

Semester Summer Year 1980

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
406	American Cultural History, 1860 to the Present	Schultz

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus attention on various themes and trends in American society from the Civil War era to the present with the principal, underlying theme of myth and reality in those cultural expressions that helped order an American society. The text for our sermons comes from philosopher Ernst Cassirer, The Myth of the State: "Myth does not arise solely from intellectual processes; it sprouts forth from deep human emotions. . . . Myth cannot be described as bare emotion because it is the expression of emotion. The expression of a feeling is not the feeling itself--it is emotion turned into an image. This very fact implies a radical change. What hitherto was dimly and vaguely felt assumes a definite shape; what was a passive state becomes an active process. . . . In myth man begins to learn a new and strange art; the art of expressing, and that means of organizing, his most deeply rooted instincts, his hopes and fears." We cannot hope to examine all of the social myths and social functions of myth in the American past. To try to gain insight into why Americans seemingly have preferred to design their cultural blueprints for living through images rather than accurate perceptions of reality, we will concentrate our attention on the following topics: social mobility and the success myth in American culture; the West and the frontier; the evil city versus the utopian city; Americanization, assimilation and integration with lectures on immigrants and blacks in American society. Our examples will be drawn from popular cultural materials--fiction, movies, music, graphics

LECTURES

there will be two lectures per week (each of two hours with a break between the first and second hour) and one, one-hour session of general discussion on readings

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS

There will be a comprehensive final examination on August 6. Depending on the enrollment, there also will be either a short primary research paper (10-15 pages) or two short (4-7 pages) essay-reviews on topics of interest to the individual student.

GRADING SYSTEM

The instructor prefers to discuss the percentage breakdown of grades with those students who enroll in the course, rather than give any hard and fast formula now.

REQUIRED READINGS

E.F. Bleiler, EIGHT DIME NOVELS
John Hope Franklin (ed.), THREE NEGRO CLASSICS
Michael Gold, JEWS WITHOUT MONEY
Edward Bellamy, LOOKING BACKWARD
John Steinbeck, GRAPES OF WRATH
Daniel J. Boorstin, THE IMAGE: Or, the Rise of Pseudo-Events in America