

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History

Semester I Year 83/84

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
Hist. 302	History of American Thought, 1859 to the Present	Prof. Boyer

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the shifting currents of American social thought from the Age of Darwin to the Age of Reagan. We will explore how successive generations of novelists, philosophers, sociologists, theologians, and activists responded to the dramatic social and technological framework of American life in these years. Among the topics to be examined are Social Darwinism, Feminism, racist thinking, the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey, the relation of literature and politics, the social thought of the 1950s and 1960s, and the impact of the nuclear arms race on American thought and culture.

LECTURES

This is primarily a lecture course, but five class periods have been set aside for discussion of the assigned readings. Additional discussion meetings will be arranged for graduate students and those seeking Honors credit.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS

Undergraduates will write a 7-8 page paper on one of the assigned books in the course, with particular attention to the author's underlying values or beliefs. There is also a midterm exam and a final. The exams will be primarily essay type, with perhaps some objective questions as well.

GRADING SYSTEM

Midterm: 25% Paper and discussion participation: 25% Final: 50%

REQUIRED READINGS

Horatio Alger, RAGGED DICK	Sinclair Lewis, ARROWSMITH
Edward Bellamy, LOOKING BACKWARD	Nathaniel West, A COOL MILLION
Charlotte Gilman, HERLAND	Walter Miller, A CANTICLE FOR
William James, PRAGMATISM	LEIBOWITZ
Christopher Lasch, Ed., THE SOCIAL THOUGHT OF JANE ADDAMS	
David Sidorsky, Ed., JOHN DEWEY: THE ESSENTIAL WRITINGS	
Jacques Ellul, THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY	