

Professor: Angus Burgin ([burgin@jhu.edu](mailto:burgin@jhu.edu))  
Office hours: Mondays 2:00pm – 3:45pm (<http://doodle.com/ndwhbnyvsyxgiyb>)  
Teaching Assistant: Emily Davidson

## AMERICAN SOCIAL THOUGHT SINCE 1865

### **Overview:**

This course surveys the history of ideas in an American context since the Civil War. Readings and discussions will explore the dynamic relationships between pragmatism and progressivism, modernism and antimodernism, scarcity and abundance, unity and diversity, science and tradition, and individualism and concern for the social good.

### **Assignments and Grading:**

20%: participation (including online postings)  
15%: first essay (5–7 pages)  
15%: midterm  
20%: second essay (8–10 pages)  
30%: final exam

The two primary essays will be due in Emily Davidson’s mailbox in Gilman 301 at 4:00pm on the assigned date; potential topics will be distributed in class. Additionally, once each week students are expected to post a paragraph on the course discussion board responding to and/or raising questions about one or more of the readings; these should be submitted no later than 8:00pm on the night prior to the day the text(s) will be discussed.

In this course, you are expected to be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student affairs and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” and the Ethics Board Web site (<http://ethics.jhu.edu>) for more information.

The grades of late papers will be lowered one level for each day they are late (e.g., a grade of B becomes a B- if one day late, a C+ if two days late, etc.).

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, [studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu).

### **Texts:**

A number of the course readings (denoted with an \* in the syllabus) are available on electronic reserve. The other readings, listed below, are available at the bookstore:

- Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Random House, 1999).
- Charles Capper and David Hollinger, eds., *The American Intellectual Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2011).
- W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Signet, 2012).
- Walter Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).
- Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

#### **Thursday, August 28: University Life after the Civil War**

#### **Tuesday, September 2: Darwinism in an Age of Industry**

- Asa Gray, “Review of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1860), *AIT*, pp. 6–11.
- William Graham Sumner, “Sociology” (1881), *AIT*, pp. 27–36.
- Lester Frank Ward, “Mind as a Social Factor” (1884), *AIT*, pp. 42–50.

#### **Thursday, September 4: Victorian Culture and Modern Morals**

- \*Charles Eliot Norton, “American Political Ideas,” *North American Review* 101 (1865), pp. 550–66.
- \*Walt Whitman, “Democratic Vistas” (1871), in *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Prose*, pp. 929–69.
- George Santayana, “The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy” (1913), *AIT*, pp. 108–120.

#### **Tuesday, September 9: The Problem of Poverty in the Gilded Age**

- Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements” (1892), *AIT*, pp. 126–31.
- \*Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1898), preface, ch. 1–7, 12, 14, 18, 22, 25, 28, postscript.
- \*Andrew Carnegie, “Wealth,” *North American Review* (June 1889).

#### **Thursday, September 11: Reforming the Cult of Domesticity (guest lecturer: Emily Davidson)**

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, selection from *Women and Economics* (1898), *AIT*, pp. 96–102.
- \*Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” and “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper” (1892), *Norton Anthology*, vol. 2, 4th ed., pp. 644–58.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “The Solitude of Self” (1892), *AIT*, pp. 55–59.

#### **Tuesday, September 16: The White City and the Image of the West**

- \*Chief Joseph, “An Indian’s View of Indian Affairs,” *North American Review* 128 (1879), pp. 412–33.
- Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893), *AIT*, pp. 61–68.

### **Thursday, September 18: Antimodernism as Impulse and Theory**

- Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (1918), ch. 1, 4, 22, 25, 31, 33–35.

### **Tuesday, September 23: Varieties of Pragmatism**

- Charles Peirce, “The Fixation of Belief” (1877), *AIT*, pp. 16–26.
- William James, “The Will to Believe” (1897), *AIT*, pp. 70–82.
- \*William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), lectures 2 and 6.

### **Thursday, September 25: The Politics of Progressivism**

- Walter Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery* (1914), introduction and ch. 1–3, 8–10, 13–16.

