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.

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:
• Walter Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).

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

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


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


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

• *Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward* (1898), preface, ch. 1–7, 12, 14, 18, 22, 25, 28, postscript.

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


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

Thursday, September 18: Antimodernism as Impulse and Theory


Tuesday, September 23: Varieties of Pragmatism

- 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


Thursday, October 2: The Intellectuals and the War


Tuesday, October 7: The Aesthetic Experience of Modernity


Thursday, October 9: Conservatism in a Liberal Society

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


* Tuesday, October 21: MIDTERM *

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


Tuesday, October 28: The Vital Center

- Daniel Bell, “The End of Ideology in the West” (1960), *AIT*, pp. 373–79.

Thursday, October 30: Cold War Capitalism


Tuesday, November 4: Civil Rights and the American Dilemma

- Martin Luther King, Jr., selection from “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (1963), *AIT*, pp. 475–82.

Thursday, November 6: The Moral Life of Markets


Tuesday, November 11: Left Critiques of Liberalism

Thursday, November 13: The Redistribution of Rights


* 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.

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


Tuesday, December 2: The Norms of Postmodernity


Thursday, December 4: Community in an Age of Fracture


* Friday, December 12: FINAL EXAM *