

History 166
Fall 2014
TTh 11:00-12:15
Hum 101

Professor Liss
Hum. 214, x73541
Office Hours: Tues. 4:15-5:30
Wed. 10:30-12

Political and Cultural Criticism in the U.S.

This course focuses on political and cultural criticism in the US. since the turn of the 20th century as a means of activism and critique. We will read fiction, memoirs, and social scientific, philosophical and political essays to explore the efforts to understand and transform society. Topics include the relationship between the individual and society, the possibility of community, the challenge of democracy, aesthetics and politics, the rise of science and the cult of expertise, violence and technocracy, alienation and the desire for engagement, exile and national identity.

The following books are available at Huntley's Bookstore and are on reserve at Honnold Library: Be sure to purchase the correct editions. Do not buy ebooks for this course.

Hollinger & Capper, eds., American Intellectual Tradition, 6th ed., vol. 2 (ISBN 9780195392937)
Alain Locke, The New Negro (ISBN 9780684838311)
Malcolm Cowley, Exile's Return (ISBN 9780140187762)
Richard Wright, Native Son (ISBN 9780061148507)
Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem (ISBN 9780143039884)

Readings marked with an asterisk* are available in the Resources folder on Sakai.
Readings in [brackets] are recommended but optional.
Do not buy ebooks for this course

Learning objectives:

- students will become acquainted with significant themes in the development of political and cultural criticism in U.S. history;
- students will learn to analyze primary sources as a basis of historical interpretation;
- students will formulate individual arguments through close reading and analysis of primary sources;
- students will develop clear and well-organized writing;
- students will develop clarity in oral expression.

Information on grades, course requirements, and academic accommodations is on next page→

Grades and requirements:

Grades will be determined as follows:

Participation:	30%
Discussion questions:	10%
Paper #1—5-7 pages (due Oct. 3) :	20%
Paper #2—5-7 pages (due Nov. 14):	20%
Paper #3—5-7 pages (due Dec. 15):	20%

Participation: This course will be run as a seminar. This means that your active participation is necessary for the course's success. Students are expected to attend all classes, complete the readings before class, and come prepared to discuss the material. Laptops and other electronic devices are not permitted, except in the case of academic accommodations (see below). You should bring (and print out, as needed) the day's assignment. Annotating the texts (underlining and taking marginal notes) will help you focus your reading and prepare for class. Take notes as you finish an assignment to identify key terms and arguments, questions and important passages. The readings are challenging and varied. We will focus our discussions on understanding their arguments and implications: what was at stake (then)? how do they matter still (today)? You do not need to agree with or even understand all of the readings, but you must come to class ready to discuss them.

Discussion questions: You are required to post (in the appropriate Sakai forum thread) at least one question for each assigned reading (i.e. each essay or selection) by 9 a.m. of the day's discussion. Your questions should demonstrate that you have done the readings *and* thought about them. Your questions should help generate discussion about the readings and their arguments or approaches. Avoid simple factual questions. In contrast, questions that focus on a key concept that is unclear, difficult, or controversial may be helpful. Questions that explore the implications or conclusions of the readings or connect them to each other are also useful. We will use these questions as a starting point and basis for class discussion.

Papers: Written assignments will focus on analysis of the assigned texts. They will require close reading of the material and the development of your own argument in response to the assignment. These assignments will give you the opportunity to synthesize some of the readings and drawing thematic connections among them. I will distribute paper prompts two weeks before each assignment is due. The last assignment will involve additional reading, according to the students interests in the material in the course.

Paper #1: due Friday, Oct. 3 by 5 p.m.
Paper #2: due Friday, Nov. 14 by 5 p.m.
Paper #3: due Monday, Dec. 15 by 4 p.m.

Academic accommodations:

Scripps students seeking to receive academic accommodations should meet with Sonia De La Torre-Iniguez, sdelator@scrippscollege.edu, in the Dean of Students Office. Accommodations may not be provided for students who have not registered through the Dean of Students Office. Other students must contact their home college's disability coordinator to establish accommodations, as follows: CMC - Julia Easley, julia.easley@claremontmckenna.edu; Pitzer- Jill Hawthorne, Jill_Hawthorne@pitzer.edu; Pomona - Jan Collins-Eaglin, Jan.Collins-Eaglin@pomona.edu; Harvey Mudd – Nikki Ayers, nayers@hmc.edu

Week I: Introduction

- 9/2 Introduction to the course
- 9/4 *Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations” and “The Case for Reparations: An Intellectual Autopsy” (2014) (Sakai)
*David Bromwich, from The Moral Imagination (2014), (Sakai)

Week II: Tradition and Critique

- 9/9 *Walt Whitman, “Democratic Vistas” (Sakai) also
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/whitman/vistas/vistas.html>
*Edward Said, “The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals”
- 9/11 George Santayana, “The Genteel Tradition,” AIT, 108-120

