

History 305/705
Fall 2019
HIS 504
TTh 9:30-10:45

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American Thought and Culture, 1776 to 1900

Elements

REQUIRED READING:

David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper, eds., *The American Intellectual Tradition*, Vols. 1 and 2, Seventh Edition (Oxford UP, 2016)
James Fenimore Cooper, *The Prairie* (Penguin)
Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition*, ed. Malcolm Cowley (Penguin Classics)
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Penguin)
Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Viking-Penguin)
Harold Frederic, *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (Viking-Penguin)

AIMS AND APPROACHES: History 305/705 and 306/706 investigate the history of ideas underlying religious, philosophical, political, artistic, and other intellectual disciplines and cultural practices in the United States. Both courses emphasize the thinkers and movements most influential in formulating, debating, and disseminating these ideas in their own time and beyond. Both also address two important questions on the courses' subject. One is methodological: How does the study of reflective and expressive thought illuminate the larger culture of the United States? The other is definitional: In light of the nation's extensive importation of ideas from Europe, its unique diversity of ethnic and other identity groups, and its purportedly hyper-practical ethos, what does it mean to speak of an "American Intellectual Tradition"?

THEMES AND TOPICS: History 305/705 examines how major American thinkers and intellectual movements of the "long nineteenth century" constructed an "exceptional" national identity by adjusting their culture's provincial Protestant and Enlightenment traditions to the challenges of transnational democratic, Romantic, and secular modes of thinking. Topics include American Transcendentalism; evangelical and liberal Protestantism; pro- and anti-slavery arguments about "freedom," race, and gender; philosophical idealism; literary realism; and scientific and social Darwinism.

READING: The required readings are all primary documents of their times, including essays, addresses, debates, book excerpts, pictures, and novels.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES: All required books are available at the BU Barnes and Noble bookstore or can be purchased from Amazon and other online booksellers. Links to electronic versions of articles from journals (e-journals) and essays from books (e-

reserve) may be found on the BU Libraries website. Students desiring overviews of major periods in American intellectual history covered in HI 305/705 and HI 306/706 might want to consult the relevant volumes in Lewis Perry and Howard Brick, Series Editors, *American Thought and Culture* (1991-2010). Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen provides a succinct synthesis in *The Ideas That Made America: A Brief History* (2019).

DISCUSSIONS AND QUESTIONS: To make lectures optimally useful and discussions possible, it's essential that reading assignments be done *before* the date indicated. Class discussions will be emphasized on certain dates, but comments and questions will be encouraged throughout the term. There will also usually be a time at the beginning or end of class for students to ask questions about the reading and lectures.

Assignments

SHORT PAPERS: Students will be required to write two 5-page papers. Each is a comparative analysis of all or at least most of the reading assignment for a particular day, although you may, especially when the readings include a relatively long text, such as a novel, largely emphasize it. The object is not just to summarize or paraphrase the readings but to *analyze* them. Some ways of doing this would include picking out their main arguments or themes, evaluating how they're supported logically or rhetorically, how in these respects they compare with each other, and how they fit (or don't fit) into the topics or texts we've discussed in the course so far.

The first paper can be on any required reading assignment from **Sept. 5** through **Oct. 22** and should be turned in no later than the beginning of class on the day the assignment will be discussed. The second short paper can be on any assignment from **Oct. 24** through **Dec. 10** and will likewise be due in class on the day scheduled to discuss it.

TERM PAPER: This paper is an essay of 10 pages on a single book by an American thinker and should address the question, "*What marks this book as a product of its intellectual time?*" You may choose any book listed in the "Chronologies" sections of *AIT1* and *AIT2* with four qualifications: 1.) The book must be by an American author. 2.) Its first publication date should be roughly between 1776 and 1900. 3.) Generally it should not include a major selection from the required reading. 4.) Ideally it should not be a commonly assigned novel that you've already read.

