

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester II 1987-88

History 302

Hans van Dyk

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
- Robert Bellah and Richard Madsen Habits of the Heart: Individualism and
Commitment in American Life paper
University of California 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 Vulgarities: Rock Music in the Mirror
of Romanticism cloth Oxford University Press
- John Hellmann American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam paper Columbia
University Press
- Daniel Horowitz The Morality of Spending: Attitudes Toward the Consumer
Society Johns Hopkins University Press