

U.S. SOCIAL THOUGHT, 1815-1915
HIST 314E A01

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Hours: 12:10-1pm, M, W

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to key concepts and ideas in the history of American intellectual life during the 19th century up through World War I. In order to delve into ideas and understand them better, the course will combine lecture – providing context, background, and concepts for students – with discussion of key, primary texts.

Requirements: Since this course relies upon discussion of texts, your participation in classroom discussion is crucial. Lectures will serve as the basis of your tests. *If you miss more than three classes without excuse, you will fail this course.*

Every day a reading is due, you will hand in, *at the beginning of the class*, a one-page summation of the reading and be prepared to discuss the reading with fellow students. Hand-ins will not be graded individually, though they will count towards your final grade. These one-page summations can be in note form and hand-written if you wish. They will be handed back before examinations in order to help you review.

Your final grade will be assigned based upon your performance on in-class exams, your two essays, your hand-in record, and your class participation.

Your texts in this class include (all available at Little Professor):
Readings from *The American Intellectual Tradition*, Volumes I and II, Fifth Edition, editors Hollinger and Capper.
Lewis Perry, *Intellectual Life in America: A History*.
George Tindall, *America: A Narrative History* (get the One Volume Brief Edition).

The course will proceed as follows. Wherever there is discussion of readings mentioned, you must have read that selection and have your one-page summation ready at the beginning of class. When a lecture is noted, there are no readings. It is noted throughout the syllabus where you should be in terms of the readings that are not directly discussed in class but you will be tested on.

INTRODUCTIONS

January 3: Introductions and Explanation of this Course: What is Social Thought?; Electronic Reserve: Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The American Scholar”

January 4: Lecture and Brief Discussion: The Legacy of the American Revolution and the Idea of a Nation (Ideals versus Realities); Very brief discussion of Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The American Scholar”: First Hand-in Due

TWO AMERICAS: INDIVIDUALISM OR ORGANIC, HIERARCHICAL COMMUNITIES?

January 5: Lecture: The Stabilization of Slavery and the Dawn of Industrial Capitalism in the North

January 9: Organicism and Hierarchy in Southern Social Thought: Discussion of George Fitzhugh, "Selection from *Sociology of the South*"

January 10: The Principle of Individual Freedom: Discussion of William Lloyd Garrison, "Prospectus of *The Liberator*" and Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

THE WANING OF RELIGIOUS FAITH?

January 11: Lecture: Religious Changes, Awakenings, or Decline?

January 12: Unitarianism versus Orthodoxy: Discussion of William Ellery Channing, "Unitarian Christianity" and Nathaniel William Taylor, "*Concio ad Clerum*"; Also read Perry, *Intellectual Life*, Chapters Two and Three

TRANSCENDENTALISM AND ITS APPROPRIATIONS

January 16: No Class, Martin Luther King Birthday

January 17: Lecture: The Rise of Transcendentalism

January 18: The Godfather of Transcendentalism – Ralph Waldo Emerson: Discussion of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Divinity School Address" and "Self-Reliance"; Read also Perry, *Intellectual Life in America*, Chapter 5

January 19: Transcendentalism as Radical Individualism?: Discussion of Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government"

January 23: Lecture: Jacksonian Democracy in American Political and Social Thought and the Origins of Working-Class Anti-Capitalism

January 24: American Radicalism?: Discussion of Orestes Brownson, "The Laboring Classes"

January 25: Lecture: Communitarian Experiments in America

January 26: Communitarianism Philosophized: Discussion of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, "A Glimpse of Christ's Idea of Society" and "Plan of the West Roxbury Community"

"WHIG CULTURE": WOMEN AND ECONOMICS

*****January 30: Mid-Term Exam In Class*****

January 31: Lecture: Whig Culture: The Growth of the Middle Class

February 1: “Growing” the Economy: Discussion of Henry Carey, “Selection from *The Harmony of Interests*”

February 2: Lecture: The “Separate Sphere” and the Rise of Domesticity

February 6: Domesticity Theorized: Discussion of Catharine Beecher, “Selection from *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*”

February 7: Transcendentalists Respond: Discussion of Margaret Fuller, “Selection from *Woman in the 19th Century*”

BY THIS POINT IN TIME, YOU SHOULD HAVE READ TINDALL FROM THE WAR OF 1812 UP THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR.

THE CIVIL WAR, DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL THOUGHT, AND NATIONALISM

February 8: Lecture: The Idea of Federalism in Political Thought

February 9: Anti-Federalism Rearticulated: Discussion of John C. Calhoun, “Selection from *A Disquisition on Government*”

February 13: Federalism and the Idea of Nationalism Reasserted: Discussion of Abraham Lincoln, “Speech at Peoria, Illinois,” “Address Before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society,” “Gettysburg Address,” “Second Inaugural Address”

THE GILDED AGE AND SECULARIZATION

February 14: Lecture: Secularization as an Idea and Historical Reality

February 15: Doing without Religious Certitude: Discussion of Charles Peirce, “The Fixation of Belief”; Asa Gray, Selection from Review of Darwin.

February 16: Lecture: The Dawn of Modernity: The Gilded Age in Culture and Social Thought

February 20: Pessimistic versus Optimistic Modernism: Discussion of Henry Adams, “The Dynamo and the Virgin” and William James, “The Will to Believe”; Also due is Perry, *Intellectual Life in America*, Chapter 6

THE REVOLT AGAINST PURITANISM

February 21: Lecture: The Genesis of an American Avant-Garde in Literature and Painting

February 22: Why American Culture Lags Behind: Discussion of George Santayana, “The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy” and H.L. Mencken, “Puritanism as a Literary Force”

PROGRESSIVISM AS AN INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT

February 23: Lecture: The Revolt Against Formalism: Changes in Social Thought

February 27: The Meanings of Pragmatism: Discussion of William James, “What Pragmatism Means” and John Dewey, “Philosophy and Democracy”

February 28: Lecture: The Dawn of the Activist Intellectual: Reform as Political Philosophy

March 1: The Woman as Social Reformer: Discussion of Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements”

March 2: Lecture: The Concept of Race in American Social Thought

March 6: The New Liberalism in Race Relations: Discussion of W.E.B. Du Bois, “Selection from *The Souls of Black Folk*”

March 7: Lecture: American Civic Identity and Class: How Does Democracy Square with Social Inequality?: Lecture also on Thorstein Veblen, “Selection from *The Theory of the Leisure Class*” (reading due)

BY THIS POINT, YOU SHOULD HAVE READ TINDALL’S BOOK UP THROUGH WORLD WAR I.

**THE WAR AND THE INTELLECTUALS OR
THE CRISIS OF PROGRESSIVISM**

March 8: Lecture: The War, Progressivism, and Social Thought

March 9: Discussion of Reading: Randolph Bourne, “Trans-National America” and “Twilight of Idols” – Review as well

FINAL EXAM: TBA