

Final Exam Study Guide

Nine of the following twelve questions will appear *verbatim* on the final exam. You will answer SIX of them. I will choose ONE question that everyone in the class must answer. You will answer FIVE questions of your choice from the remaining eight.

Since you have all of the questions a week ahead of time – and 20 minutes to answer each question on the day of the exam – I will expect thorough, well-supported, and thoughtful answers, and I will grade your responses accordingly. It should be clear that these questions cannot be answered in two or three sentences or in “bullet points.” The quality of your answers (and thus your grade on the exam) will correspond to the amount and quality of the preparation you put in ahead of time. In your answers, be sure you address each aspect of the question, avoid generalizations or unsupported assertions, and provide specific evidence from the assigned readings in formulating a persuasive response.

It may be useful to refer to the “Key” I gave you when I returned your midterm to get a sense of what constitutes a “thorough, well-supported, and thoughtful answer.”

1. How did U.S.-Japanese diplomacy between 1933 and 1941 show that both nations had misunderstood the “psychology” of the other? If neither country wanted a war with the other, why did they nonetheless end up going to war? [See Mark Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” pp. 138-143]
2. What were the most significant disagreements among the British, Soviets, and Americans during World War II? How did these disagreements reflect the three nations’ different goals, experiences, and motivations? How did the postwar plans of the US, the USSR, and Great Britain shape their wartime disagreements? [See Mark Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” especially pp. 149-156; 159-164; 169-179]
3. In his article of the same title, Ward Wilson tells us “the Bomb didn’t defeat Japan...Stalin did.” What evidence does he introduce to support this thesis? Why, according to Wilson, did attributing the Japanese surrender to the Atomic bombs suit the purposes of *both* the Japanese and the Americans?
4. Explain, by citing examples from *Wartime*, what Paul Fussell means by “chickenshit.” What caused so much “chickenshit” to happen during the war and how did it affect soldiers’ morale?
5. Paul Fussell’s *Wartime* sets out to correct the “sanitized” view of the war that most Americans at the time and since have taken to be “the truth.” Identify **TWO** myths that Fussell debunks, and, citing specific evidence from the book, explain how he shows that the “sanitized” myth bore little resemblance to the wartime truth. For both examples,

also indicate what purpose the myth served at the time and/or in later years after the war.

6. In *Wartime*, Paul Fussell concludes that officials in both the government and the private sector sold the American public a grossly inaccurate picture of what was really going on in the war. How was this done? Why did it work so well?
7. How did Anticommunism affect both American politics and culture during the postwar period (1945-1960)? In what ways was Anticommunism a product of postwar Anxiety? [Draw on the posted lecture notes from April 21st to inform your answer.]
8. What factors contributed to the economic boom that occurred between 1948 and 1960? Why did this postwar Affluence produce Alienation among those excluded from it and those who wanted no parts of it? [Draw on the posted lecture notes from April 26th to inform your answer.]
9. A famous humorist once remarked, “We have met the enemy...and they are us.” How does this ironic sentiment apply to the United States during the early Cold War years? Specifically, what steps did government officials and individual American citizens take that ended up making the United States more like the oppressive and conformist society it claimed to be waging a Cold War against?
10. According to Robert Pielke, how did Elvis Presley “negate” mainstream American beliefs about race, sex, and the Protestant work ethic? How did he also engage in “self-negation” – that is, how did he make fun of the very notion that anyone would find him threatening?
11. According to Robert Holton, why was it so difficult to “walk away” from “IT” or to escape the “closed room” of American mainstream culture during the 1950s? How did the Beats manage to do so – to find their own “folds of heterogeneity”?
12. In her book chapter “Learning to Play on Locked Pianos,” Jeanne Theoharis lays out “ten lessons” of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Choose **THREE** of these lessons and explain how by learning them we are able to transform the “fable” of Rosa Parks into the *history* of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.