Final exam (20%)
The final exam will take place on Tuesday, May 16, at 10:15AM promptly. Bring a 15-question Scantron quizzstrip (815-E) (no other Scantron is acceptable), a BLANK green-book, and a writing implement. No notes or textbook will be allowed. The exam will consist of:

Ten Multiple-Choice Questions (each worth a point; 15 minutes):
The questions will be drawn from the entire semester’s class meetings (not the textbook). The aim is to test your knowledge and understanding of the major issues and events in recent U.S. history, not minor points of detail. So, for example, a question about the origins of the Cold War would ask what nation the “Revisionist” interpretation blamed for the onset of the conflict – the U.S., Soviet Union, or France – not for the precise dates of the Berlin air-lift.

An Essay (worth ten points; 1 hour):
Be prepared to write an exam essay answering ONE of the following four questions – YOU get to choose which one. Your answer should include evidence from the textbook, primary sources, and lecture/classroom discussion notes. You do not need to include citations (footnotes or endnotes).

1. At several key junctures in recent U.S. history, the United States has witnessed “culture wars” between different groups of Americans, for example, between middle-class “WASP” city-dwellers and the immigrant poor in the late 1800s; small-town and big-city America during the 1920s; and between white cultural conservatives (Richard Nixon’s “Silent Majority”) and newly assertive “minority” groups during the late 1960s and 1970s. Focusing either on ONE of these episodes or taking into account ALL THREE, explain the reasons why these groups came to blows, and consider which side(s) won, providing evidence to support your verdict.

2. What was the impact on the United States of U.S. involvement in foreign wars, both “hot” and “cold,” during the twentieth century? Was war a positive or a negative force in the lives of so-called minority groups in American society? In your answer, you may either consider the impact of ALL THREE of the major conflicts in which the United States was involved during the twentieth century (World War I, World War II, and the Cold War) or focus your attention on just ONE of these conflicts. Remember to provide evidence for any claims you make.

3. Over the course of the twentieth century, U.S. political reformers sought to use the powers of federal government to solve social and economics problems affecting American citizens. Confining your answer to ONE period of such reform activity – the Progressive era, the New Deal, or the New Frontier/Great Society – or addressing ALL THREE, consider how successful these efforts were. Remember that answering such a question involves identifying the aims as well as achievements of a particular group of reformers, and that you should support your argument with specific evidence.

4. Leaders of minority groups struggling to achieve freedom and equality in modern American society – for example, African Americans and women – have often disagreed among themselves about the best strategy to adopt: a gradual effort to reform U.S. society from within or a radical approach seeking drastic social transformation? Choosing ONE group or MORE, describe how this debate has progressed in the period since the late 1800s. In your view, which approach – the gradual or the radical – has proved more successful for your group(s), and why? Remember to provide evidence in support of your argument.