**\* Monday, September 29: FIRST PAPER DUE \***

### **Tuesday, September 30: Legal Realism and Social Reform**

- \*Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., “The Path of the Law” (1897), in *American Thought, Civil War to World War I*, ed. Perry Miller, pp. 184–206.
- \*Louis Brandeis, selections from *Brandeis on Democracy* (1905–1922), pp. 25–36, 51–66, 94–102.

### **Thursday, October 2: The Intellectuals and the War**

- \*John Dewey, “What America Will Fight For,” *New Republic*, 18 August 1917, pp. 68–69.
- Randolph Bourne, “Twilight of Idols” (1917), *AIT*, pp. 188–194.
- John Dewey, “Philosophy and Democracy” (1918), *AIT*, pp. 209–216.

### **Tuesday, October 7: The Aesthetic Experience of Modernity**

- \*T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1915), “The Hollow Men” (1925).
- \*Wallace Stevens, “Anecdote of the Jar” (1919).
- Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper* (1929), in *AIT*, pp. 224–32.

### **Thursday, October 9: Conservatism in a Liberal Society**

- \*H. L. Mencken, selection from *Notes on Democracy* (1926) in Mason and Baker, eds., *Free Government in the Making*, pp. 638–43.
- John Crowe Ransom, “Reconstructed but Unregenerate” (1930), *AIT*, pp. 233–44.
- Whittaker Chambers, selection from *Witness* (1950), *AIT*, pp. 325–37.

## **Tuesday, October 14: Double-Consciousness and the Cosmopolitan Ideal**

- W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), ch. 1, 2, 3, 9, 13, 14.
- Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America" (1916), in *AIT*, pp. 178–87.

## **\* Tuesday, October 21: MIDTERM \***

## **Thursday, October 23: Mass Culture and the Pathology of Normalcy**

- Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939), *AIT*, pp. 260–69.
- \*Erich Fromm, "The Psychology of Normalcy," *Dissent* 1, no. 2 (1954), pp. 139–43.

## **Tuesday, October 28: The Vital Center**

- Reinhold Niebuhr, selection from *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944), *AIT*, pp. 286–91.
- Hannah Arendt, "Ideology and Terror" (1953), *AIT*, pp. 338–48.
- Daniel Bell, "The End of Ideology in the West" (1960), *AIT*, pp. 373–79.

## **Thursday, October 30: Cold War Capitalism**

- \*X (George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (1947), pp. 566–582.
- W. W. Rostow, selection from *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1960), *AIT*, pp. 380–86.
- Noam Chomsky, "The Responsibility of Intellectuals" (1967), *AIT*, pp. 500–509.

## **Tuesday, November 4: Civil Rights and the American Dilemma**

- Gunnar Myrdal, selection from *An American Dilemma* (1944), *AIT*, pp. 277–284.
- Harold Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American" (1962), *AIT*, pp. 444–57.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., selection from "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (1963), *AIT*, pp. 475–82.

## **Thursday, November 6: The Moral Life of Markets**

- \*Friedrich Hayek, "Equality, Value, and Merit," in *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), pp. 85–102.
- Milton Friedman, selection from *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), *AIT*, pp. 402–410.

## **Tuesday, November 11: Left Critiques of Liberalism**

- C. Wright Mills, "Letter to the New Left" (1960), *AIT*, pp. 435–443.
- Herbert Marcuse, selection from *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), *AIT*, pp. 491–99.

**Thursday, November 13: The Redistribution of Rights**

- \*John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness,” *The Philosophical Review* (1958).

**\* Friday, November 14: SECOND PAPER DUE \***

**Tuesday, November 18: Gender Equality, Gender Difference**

- Betty Friedan, selection from *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), *AIT*, pp. 468–74.
- \*Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1989, Routledge edition 2006), pp. 1–22.
- \*Joan Williams, Preface, Introduction, and chapters 2, 8, in *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to do About It* (2000).

**Thursday, November 20: Truth and Meaning in the Postwar Sciences**

- Thomas Kuhn, selection from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), *AIT*, pp. 458–66.
- \*Clifford Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” (1972), in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 412–54.

**Tuesday, December 2: The Norms of Postmodernity**

- Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), viii–95, 189–98.

**Thursday, December 4: Community in an Age of Fracture**

- \*Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone,” *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995), pp. 65–78.
- \*Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union” (2008).

**\* Friday, December 12: FINAL EXAM \***