

History 103: Twentieth-Century U.S. Intellectual History, Fall 2010

Time and Location: Mondays, 2–4, 204 Wheeler

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 2–4

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Course website: <http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~immer/103>

Course Description:

This course traces the history of the United States in the twentieth century through its ideas. How have intellectuals understood, reacted to, or participated in such developments as the growth of the corporation, imperialism, Jim Crow segregation, the wars of the twentieth century, the United States' rise to global prominence, and the social movements of the 1960s? How has the role of intellectuals changed with the growth of the university, the rise of the planners, and the emergence of novel sources of information? Such questions will be explored as we read a variety of primary texts from the period and scholarship in the field of intellectual history.

The course will be focused on two activities. First, students will read a blend of primary and secondary sources and discuss them in class. Second, they will engage in a number of explorations of individually-chosen primary sources from the period and write short memos explaining how those sources fit into the broader patterns of U.S. history. By the end of the course, students will have read widely in the primary sources of the period and have had ample practice doing original work in intellectual history.

The assigned reading will include texts by and about such prominent U.S. intellectuals as William James, Thorstein Veblen, W. E. B. Du Bois, John Dewey, Margaret Mead, and Thomas S. Kuhn and on such classic topics as pragmatism, Darwinism, science, political economy, race, culture, and democracy. Through their individual work, however, students will also be encouraged to investigate the more eclectic and minor aspects of intellectual history—science fiction, pedagogy, mathematics, environmentalism, jazz, legal theory, etc.

Students who have taken History 132B before or concurrently with this class will no doubt benefit, but 132B is not a required prerequisite. Students who plan to take a 101 after this course will be asked to prepare a short, nonbinding pre-prospectus. Note: this course will feature a fair amount of work, but that work will be evenly spaced throughout the semester.

Course Requirements:

Reading for Class:

Each week, you will be assigned to read somewhere between 100–150 pages of text for class. You are expected to read these assignments carefully and to be prepared to discuss them, so bring your books as well as any notes you have made. It would be helpful if you could note important passages, questions that occurred to you, or other items of interest that you would like to introduce into the class discussions.

Reading Responses

To help you focus your reading, you will be responsible for writing a paragraph-length reading response every week and sending it to me by e-mail (immer@berkeley.edu) by 10pm the Sunday night before each class. Unless otherwise indicated, your reading responses should propose an item for class discussion and give reasons why you would like to discuss that item. Reading responses needn't be formal or exhaustive. You are only required to submit one reading response per week, not one reading response per assigned text.

Class Participation

Seminars work best when their members listen attentively, participate actively, and treat each other with respect. You will be graded on all of those criteria. If you feel that discussions are not running the way you would like them to run, please talk to me about it or send me an e-mail.

Individual Readings

Every two weeks, you will get to choose a text from the set that I have selected and brought into class. You will then have two weeks to examine it and to come up with some analysis of it. Your analysis should discuss some aspect of the text and then draw some connection between the text and something outside of it (another text, a historical event, future developments in the field, an intellectual legacy). You must have a basic sense of how your chosen text operates, but you are not required to read it cover to cover if it is long.

If you would like to choose your own book rather than one I have brought in, that should be fine, although be sure to check with me first. The website “Books of the Century” (www.booksofthecentury.com) is a good place to go for ideas. Any book you choose should be (a) nonfiction, (b) within the same chronological period as the assigned readings for those two weeks, and (c) something you haven’t read already.

Memos

You will be asked to compose six memos during this class on the individual readings that you have selected. What is the difference between a memo and a paper? A memo mainly differs from a paper in that it is informal. It should be clear and concise, but needn’t feature florid language, comprehensive documentation, transitions, an introduction, a conclusion, or a title. It can include lists, bullet points, ideas you have not yet fully developed, and use of the first-person (e.g., “I’m intrigued by William James’s frequent reference to the ‘cash value’ of ideas and wonder if . . .”). The idea is to encourage you to spend your time thinking, not agonizing over sentences or chasing down quotations. Your goal in these memos will be simply to write down any interesting conclusions you have come to and to indicate the reasons why you have come to them. Your memos, though informal, should still be clearly written and be free of grammatical errors. Ideally, it will take you much less time to write a memo than it would to write a paper on the same topic.

Pre-Prospectus

If you plan to write a thesis in history, your final assignment will be to hand in a non-binding pre-prospectus (5–6 pages). If not, you will be expected to hand in a memo of roughly 5-6 pages that will count for slightly more than your other memos.

Oral Exam

At the end of the term, we will schedule a time to have a conversation about the course material and what you learned. This will give you a chance to raise your grade, especially if you are the sort of person who does not feel comfortable speaking in front of a group. The only way it can lower your grade is if you fail to show up. If you do not feel comfortable with an oral exam and would prefer to have a written one instead, I can arrange that.

Before your exam, I will ask you to submit a list of texts, at least six, that you would be particularly interested in discussing during your exam. Although I will not limit questions to only those texts, I will try to guide the conversation toward your strengths rather than toward your weaknesses.

