backgrounds and perspectives. As students probe their own attitudes and strengthen their own arguments concerning social, political, and cultural matters, the readings of the course can stimulate and deepen their thinking.

As the often-used slogan of the 1960s “the personal is political” suggests, culture and perceptions of individual identity inform how groups and movements develop to challenge the status quo. The topics in this course encourage understanding of how the actions of individuals have consequences and implications for society as a whole. The course content also gives historical context to current calls for change.

**Eligibility**

Although designed for Commonwealth Honors College juniors, the course may be taken by sophomore CHC students who are planning to study abroad or with other extenuating circumstances, if the student receives permission from the instructor.

**Credits**

The course offers 4 credits and carries the General Education designation Diversity (U).

**Prerequisites**

This course has no prerequisites.

"End the War Now! Bring the Troops Home," by Wystan is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](https://www.honors.umass.edu/1960s-course)