Greatest Generation

There is a mysterious cycle in human events. To some generations, much is given. Of other generations, much is expected. This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny.

Franklin D. Roosevelt 1936

Baby Boom

People try to put us d-down (Talkin' 'bout my generation)
Just because we get around (Talkin' 'bout my generation)
Things they do look awful c-c-cold (Talkin' 'bout my generation)
I hope I die before I get old (Talkin' 'bout my generation)
This is my generation.

The Who 1965

GenX

I see all this potential, and I see squandering. God damn it, an entire generation pumping gas, waiting tables; slaves with white collars. Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don't need. We're the middle children of history, man. No purpose or place. We have no Great War. No Great Depression. Our Great War's a spiritual war... our Great Depression is our lives. We've all been raised on television to believe that one day we'd all be millionaires, and movie gods, and rock stars. But we won't. And we're slowly learning that fact. And we're very, very pissed off.

Fight Club 1996

We are always talking about generations… the lost generation, the greatest generation, the sixties generation, generation X, the hip-hop generation, the millennial generation and so on. But what is a generation?

The quotes above are from different "generations." We read them differently knowing their generational origins. We compare these statements to what the generation actually did. Roosevelt was addressing a group of people who had grown up during the Depression and were destined to fight in World War II. Only the drummer of The Who died before he got old, although many of that generation lived as though they would. Fight Club was seen as a manifesto for a generation whose very name reflected a lack of meaningful goals, generation X.

The simplest definition of a generation is a group of people who were born at roughly the same time. When you think about it, that is a trivial fact. But it has powerful effects. The generation you are born into influences the childhood games you played, the education you are receiving, the career you will choose, when you will marry, how many children you will have and, really, the entire course of your life. But why? It is because people born around the same time are exposed to the same historical events and social trends at roughly the same age. Every human being has a childhood of some sort, but one generation's childhood was during the Great Depression (the greatest generation). Many young adults rebel against their elders, but one generation had their rebellion fueled by the widespread availability of LSD and a passionate movement against an unpopular war (the baby boomers). Many have been witness to political scandal, but one generation was exposed to a sex-drenched presidential scandal as they began to think about puberty. (You know who you are!)

Many of you firmly believe that you are part of a distinct generation: A millennial generation. But are you a distinct generation? Also, many people believe that this generation is more tolerant, less racist and less sexist--but is it? You will be looking at these issues and trying to develop a position that is backed up by research and that does not just reflect the opinions of you and your friends.
This class has four goals:

1) **To develop your speaking, writing and presentation skills.** This is a writing intensive course. You will write throughout the class using an array of different writing assignments. We will discuss writing in class workshops, small groups and individual conferences. You will have opportunities to give feedback on your fellow students' work and you will be encouraged to revise your own work.

2) **To develop research and library skills.** You will use research to better understand yourself and your generation. This includes finding and evaluating primary and secondary sources. These sources will be used as evidence in the development of scholarly arguments. It includes learning the appropriate form of citations as well as how to produce an annotated bibliography.

3) **To understand what is unique about this current generation.** This generation is faced with new perils, new types of organizations and new ways of communicating. We will look at some of the most important changes, examine some potential disasters and investigate promising trends.

4) **To understand the Sociological Perspective.** Sociologists have a unique way of looking at things. Instead of focusing on individuals, we look at social systems and at interactions between people. For instance, when a problem emerges, instead of looking for someone to blame and punish, sociologists search for ways to fix the system that is at the root of the problem. This way of looking at things goes against the "common sense" of a society that is fixated on individualism, but it can be a very useful thing to know.

**Grades**

Every assignment will have an assignment sheet posted on Blackboard which will include a list of the criteria (or a rubric) on which the assignment will be graded.

Your grade for each assignment will be posted on Blackboard along with your final grade so far.

Grades will be based on the following:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Reading</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researching an Article</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Paper Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Generation's Childhood Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Collective Memory Paper</td>
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<td>Why Issue is Important Presentation</td>
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<td>Generation Annotated Biblio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation Rough Draft</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Generation Paper</td>
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*Incompletes will only be given when the student is otherwise passing the course and cannot complete it due to circumstances that are unforeseen and beyond the student's control.*

**Reading Points:** Reading points will be posted on Blackboard for each reading. You will be graded on your ability to lead a discussion on those points when called on in class. Only students called on in class will be graded on that day. If you are absent the day that I call on you without a college defined
excuse, you will receive an 'F'. It is important that you be prepared for every class. I will give everyone one 'free pass' for the semester on reading points. In other words, you can let me know that you will be unprepared to answer the reading points for that day. However, you must do this before class starts, either in person, phone message or email. You will not be given a free pass after I have called on you.