Before selecting your book, you need to check with me either in person or by email about your selection. In initially assessing possible books, you might find it helpful to consult a dictionary of American thinkers and ideas, such as Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg's *Companion to American Thought* (1995). The focus of your paper should *not* be on your author's biography but on his or her ideas. You should not try to fit your book into the history of particular social and political events of its era, although you may allude to them. Rather you should select a central intellectual problem, question, theme, or movement alive at the time and position your book in relation to it, using evidence drawn from the required reading. Term papers will be due on **Dec. 13**).

CITATIONS: Citation form should be consistent and generally follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*. If you frequently cite the same text, you can place a shortened version of its author and title in parentheses directly following a quotation or sentence and create a bibliography of full citations at the end.

EXAMS: There will be a quiz (**Oct. 1**) and a final (**Dec. 17**).

GRADE BREAKDOWN: 10% for the quiz, 30% for the two short papers, 30% for the term paper, and 30% for the final.

GRADUATE STUDENTS: Graduate students enrolled in History 705 are expected to read the secondary texts listed in “*Recommended Reading*” and, where pertinent, reference them in some of their papers and exams. In addition they will be required to write a 10-page historiography paper on two or three scholarly works on any of the topics in the course, which will be due by **Dec. 16**. Students should consult with me about appropriate subjects and books.

AUDITORS: Auditors will not write papers or take exams but are expected to regularly attend, do the required readings, and, if they wish, participate in discussions.

Regulations

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Attendance at all classes is required and unexplained absences will lower a student’s final grade. Participation in the form of questions and comments in class may raise it by as much as a half grade.

LATE WORK: Makeups will not be given nor will late papers be accepted except in the case of an extraordinary emergency or a severe illness. I need to be informed in advance unless the event’s suddenness makes that impossible. Generally, a makeup date will be scheduled within a week.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is arguably the most serious ethical violation that a scholar or student can commit. Read the Academic Conduct Code to understand the college policy on plagiarism. All cases of its suspected perpetration, as well as all other acts of suspected academic misconduct, will be referred to the Dean’s Office. If found guilty, a student will receive the maximum punishment allowed at the university.

ETIQUETTE: To preserve a classroom atmosphere conducive to collective learning, turn off cell phones and use laptop computers only for taking notes on the classroom lecture and discussion. Laptop use should not interfere with your ability to interact with the instructor and other students.

Hub Areas

History 305 qualifies as a Hub course by engaging with three areas of thinking or “habits of mind”: historical consciousness, ethical reasoning, and critical thinking.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READING

Sept. 3 **Intellectual History and the Long Nineteenth Century**

Recommended:

- David A. Hollinger, "Historians and the Discourse of Intellectuals," in Hollinger's *In the American Province: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas* (1985), 130-51, 210-15
- Stefan Collini et al., "What Is Intellectual History?" in Juliet Gardiner, ed., *What Is History Today?* (1988), 105-19

I. ENLIGHTENMENT FOUNDATIONS

Sept. 5 **Visions of Revolutionary Republicanism**

Reading:

- AITI*, xi-xv, 109-14
- John Adams, *A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law*, in *AITI*, 128-38
- Thomas Paine, Selection from *Common Sense*, in *AITI*, 139-47
- Thomas Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence, in *AITI*, 148-51

Recommended:

- James T. Kloppenberg, "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse," *Journal of American History*, 74 (June 1987), 9-33

Sept. 10 **Debates over Republican Constitutionalism**

Reading:

- Alexander Hamilton, "Constitutional Convention Speech on a Plan of Government," in *AITI*, 152-57
- "Brutus," in *AITI*, 158-68
- James Madison, *The Federalist*, "Number 10" and "Number 51" in *AITI*, 169-78

Sept. 12 **John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and the Republican Enlightenment**

Reading:

