

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History

Semester II Year 1981-82

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
Hist. 622	History of American Thought, 1859 to the Present	P. Boyer

COURSE DESCRIPTION A wide-ranging survey of American thought from the Civil War to the Age of Reagan. We will explore how Americans as diverse as Andrew Carnegie, James Jackson Putnam, and Robert Millikan came to terms with such European intellectual imports as Darwinism, Marxism, Freudianism, and Einsteinian Physics. We will look at the ideas of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jane Addams, and their feminist successors. We will examine Black thought and culture from Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois to the Harlem Renaissance and Richard Wright - while also probing the "scientific" and genteel racist thought of the notorious Madison Grant and his ilk.

We will examine Pragmatism as that term was elaborated by such thinkers as Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. We will look at such Progressive-era social thinkers as Walter Lippmann and Herbert Croly who welcomed the First World War as a glorious opportunity for social engineering - and at the mordant critique of their optimism offered by the crippled and doomed genius Randolph Bourne. We will survey American writers of the 1920s and 1930s, as they moved from alienation to passionate engagement with American society. Finally, we will look at the social thought of post-World War II America, including the radical challenge to the liberal consensus in the Sixties and the "New Conservatism" which rocketed to public visibility in the 1980 election.

LECTURES

The course is organized primarily on a lecture format, with several class periods set aside for discussion.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS

There will be a midterm exam and a final. In addition, each student will write a paper of 6 or 7 pages critically discussing one of the assigned readings in the course.

GRADING SYSTEM

Midterm: 25%; Paper and Discussion participation: 25%; Final: 50%

REQUIRED READINGS

Readings will include Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward; William Dean Howells, The Rise of Silas Lapham; Frederick W. Taylor, The Principles of Scientific Management; Sinclair Lewis, Babbitt; Thornton Wilder, Our Town; Robert Paul Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism; Theodore Roszak, Person/Planet; and essays of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, John Dewey, Jane Addams, Garry Wills, and Milton Friedman.