Week III: Scientific Culture and Secular Society

- 9/16 William Graham Sumner, “Sociology,” AIT, 27-36
Lester Frank Ward, “Mind as a Social Factor,” AIT, 42-50
- 9/18 William James, “What Pragmatism Means,” AIT, 161-171
Oliver Wendell Holmes, “Natural Law,” AIT, 204-207
*Schenck v. U.S. and Abrams v. U.S. (Sakai)

Week IV: Social Critiques in an Age of Progress

- 9/23 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, from Women and Economics, AIT, 96-102
Thorstein Veblen, from The Theory of the Leisure Class, AIT, 132-146
- 9/25 *W.E.B. Du Bois, from Souls of Black Folk (Sakai)
Randolph Bourne, “Trans-National America,” AIT, 170-180

Week V: The Progressive Search for Social Order

- 9/30 Jane Addams, “Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements,” AIT, 126-131
Walter Lippmann, from Drift and Mastery, AIT, 172-176
- 10/2 Randolph Bourne, “Twilight of Idols,” AIT, 188-194
*John Dewey, “Social Possibilities of War” (Sakai)
[*Robert Westbrook, “Pragmatism and War”; “Bourne Over Baghdad”; Blake]
- 10/3 **Paper #1 due by 5 p.m.**

Week VI: When Harlem Was in Vogue: Relativism and Race

- 10/7 Alain Locke, The New Negro, browse, focusing on these sections: Intro., Foreword, pp. 3-16, 47-53, 141-145, 216-227, 231-237, 250-53, 301-311, 353-414, 415-419
*Zora Neale Hurston, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” (Sakai)
- 10/9 *Franz Boas, from Anthropology and Modern Life (Sakai)
*Boas, “An Anthropologist’s Credo” (Sakai)

Week VII: Social Science as Social Critique

- 10/14 *Ruth Benedict, "The Science of Custom" (Sakai)
*Robert & Helen Lynd, from Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture (Sakai)
- 10/16 Malcolm Cowley, Exile's Return, Prologue; I: 2,4,5
Margaret Mead, from Coming of Age in Samoa, AIT, 217-223

Week VIII: The Lost Generation and the Problem of American Culture

10/21 Break

- 10/23 Cowley, Exile's Return, II; V: 1-4; VI:1; VII; VIII: 1, 2, 4; Epilogue

Weeks IX and X: Democracy, Capitalism & Revolution: Confronting the Great Depression

- 10/28 David E. Lilienthal, from TVA: Democracy on the March, AIT, 270-276
*Meridel Le Sueur, "I Was Marching" (Sakai)
Pare Lorentz, "The River" (32 min.): read about film here:
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s/film/lorentz/river.html>
Watch film here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpz0XI6U97U> or
<http://archive.org/details/TheRiverByPareLorentz> (also available Honnold AV 0219)

Peggy McIntosh lectures: Tues. and Wed., 10/28 and 10/29, 7:30 p.m., Balch Auditorium

- 10/30 Richard Wright, Native Son, "How 'Bigger' was Born"; Book I
- 11/4 Wright, Native Son, Book II
*Carlos Bulosan, "Freedom From Want" [and others on The Four Freedoms] (Sakai)

Week X and XI: The Critique of Liberal Innocence

- 11/6 Wright, Native Son, Book III
James Baldwin, "Many Thousands Gone," AIT, 309-319
[*Teju Cole, "Black Body: Rereading James Baldwin"]
- 11/11 Reinhold Niebuhr, from Children of Light & Children of Darkness, AIT, 285-292
Gunnar Myrdal, from An American Dilemma, AIT, 276-284 *plus pages on Sakai

Weeks XI & XII: Morality and Responsibility in the Age of Mass Destruction

- 11/13 *Dwight Macdonald, from Memoirs of a Revolutionist (Sakai)
*Macdonald, "Masscult and Midcult" (Sakai)
- 11/14 **Paper #2 due by 5 p.m.**
- 11/18 Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, ch. 1-8
[*Young-Bruehl, Why Arendt Matters, selections (Sakai)]
- 11/20 Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, ch. 14-end (including Postscript)
[*Responses to Eichmann (Sakai)]

Weeks XIII-XIV: Conscience and Democracy

11/25 *Hannah Arendt, "Reflections of Little Rock" (Sakai)
*Ralph Ellison, "The World and the Jug" (Sakai)
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," AIT, 475-482
[*Danielle Allen, "Law's Necessary Forcefulness"]

11/27 No class: Thanksgiving

12/2 *Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (Sakai)
Catharine MacKinnon, from Feminism Unmodified, AIT 562-571
*Gloria Anzaldua, from Borderlands/La Frontera (Sakai)

12/4 Noam Chomsky, "The Responsibility of Intellectuals," AIT, 500-509
Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," AIT, 597-603
*Edward Said, "The Clash of Ignorance" (Sakai)

Week XV: Your conclusions

12/9 *Student-selected readings (arrangements TBA)

12/15 Paper #3 due by 4:00 p.m.