- John Adams to Samuel Adams and to Thomas Jefferson, in *AITI*, 187-96
- Thomas Jefferson, Selection from *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in *AITI*, 197-208
- Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, to Benjamin Rush, and to Thomas Law, in *AITI*, 209-18

Recommended:

Henry F. May, "After the Enlightenment: A Prospectus," in Henry F. May, *The Divided Heart: Essays on Protestantism and the Enlightenment in America* (1991), 179-96, 210-13

David A. Hollinger, "The Accommodation of Protestant Christianity with the Enlightenment: An Old Drama Still Being Enacted," in Hollinger's *After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History* (2013), 1-17

Sept. 17 **Race, Gender, and the Proto-Democratic Enlightenment**

Reading:

Judith Sargent Murray, "On the Equality of the Sexes," in *AIT1*, 179-86

Samuel Stanhope Smith, Selection from *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*, *AIT1*, 219-32

Recommended:

Ruth H. Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 13 (1987)

II. PROTESTANT COUNTERPOINTS AND DEMOCRATIC ORDER

Sept. 19 **The Reawakening of Protestant Theology**

Reading:

AIT1, 233-38

William Ellery Channing, "Unitarian Christianity," in *AIT1*, 239-51

Nathaniel William Taylor, *Concio ad Clerum*, in *AIT1*, 252-66

Charles Grandison Finney, "What a Revival of Religion Is," in *AIT1*, 267-77

Recommended:

Mark A. Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," *American Quarterly*, 37 (Summer 1985), 216-238

Sept. 24 **Christian Perfectionism and Social Reform**

Reading:

John Humphrey Noyes, Selection from *The Berean*, in *AIT1*, 278-85

Sarah Grimké, Selection from *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Woman*, in *AIT1*, 300-13

Sept. 26 **The Problem of "The People" in Democratic Ideology**

Reading:

George Bancroft, "The Office of the People in Art, Government, and Religion," in *AIT1*, 314-23

Orestes Brownson, "The Laboring Classes," in *AITI*, 324-39

Oct. 1 **Harmony and Hierarchy in Whig Social Thought**

Reading:

Catharine Beecher, Selection from *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, in *AITI*, 340-53

Henry C. Carey, Selection from *Harmony of Interests*, in *AITI*, 354-64

QUIZ

III. ROMANTIC INTELLECT AND CULTURAL REFORM

Oct. 3 **Romantic Nationalism in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Prairie***

Reading:

James Fenimore Cooper, *The Prairie*

Recommended:

Perry Miller, "The Romantic Dilemma in American Nationalism and the Concept of Nature," in Perry Miller, *Nature's Nation* (1967), 197-207

Oct. 8 **Transcendentalism as a Religious Demonstration**

Reading:

AITI, 365-69

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Divinity School Address," *AITI*, 386-98

Recommended:

Charles Capper, "A Little Beyond: The Problem of the Transcendentalist Movement in American History," *Journal of American History* (Sept. 1998), 502-39

Oct. 10 **Ralph Waldo Emerson's Philosophy of Self-Reliance**

Reading:

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," *AITI*, 399-412

Oct. 15 **No Class—Substitute Monday Classes**

Oct. 17 **Transcendental Education**

Reading:

A. Bronson Alcott, Selection from *Conversations with Children on the Gospels*, *AITI*, 370-85

Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, "Plan of the West Roxbury Community," in *AITI*, 413-20

- Oct. 22 **Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, and Transcendentalist Politics**
Reading:
 Margaret Fuller, Selection from *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, in *AIT1*, 421-39
 Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," in *AIT1*, 440-53
- Recommended:*
 John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America," *American Quarterly* (Winter 1965), 656-81

LAST DAY TO TURN IN FIRST SHORT PAPER

- Oct. 24 **Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and the Two Souls of Romantic Democracy**
Reading:
 Herman Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," in *AIT1*, 464-74
 Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition*, 1-86
- Oct. 29 **Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the Powers of Sentiment**
Reading:
 Horace Bushnell, "Christian Nurture," *AIT1*, 454-63
 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