Assigned Texts:

I have selected the cheapest or most widely available edition of each book, but you should feel free to acquire any edition of these books. All books are on reserve at Moffitt library.

1. Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Mariner Books, 1986); ISBN: 0618619550
2. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Dover, 1994); ISBN: 0486280411
3. David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper, *The American Intellectual Tradition*, 5th ed., vol. 2 (Oxford University Press, 2005); ISBN: 9780195183405.
4. William James, *Pragmatism* (Hackett, 1981); ISBN: 0915145057
5. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3d ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1996), ISBN: 0226458083
6. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Dover, 1994); ISBN: 0486280624
7. Robert Venturi, Steven Izenour, and Denise Scott Brown, *Learning from Las Vegas* (MIT Press, 1977); ISBN: 026272006X
8. Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Cornell, 1993); ISBN: 0801481112
9. Course Reader, available at CopyEdge, 2121 University Ave (between Shattuck and Oxford)

Using the Library's Electronic Resources:

To read some of the assigned texts online and to conduct your own research, you will need access to the library's various electronic databases and journals. You can use these databases and journals through the library's computers, but it will be more convenient for you to be able to use your own computer as well. To set up your computer so that it can access the library's electronic resources, you'll need to set up the Proxy Server Service on your computer. Go to <http://proxy.lib.berkeley.edu/> and follow the instructions there.

Checking Out Individual Readings:

I will bring in to class every two weeks books or other texts for individual readings. Unless you come up with your own reading and clear it with me, you'll need to take one of the readings that I've brought in. The books will be checked out to my library account. When you take a book from the classroom, sign it out and, within a week, take it to the library to charge it to your own account. If, at the end of the semester, any signed-out books remain charged to my account, I will assign an "incomplete" grade to whoever checked out those books until they are discharged from my account.

Grading:

Class Participation (class discussion, reading responses, oral exam)	50%
Outside Reading (memos, oral exam)	40%
Pre-Prospectus or Final Memo	10%

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Aug. 30: Intro Class, no reading due

Sept. 13: Darwinism, Biological and Social

- Asa Gray, Selection from "Review of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*" (1860) in *AIT*
- William Graham Sumner, "Sociology" (1881) in *AIT*
- Lester Frank Ward, "Mind as a Social Factor" (1884) in Course Reader (online also)
- MEMO 1 DUE

Sept. 20: Thorstein Veblen

- Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), chaps. 3-4, 6-8 (online also)
- C. Wright Mills, 1953 introduction to Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* in Course Reader

Sept. 27: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Idea of Race

- W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races" (1897) in Course Reader (online also)
- W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), forethought, chaps. 1, 3, and 5-6 (online also)
- MEMO 2 DUE

Oct. 4: William James and Pragmatism

- William James, *Pragmatism* (1907), table of contents, lectures II-III and VI-VII (online also)

Oct. 11: The Boasians and the Idea of Culture

- Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (1934), chaps. 1-3 and 7-8
- Richard Handler, "Boasian Anthropology and the Critique of American Culture," *American Quarterly* 42 (1990): 252-273 in Course Reader (online also)
- MEMO 3 DUE

Oct. 18: John Dewey and the Idea of Democracy

- Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (1991), preface and chaps. 2, 4-7, 9, and 12

Oct. 25: World War II and the Search for a National Morality

- Dwight Macdonald, "The Responsibility of Peoples" (1945), in Course Reader
- Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., selections from *The Vital Center* (1948) in Course Reader
- MEMO 4 DUE

Nov. 1: Postwar Economic Thought

- F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), chaps. 3, 5–6, and 11 in Course Reader
- Chester Bowles, *Tomorrow without Fear* (1946), selections in Course Reader
- Karl Polanyi, "Our Obsolete Market Economy" (1947) in Course Reader (online also)

Nov. 8: The End of Ideology

- Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), chap. 1 in Course Reader
- Daniel Bell, "The End of Ideology in the West," (1960), in *AIT*
- W. W. Rostow, "Some Lessons of History for Africa" (1960) in Course Reader
- MEMO 5 DUE

Nov. 15: Thomas S. Kuhn and the Scientific Community

- Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962)
- MEET WITH ME DURING MY OFFICE HOURS THIS WEEK IF YOU ARE WRITING A PRE-PROSPECTUS

Nov. 22: The Age of Contradiction

- Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (1962), chaps. 1 and 9 in Course Reader
- Harold Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American" (1962) in Course Reader
- Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), chap. 1 in *AIT*

Nov. 29: Postmodernism

- Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp'" (1964), in *AIT*
- Robert Venturi, Steven Izenour, and Denise Scott Brown, *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972)
- NON-BINDING PREPROSPECTUS OR MEMO 6 DUE

Dec. 6: The Rest of the World

- Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 3 (1972): 229–243 in Course Reader (online also)
- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978), chap. 1 in *AIT*
- Samuel Huntington, excerpt from *The Clash of Civilizations* (1993), in *AIT*

Dec. 10: SUBMIT LIST OF TEXTS (AT LEAST SIX) THAT YOU WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO DISCUSS FOR ORAL EXAMINATION.

Dec. 13-14: ORAL EXAMINATIONS