Presentations

**Academic Paper**: Throughout the course, you will be researching articles related to this generation. You will sign up to give a 15 minute in-class presentations of an article that you've found.

**Why this Issue is Important**: You will be working on a research paper on an issue related to this generation. You will give a 10 minute in-class presentation on why that issue is important.

Short Writing Assignments

**Critical Reading Paper**: You will be given a reading along with a worksheet with 9 points to analyze in the reading. You will write a 3-5 page **critical analysis** of the reading using those 9 points.

**This Generation's Childhood Paper**: Using in-class readings and one article that you've found through research, you will write a 3-5 page **position paper**.

**Collective Memory Paper**: You will choose an event that is important to your generation and provide a **narrative description** of the event using concepts from the readings.

**Research Paper**: This will be an 8-10 page paper involving library research. Assignments leading up to the final paper will include a rough draft and an annotated bibliography (10-12 entries).

Readings

All of the readings will be available as pdf files on Blackboard.

Help

My office is Silsby 109, down the hall from the sociology office. I will hold office hours Mon, Wed & Fri from noon to 12:30 & from 1:45 to 2:45. I can also be reached by phone or email, **Douglas.J.Goodman@Dartmouth.edu**. I check my email often every day and it is my preferred mode of communication. Messages can also be left for me in the Sociology office.

*Please let me know if you have any disabilities which will affect your participation in this class. I will make every effort to accommodate you.*

**The Research Center for Writing, and Information Technology (RWiT)** ([http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rwit/](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rwit/))

The Student Center for Research, Writing, and Information Technology is a place where you can meet with an undergraduate tutor to discuss a paper, research project, or multi-media assignment. The tutors can help you brainstorm or plan, draft or structure, tweak or polish.
Readings and Assignments

(May change to accommodate guest presenters & student needs)

Full Citations are on Blackboard

Introduction
- Mon 1/7  Introduction
- Wed 1/9  Reading: "Researching This Generation" Goodman.

Childhood
- Fri 1/11  Reading: "Standardized Testing" Solley
  Assign: Critical Reading Exercise
- Mon 1/14  Reading: "Exploding Self Esteem" Baumeister et al
  Reading: "Diverging Destinies" McLanahan
- Wed 1/16  Guest Lecture: "Researching Articles"
  Assign: Research Exercise
- Fri 1/18  Assign: "My Generation's Childhood"
  Class Exercise: Critical Peer Review

Historical Events
- Tues 1/22 (1:00-1:50) Moved to X period
  Reading: "Generations and Collective Memories" Schuman & Scott
  Assign: Narrative Description of Collective Memory
- Wed 1/23  Reading: "Historical and Cultural Influences" Coomes
  Reading: "Recession Generation" Forochar

Social Change
- Fri 1/25  Movie: The Social Media
  Assign: Using Technology to have a Discussion
- Mon 1/28  Reading: "Spoiling Survivor" Jenkins
  Reading: "Daily Me" Turow

Peer Effects
- Wed 1/30  Reading: "Freaks, Geeks, Cool Kids" Milner
- Fri 2/1  Reading: "Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings" Newman

Media & Marketing
- Mon 2/4  Reading: "What Drives Gen Y Consumers" Noble et al
- Wed 2/6  Reading: "Consumption of Anti-consumption" Goodman

Generational Antagonism
- Mon 2/11  Reading: "Forgive us Our Debts" Yarrow
Tues 2/12 (1:00-1:50) Moved to X period
   Movie: "Feminist Generations"

Wed 2/13 Reading: "Emerging Adults & Parents: Conflict & Companions" Arnett

Cracks in this Generation

   Fri 2/15 Reading: "This Generation: Inequality" Goodman
   Mon 2/18 Reading: "This Generation: Race & Ethnicity" Goodman
   Wed 2/20 Reading: "This Generation: Gender Relations" Goodman

Research Papers

   Fri 2/22 Presentations: Why this issue is important.
   Mon 2/25 Presentations: Continued
   Wed 2/27 Assign: Initial Outline & 3 supporting evidence you'd like to find
   Fri 3/1 Assign: Individual Conferences
   Mon 3/4 Assign: Completed Draft of Paper
       Class Exercise: Critical Peer Review
   Wed 3/6 Class Exercise: Continued
   Fri 3/8 Finished Paper Due