IV. THE QUEST FOR UNION AND RENEWAL

- Oct. 31 **Slavery and the Making of Southern Conservatism**
Reading:
AIT1, 475-79
 John C. Calhoun, Selection from *A Disquisition on Government*, in *AIT1*, 480-90
 Louisa McCord, "Enfranchisement of Woman," in *AIT1*, 491-503
 George Fitzhugh, Selection from *Sociology for the South*, in *AIT1*, 504-14
- Recommended:*
 Lacy K. Ford, Jr., "Inventing the Concurrent Majority: Madison, Calhoun, and the Problem of Majoritarianism in American Political Thought," *Journal of Southern History*, 60 (Feb. 1994), 19-58
- Nov. 5 **Race and Nation in Antislavery Political Thought**
Reading:
 William Lloyd Garrison, Selection from *Thoughts on Colonization*, in *AIT1*, 286-99

- Martin Delany, Selection from *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, in *AIT1*, 515-531
- Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" in *AIT1*, 532-45

Nov. 7 **Abraham Lincoln, Francis Lieber, and the Antislavery Origins of American Nationalism**

Reading:

- Abraham Lincoln, "Speech at Peoria, Illinois," "Address Before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society," "Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg," and "Second Inaugural Address," in *AIT1*, 546-61
- Francis Lieber, "Nationalism and Internationalism," *AIT1*, 562-74

V. TOWARD A SECULAR CULTURE

Nov. 12 ***Huckleberry Finn* and the Ironies of Literary Realism**

Reading

- AIT*, 3-4
- Mark Twain, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences," in *AIT2*, 64-70
- Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Recommended:

- Miles Orvell, "The Romance of the Real," in Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (1989), 103-37

Nov. 14 **Constructs of Culture and the Rise of the Research University**

Reading:

- Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "A Plea for Culture," in *AIT2*, 11-14

Recommended:

- Daniel Walker Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," *American Quarterly*, 27 (December 1975): 507-32

Nov. 19 **Scientific Belief and the Darwinian Controversies**

Reading:

- Charles Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," in *AIT2*, 15-25
- Asa Gray, "Selection from Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*," in *AIT2*, 6-10

Nov. 21 **Biblical Criticism and Harold Frederic's *Damnation of Theron Ware***

Reading:

- Charles Augustus Briggs, Selection from *Biblical Study*, in *AIT2*, 36-40

Harold Frederic, *The Damnation of Theron Ware*

Recommended:

David A. Hollinger, "Justification by Verification: The Scientific Challenge to the Moral Authority of Christianity in Modern America," in Hollinger's *After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History* (2013), 82-102

Nov.26 **Philosophical Idealism, Pragmatism, and the Secularization of Belief**

Reading:

William James, "The Will to Believe," in *AIT2*, 71-84

Josiah Royce, "The Problem of Job," in *AIT2*, 85-97

Nov. 27-Dec.1 **Thanksgiving Recess**

Dec. 3 **"Social Darwinism" and Evolutionary Social Science**

Reading:

William Graham Sumner, "Sociology," in *AIT2*, 26-35

Lester Frank Ward, "Mind as a Social Factor," in *AIT2*, 41-49

Dec. 5 **Evolution, the Self, and the Gendering of Victorian Culture**

Reading:

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solitude of Self," *AIT2*, 50-54

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Selection from *Women and Economics*, in *AIT2*, 98-104

LAST DAY TO TURN IN SECOND SHORT PAPER

Dec. 10 **Review**

Dec. 13 **TERM PAPERS DUE** (by 4:30 PM in my box in the History Department)

Dec. 16 **GRADUATE HISTORIOGRAPHY PAPERS DUE** (by 4:30 PM in my box in the History Department)

Dec. 17 **FINAL EXAM** (9-11 AM in class)