A History of American Thought: 1859 to the Present

The lectures and readings in this course reflect a broad understanding of the word "Thought". Consequently, attitudes and ideologies get as much attention as the discourse of philosophers, scientists, writers, and theologians. Race, Class, and Gender are legitimate categories of analysis, as is, of course, individual intellectual achievement. We will try to arrive at an understanding of mainstream as well as "marginal" thought and culture. The course is neither a celebration nor an indictment of those ideas or attitudes which have, at one time or another, made a difference in American life. It is, however, an attempt to understand them in their historical context.

There will be two short papers and a Final exam in the course. The papers will focus on the readings in the course while the Final will ask you questions drawn from both the readings and the lectures. You will receive additional instructions regarding the papers in due course. The two papers together constitute 50% of your grade while the Final will account for the remainder. Lamentably, there is no Teaching Assistant, and so you are left substantially to your own devices. As my schedule permits, I expect periodically to reserve a room at the Union over the lunch-hour in order to discuss the lectures and readings. Attendance at these wholly informal sessions is of course not required.

Course readings are not as taxing as the assigned reading list suggests. Of the 14 titles assigned, you are "responsible" for only 9. Here's how it works. Everyone must read the following core texts in the order in which they appear here. Read at your own pace, but try to keep up with the lecture schedule:

- Joel Williamson  A Rage for Order
- Cecilia Tichi  Shifting Gears
- Daniel Horowitz  The Morality of Spending
- Alan Wald  The New York Intellectuals
- Allan Bloom  The Closing of the American Mind
These titles will be integrated with the lectures in order to devise questions for the Final. You may NOT write papers on any of these books.

The other 4 books for which you are responsible will be drawn from the following list:

Robert Bellah and Richard Madsen  *Habits of the Heart*
Paul Boyer  *By The Bomb's Early Light*
Janice Doan and Devon Hodges  *Nostalgia and Sexual Difference*
John Dos Passos  *The Big Money*
Sarah Eisenstein  *Give Us Bread But Give Us Roses*
John Hellman  *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam*
Daniel Kevles  *In the Name of Eugenics*
Robert Pattison  *The Triumph of Vulgarity*
Alice Walker  *The Color Purple*

All books have been placed on 3 day loan at the undergraduate library. They are, of course, available for sale at the University Bookstore.

**LECTURE SCHEDULE**

1/20  Course Introduction
1/22  "Science Red in Tooth and Claw." The Darwinian Revolution
1/25  Mr. Spencer's Social Statics. Social Darwinism
1/27  American Literary Naturalism
1/29  Apartheid, American Style
2/1  "Up From Slavery"
2/3  Frankenstein in America. Confronting the Machine
2/5  "The Demiurge's Laugh." The embrace of science and technology
2/8  "The World We Have Lost." The Country and the City in the industrial age
2/10  The capitalist's credo: laissez-faire as ideology
2/12  "The bitch-goddess Success" Emulating Alger, Carnegie et al.
2/15 "In the belly of the beast." Marx in American
2/17 Varieties of reform
2/19 "Ways of Escape." the literature of utopia
2/22 Body and Mind. Sexuality in Victorian America
2/24 "The hazards of new fortunes." American anti-modernism
2/26 The New Prophets: sciences of society
2/29 A gathering revolt. The Metaphysical Club and the origins of anti-formalist thought
3/2 Manifest Destiny. Empire in the mind of America
3/4 Anti-imperialism and the fabric of American life
3/7 As American as...Pragmatism and Instrumentalism
3/9 The Social Gospel
3/11 Exam hour

SPRING RECUPERATION PERIOD
3/21 Images of the modern State: Progressivism
3/23 Wilsonianism and the "End of Innocence"
3/25 With unrelenting zeal: Alice Paul's America
3/28 I Am The Law: The ideological challenge of the Klan
3/30 The dreamworld of the bourgeoisie: the Freudian revolution
4/1 Holiday
4/4 "Montage of a Dream Deferred." Harlem in the 1920s
4/6 Black on white: Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. duBois
4/8 "The folklore of capitalism
4/11 Le cafe Americaine: the view from the Left Bank
4/13 The Depression and American literary radicalism
4/15 "Art for the Millions." The New Deal and cultural democracy
4/18 Emigre intellectuals and American life
4/20 The Holocaust and modern memory
4/22  The end of innocence redux: the Bomb
4/25  Ideology and its discontents
4/27  Bye, bye Miss American Pie: railing against the mainstream
4/29  Sixties chic
5/2   Out and about: American feminist thinking since Friedan
5/4   "Thunder on the Right." American conservatism breaks wind
5/6   MacCulture and the World
HISTORY 302  
A History of American Thought since 1859  
Spring, 1988  

Required Reading list

John Dos Passos  The Big Money  paper  Signet Classics
Paul Boyer  By The Bomb's Early Light  paper  Pantheon Books
Allan Bloom  The Closing of the American Mind  paper  Touchstone Books
Janice Doan and Devon Hodges  Nostalgia and Sexual Difference  paper  Methuen
Sarah Eisenstein  Give Us Bread But Give Us Roses  paper  Methuen
Alan M. Wald  The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s  paper  University of North Carolina Press
Cecilia Tichi  Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America  paper  University of North Carolina Press
Daniel Kevles  In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity  paper  University of California Press
Alice Walker  The Color Purple  paper  Washington Square Press (Division of Simon and Schuster)
Joel Williamson  A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the South Since Emancipation  paper  Oxford University Press

RECOMMENDED TEXTS ONLY!

Robert Pattison  The Triumph of Vulgarity: Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism  cloth  Oxford University Press
Daniel Horowitz  The Morality of Spending: Attitudes Toward the Consumer Society  Johns Hopkins University Press