

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester II, 1986-87

History 302

Prof. Paul Boyer

History of American Thought 1859 to the Present

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, theologians, sociologists, and activists responded to the dramatic changes in the social and technological framework of American life in these eventful decades.

The work of the course consists of a midterm, a final, a paper (see below), and regular attendance and participation in the scheduled discussions. Grading is as follows: Midterm: 25%; Paper and discussion: 25%; Final: 50%. (For graduate students and those taking the course for Honors credit, several conference sessions with the instructor will be scheduled, and the paper assignment will be expanded.)

Assigned Books. The following are all in paperback, and should be available in the University Bookstore. In addition, they have been placed on Reserve in Helen C. White.

Horatio Alger, RAGGED DICK
Edward Bellamy, LOOKING BACKWARD
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, HERLAND
William James, PRAGMATISM (Ed. Bruce Kuklick)
Walter Lippmann, DRIFT AND MASTERY
Sinclair Lewis, ARROWSMITH
Nathaniel West, A COOL MILLION
Ray Bradbury, FAHRENHEIT 451
Tim O'Brien, NUCLEAR AGE

Paper. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length. It may be a discussion of one of the assigned books in course or one of the thinkers or writers mentioned in lecture. It may also be on a topic of your choice relevant to the course and approved by the discussion leader. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, on good quality paper, following the standard form for college term papers. Papers are welcome at any point in the semester up to the final due date: Friday, May 1. IMPORTANT NOTICE: University penalties for plagiarism can be severe. The paper must represent your own work, and all quoted or closely paraphrased material in a paper must be clearly attributed to the original source.

Office Hours: Monday, 3:30-4:30, Wednesday, 1:30-2:30
or by appointment, 263-1829 (office) or 233-7202 (home)

Humanities 4131

Discussion Sections. The assigned readings or other work for each discussion section will be announced on a week-by-week basis.

Lecture Schedule

- W 1/21 Introduction to Course
F 1/23 Discussion Section Information (Teaching Assistant in charge)

I. THE GILDED AGE

- W 1/28 The Darwinian Revolution
F 1/30 The Impact of Darwinism I: The Scientific and Religious Debate
M 2/2 The Impact of Darwinism II: Social Thought
W 2/4 The Impact of Darwinism III: Literary Naturalism
F 2/6 Andrew Carnegie: The Tycoon as Social Philosopher
M 2/9 Booker T. Washington: Variations on the Horatio Alger Theme
W 2/11 Panaceas, Utopias, and Revolutionary Nightmares
F 2/13 Charlotte Parkins Gilman: The Darwinian as Feminist
M 2/16 Lester Ward and Thorstein Veblen: Critics of Laissez Faire Ideology and Plutocratic Culture
W 2/18 "Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?"
F 2/20 The Intellectual Journey of William Dean Howells
M 2/23 William James: Psychologist of the Soul
W 2/25 William James and the Origins of Pragmatism

II. THE EARLY 20th CENTURY

- F 2/27 From Self to Society: The Social Thought of John Dewey
M 3/2 Herbert Croly: Political Theory in the Age of TR and Wilson
W 3/4 Walter Lippmann and the Crisis of Authority in Modern America
F 3/6 HOUR EXAM
M 3/9 The Social Thought of Jane Addams

- W 3/11 "Scientific" Racism: The Worlds of Charles B. Davenport and
Madison Grant
- F 3/13 W. E. B. Dubois and the Dilemma of the Black American Intellectual
[Spring Recess]
- M 3/23 Freud Comes to America
- W 3/25 Randolph Bourne and the Watershed of World War I
- F 3/27 Multiplicity and Unity: Henry Adams' Search for Meaning

III. THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

- M 3/30 The 1920s: Alienated Writers and Intellectuals
- W 4/1 Gopher Prairie and Zenith: Sinclair Lewis's View of Middle-Class
America
- F 4/3 Guest Lecture
- M 4/6 When Harlem Was in Vogue: White Fantasies and Black Realities in
the 1920's
- W 4/8 Views of Science and Technology in the 1920s: Hope and Promise
- F 4/10 Views of Science and Technology in the 1920s: Fear and Apprehension
- M 4/13 Social Thought in the 1930s: Niebuhr, Dewey, and the New Deal
- W 4/15 Literature and Society in the Early Depression Years
- F 4/17 University Holiday
- M 4/20 The Era of the Popular Front: Literature and Politics, 1935-1940

IV. SINCE WORLD WAR II

- W 4/22 Tootles the Engine and His Friends: Social Thought in the 1950s
- F 4/24 Scientists and Public Policy, 1939-1947

- M 4/27 The Atomic Bomb in American Thought and Culture, 1945-1954
- W 4/29 From Activism to Apathy: Nuclear Weapons in American Culture, 1954-1987
- F 5/1 Rise and Fall of the New Left. (Papers Due)
- M 5/4 Paradoxes and Contradictions of the New Conservatives
- W 5/6 Since Friedan: Contemporary Feminist Thought
- F 5/8 Technology, Consciousness, and American Culture: A Concluding View