

Wesleyan University
Graduate and Liberal Studies Program
Social Sciences 640

Topics in U.S. Intellectual History
Spring 2010

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Course Description

Using a history-of-ideas approach, this course examines some of the major intellectual formulations defining the United States from the colonial to the Progressive eras. These include such ideas as American exceptionalism, republicanism, race, evangelical revivalism, the allocation of gender roles, and the ideology of class/cultural hierarchy. We shall conclude with an examination of the ideas defining of the Gilded Age and Progressivism. During this period under investigation, the political language of liberty and freedom articulated during the Revolution of 1776 would be central to the instituting and reproduction of the self-conception of the United States as primarily a Christian and democratic nation. This course attempts to illustrate how such a model of identity has had tremendous triumphs as well as profoundly tragic consequences.

Required Texts

These books have been ordered and can be purchased at Broad Street Books. A copy of each book has also been placed on reserve at Olin Library should you wish to consult the readings there.

George Fredrickson, [The Black Image in the White Mind](#)
David Hollinger & Charles Capper, [The American Intellectual Tradition](#) (2 Volumes)
Daniel Walker Howe, [Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln](#)
Drew R. McCoy, [The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America](#)
Suzanne Marilley, [Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the U. S.](#)
Perry Miller, [The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War](#)
Alan Trachtenberg, [The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age](#)
Robert Williams, [The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest](#)

The edited collection by Hollinger and Capper is the source for all the primary text readings noted on the syllabus.

Course Requirements/Evaluation

Your final grade in the course will be based on written weekly responses, oral presentations, participation in class discussions, and a final essay. The weekly essays should be at least three pages in length and should be submitted via email by 6pm on the Wednesday before class. Your final paper, which should be at least 15 (fifteen) pages in length, is due on Friday, May 14, 2010 by 5pm. Your final assessment in the course will be based on class participation (10%), oral presentations (10%), weekly papers (50%), and the final paper (30%).

Schedule of the Course

January 28: Founding Charters

Primary Texts: John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity"

John Cotton, Treatise of the Covenant of Grace

Anne Hutchinson, "The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson"

Roger Williams, The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience

General Text: Williams, American Indian in Western Legal Thought (Chapters 2,3,5)

February 4: Republican Enlightenment

Primary Texts: Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God" and
Treatise Concerning Religious Affections

Benjamin Franklin, "Selections from The Autobiography"

Thomas Paine, "Selection from Common Sense"

Thomas Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence

General Texts: Howe, Making the American Self (Chapters 1-2)

McCoy, The Elusive Republic (Chapter 1)

February 11: Virtue and Commerce

Primary Texts: Alexander Hamilton, "Constitutional Convention Speech"
"Brutus," "Selections from 'Essays of Brutus'"

James Madison, The Federalist (No. 10 and No. 51)

General Texts: Howe, Making the American Self (Chapter 3)

McCoy, Elusive Republic (Chapters 2-6)

February 18: Revolutionary Contradictions

Primary Texts: Judith Sargent Murray, "On the Equality of the Sexes"

Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

General Texts: McCoy, The Elusive Republic (Chapter 8)

Williams, The American Indian in Western Legal Thought (Chapters 6-7)

February 25: Religious Revivalism and Moral Reform Crusades

Primary Texts: William Channing, "Unitarian Christianity"

Nathaniel Taylor Concio ad Clerum

Charles Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion

William L. Garrison, Thoughts on African Colonization & "Prospectus of Liberator"

General Texts: Howe, Making the American Self (Chapter 4)

Miller, The Life of the Mind in America (Book One – Chapters 1-3)

March 4: Social Control and the Making of Individualism

Primary Texts: Ralph W. Emerson, "The Divinity School Address" & "Self-Reliance"

Elizabeth Peabody, "A Glimpse of Christ's Idea of Society" & "Plan of West Roxbury..."

Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government"

Horace Bushnell, "Christian Nurture"

Herman Melville, "Hawthorne and His Moses"

General Text: Howe, Making the American Self (Chapter 6)

March 9-18: Spring Break

March 25: Bonds of Womanhood

Primary Texts: Catherine Beecher, A Treatise on Domestic Economy
Sarah Grimké, Letters on the Equality of the Sexes & the Condition of Woman
Margaret Fuller, Woman in the Nineteenth Century
Louise McCord, “Enfranchisement of Woman”
General Texts: Howe, Making the American Self (Chapter 8)
Marilley, Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism (Chapters 1-2)

April 1: Slavery and Race in the American Imaginary

Primary Texts: John C. Calhoun, A Disquisition on Government
George Fitzhugh, Sociology for the South
Martin Delany, Condition, Elevation, Emigration, & Destiny of... Colored People
Abraham Lincoln, “Speech at Peoria, Illinois” and “Second Inaugural Address”
General Texts: Fredrickson, The Black Image in the White Mind (Chapters 1-2)
Howe, Making the American Self (Chapter 5)
Marilley, Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism (Chapters 3, 6)

April 8: Class Conflict or Harmony of Interests?

Primary Texts: Orestes Brownson, “The Laboring Classes”
Harey C. Carey, The Harmony of Interests
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Women and Economics
Thorsten Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class
General Texts: Fredrickson, The Black Image in the White Mind (Chapters 4-5)
Howe, Making the American Self (Chapter 6)
Marilley, Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism (Chapter 4)

April 15: The Rise of (Techno/Social) Science

Primary Texts: Asa Gray, “Review of Darwin’s On the Origin of the Species”
Charles Pierce, “The Fixation of Belief”
William Graham Sumner, “Sociology”
William James, “The Will to Believe”
General Texts: Fredrickson, The Black Image in the White Mind (Chapters 3,8)
Miller, The Life of the Mind in America (Book 3)
Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America (Chapter 1)

April 22: The Gilded Age and the Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy

Primary Texts: Thomas Wentworth Higgins, “A Plea for Culture”
William Dean Howells, “Pernicious Fiction”
Henry Adams, “The Dynamo and the Virgin”
George Santayana, “The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy”
General Texts: Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America (Chapters 2-5)

April 29: Progressivism and Beyond: On the Responsibility of Intellectuals

Primary Texts: Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements”
Woodrow Wilson, “The Ideals of America”
W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk
William James, “What Pragmatism Means”
Walter Lippman, “Drift and Mastery” & John Dewey, “Philosophy and Democracy”
Sidney Hook, “Communism without Dogmas”
General Texts: Marilley, Woman Suffrage Origins of Liberal Feminism (Chapters 5,7)
Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America (Chapters 6-7)

