AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Overview:

This graduate seminar explores historical works on ideas in an American context since the late nineteenth century, with an emphasis on recent developments in the field. Topics will include the development of the modern social sciences, the politics of knowledge production, and transnational exchanges of ideas.

Assignments and grading:

This is a readings seminar, and the primary expectation is that every student will arrive in class prepared to contribute to an in-depth discussion of the assigned texts.

Each student will open two of the discussion sessions by emailing the class four to six succinct questions (by 8:00pm on the Monday before the meeting) and providing five minutes of introductory remarks at the beginning of class.

At the conclusion of the semester, students are asked to submit a paper of 12-15 pages which examines a historiographic problem in greater depth. This paper should include substantial readings beyond those assigned on the syllabus, though they need not be defined around the general topics for the weekly reading assignments. It will be due on December 18.

This course will be graded on a pass/fail basis for graduate students.

Texts:

A number of the readings from the course (denoted with an * in the syllabus) will be available on electronic reserve. The other readings, listed below, can either be purchased separately or checked out on a short-term basis from Eisenhower Library reserves:


Wednesday, September 3: Introduction

Wednesday, September 10: Time, Space, and the History of the Future


Supplementary Readings:
Wednesday, September 17: Modernism, Antimodernism, and the Practice of Cultural History


Supplementary Readings:

Wednesday, September 24: Pragmatism and the Atlantic Intellectual World


Supplementary Readings:
• Trygve Throntveit, *William James and the Quest for an Ethical Republic* (Palgrave, 2014).

**Wednesday, October 1: Populism, Progressivism, and the Problems of Consensus**


**Supplementary Readings:**

**Wednesday, October 8: Race, Nation, and Civic Memory**


**Supplementary Readings:**
• David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (Basic, 2000).

**Wednesday, October 15: Rights Discourse and Categories of Difference**


**Supplementary Readings:**
• Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (Yale University Press, 1987).

**Wednesday, October 22: Religion and the Dynamics of Secularization**


**Supplementary Readings:**
• George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

**Wednesday, October 29: Contextualizing the Social Sciences**


**Supplementary Readings:**
• Thomas Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

**Wednesday, November 5: The Politics of Knowledge in Cold War America**

• *Bruno Latour, We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvard University Press, 1993), ch. 1.

**Supplementary Readings:**

• David Hollinger, ed., *The Humanities and the Dynamics of Inclusion since World War II* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
• James Miller, “*Democracy is in the Streets*”: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago (Simon and Schuster, 1987).
Wednesday, November 12: The Political Economy of the New Capitalism

• Howard Brick, Transcending Capitalism: Visions of a New Society in Modern American Thought (Cornell University Press, 2006).

Supplementary Readings:
• Howard Brick, Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism: Social Theory and Political Reconciliation in the 1940s (University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).
• Daniel Geary, Radical Ambition: C. Wright Mills, the Left, and American Social Thought (University of California Press, 2009).
• T. J. Jackson Lears, Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America (Basic, 1994).

Wednesday, November 19: Intellectual History and International History

• Daniel Immerwahr, Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development (Harvard University Press, 2014).

Supplementary Readings:
• Thomas Bender, Rethinking American History in a Global Age (University of California Press, 2002).

**Wednesday, December 3: Market Politics and the “End of History”**

• *Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore, “The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History,” International Labor and Working-Class History* 74 (2008), pp. 1–32.

**Supplementary Readings:**

Synthetic Texts on the History of Ideas in an American Context: