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HSTA 373.01: The History of American Thought to 1865

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The History of American Thought to 1865

HSTA 373 | 3 Credits | LA 337

Professor Claire Arcenas | Spring 2022 | T/Th 11-12:20pm

Office Hours: Thursdays 1-2:30pm & by appointment

Course Overview

This course introduces you to some of the major themes, questions, topics, and problems in American intellectual life from the early seventeenth century until the American Civil War. We will explore the history of American thought at the intersections of the history of religion, art, politics, scientific explorations, education, gender, race, and culture. From John Locke's ideas about the "social contract" and human psychology to Catherine Beecher's ideas about social reform, from Thomas Jefferson's and Frederick Douglass's ideas about the meaning of freedom to Abraham Lincoln's meditations on the universal value of the American nation-state, the readings for this course will address the intellectual traditions upon which the United States was built and that have given form and function to American political and cultural institutions to this day.

As we study Americans thinking (and people thinking about America), we will pay attention to questions about how the more recent past shapes what we *know* and what we tend to think is *important* about the distant worlds of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Along the way, lectures and discussions will challenge you to reconsider the category of "thinker" or "intellectual" in new and important ways.

Learning Outcomes

By successfully completing this class, you will:

- identify the major themes, questions, topics, and problems in American intellectual life from the early seventeenth century until the American Civil War;
- analyze and reevaluate the category of "intellectual" or "thinker" in early American history;
- understand how seemingly static concepts such as race, liberty, science, or gender have changed over time;
- use primary sources from diverse perspectives and different time periods to gain knowledge about the history of ideas, thinkers, and institutions in the past;
- gain an appreciation for how the more recent past shapes what we *know* and what we tend to think is *important* about the distant worlds of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries;
- hone your critical thinking, close reading, and communication skills; and
- learn how to write analytically, persuasively, and thoughtfully about the past.

Furthermore, as an approved intermediate writing course, this class will adhere to the specific learning outcomes provided by the University of Montana Faculty Senate. These are copied verbatim below.

Upon completion of this course, students will have learned how to do the following:

- identify and pursue sophisticated questions for academic inquiry;
- find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources
- manage multiple perspectives as appropriate;
- recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline;
- use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work;
- follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation that are appropriate to the discipline;
- Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy.¹

Required Texts (available for purchase or rental at UM Bookstore)

1. David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper, *The American Intellectual Tradition*, vol. 1, 7th ed. (Oxford, 2015).
2. Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, *The Ideas that Made America: A Brief History* (Oxford, 2019).

Assignments and Grading

1. Attendance, class participation, and informal reading responses (20%)
2. In-Class Quizzes (20%)
3. Presentation (10%)
4. Assignment #1 (10%: 2.5% = completed rough draft; 7.5% = final draft)
5. Assignment #2 (25%: 2.5% = completed rough draft; 22.5% = final draft)
6. Assignment #3 (15%: 2.5% = completed rough draft; 12.5% = final draft)

Your attendance in class is required. Simply attending class, however, is not sufficient. Rather, active, thoughtful, and engaged participation is the key to your success in this class. When evaluating your participation, I place more value on the quality rather than the quantity of your contributions. I will also take into account improvement in your participation over the duration of the semester. When thinking about your participation in class, it might be helpful to imagine yourself as a co-discussion-facilitator; participation means both constructively contributing to discussion and actively engaging with your peers. Your contributions to discussion should be based closely on the readings you complete for each class. In preparation for many classes, you will also complete an informal reading response. You will receive full credit for completing these and turning them in on time.

Assignment descriptions and further details will be distributed in class and posted on Moodle. Provisional due dates are on the syllabus below, but please check Moodle regularly and listen in class for any changes!

Grading Rubric:

A: 93-100	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	D: 63-66
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	D-: 60-62
B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D+: 67-69	F: 59 and below

¹ You can find more here:

http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/committees/writing_committee/guidelines.php

Overview of Important Deadlines (See Moodle for any Changes):

Thursday, 2/10: Quiz 1 ~ In Class
 Thursday, 3/10: Quiz 2 ~ In Class
 Thursday, 4/14: Quiz 3 ~ In Class

Tuesday, 4/26; Thursday, 4/28; Tuesday, 5/3: Student Presentations ~ In Class

Assignment	Submit Draft to via Moodle	Writing Workshop Session	Final Version Due to Professor
Assignment #1	Sunday, February 20th	Tuesday, February 22nd	Tuesday, March 1st
Assignment #2	Friday, April 1st	Tuesday, April 5th	Tuesday, April 12th
Assignment #3	Sunday, April 24th	Tuesday, April 26th	Sunday, May 8th

UPWA Submission:

As an intermediate writing course, this class requires an electronic submission (via Moodle) of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the university’s writing program. Your assignment will be stored in a database. A random selection of papers will be assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from a selection of the Writing Learning Outcomes. This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university. You will receive additional information about which assignment you’ll submit ahead of time.

Formatting Specifications:

Unless otherwise noted, here are the formatting guidelines you should follow for all written work in this class:

- 12-point, Times New Roman font; Double-spaced text; 1-inch margins; *Chicago Manual of Style* citations.

Electronics Policy: Before coming to class, please silence and put away all electronics, including your cell phone. On the first day of class, we will discuss appropriate use of laptops and tablets for discussion and accessing readings.

Academic Honesty: Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with UM’s Student Conduct Code and conducting themselves accordingly. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating, will result in appropriate disciplinary action and possibly a failing grade. An easy rule to follow is that all work you produce for this class should be your own. Please ask Professor Arcenas if you have any questions.

Equal Access: The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE). If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact the ODE at: (406) 243-2243, ode@umontana.edu, or visit www.umt.edu/disability for more information. Retroactive accommodation requests will not be honored, so please, do not delay. As your instructor, I will work with you and the ODE to implement an effective accommodation, and you are welcome to contact me privately if you wish.

COVID-Related Policies: You are required to wear a face mask covering your nose and mouth at all times while inside our classroom. You can find more details and up-to-date information from the University of Montana here: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus/campus-covid-plan/default.php>. In addition to the mask requirement, please make note of the following policies:

- You are discouraged from eating or drinking while inside our classroom.
- Stay home if you feel sick and/or if you are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. We will work together to ensure you don't fall behind in class.
- If you are sick and/or displaying COVID-19 symptoms, please contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330 ASAP.
- Thank you for your vigilance! We are all in this together.

A Note on Student Hours & Email: I am looking forward to getting to know all of you! This semester, I am holding office hours on Thursdays from 1-2:30pm & by appointment. Please email me to set up a meeting via Zoom or in my office. During the week, I can be reached by email and will do my best to respond within 24 hours. Please use your UM email address for all communication.

Civic, Academic, and Career Competencies Statement:

This class will prepare you for a range of civic, academic, and employment opportunities. On a fundamental level, this course will prepare you for what the political theorist Danielle Allen calls “participatory readiness”—that is, your role as a member of our twenty-first-century democratic society.

This course will also prepare you for a range of specific academic and career opportunities, such as a graduate degree in history (or a related field), advanced degrees in law, business, or journalism, or work in museums, schools, archives, non-profits, law firms, and governmental agencies.

I encourage all of you to review the following National Association of Colleges and Employers Career Readiness Statement, which includes attention to eight essential competencies of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, digital technology, leadership, work ethic, career management, and intercultural fluency: <https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>. Over the course of the semester, we will reflect on the ways in which this course and its specific assignments align with these competencies.

Provisional Schedule of Class Meetings (Please check Moodle regularly for most up-to-date information on topics, readings, and assignments):

Week 1: What Is Intellectual History? What Does It Mean to Study American Thought & Culture?

T 1/18: Course Introduction

-No reading for today! Please come to class ready to introduce yourself and learn a bit about what we'll cover this term.

TH 1/20: Sources, Tools, and Traditions

To read for today:

- Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, *The Ideas that Made America: A Brief History*, introduction and chapter 1.

Week 2: "Thus in the Beginning All the World Was America"

T 1/25: Thinking about America: The New World as a State of Nature

To read for today:

-John Locke, selections from the *Second Treatise of Government* (1690) and *Fundamental Constitution of Carolina* (1669) (Moodle)

TH 1/27: Puritan Thought, Puritan Belief

To read for today:

-John Winthrop, selections from "A Modell of Christian Charity" (1630) (*AIT*)
-Daniel T. Rodgers, *As a City on a Hill*, selections (Moodle)

Informal Reading Response:

-See Moodle.

Week 3: Errands into the Wilderness

T 2/1: Legacies of the Puritans

To read for today:

-Anne Hutchinson, "The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson at the Court at Newtown" (1637) (*AIT*)
-Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644) (*AIT*)

TH 2/3: Eighteenth-Century Religious and Scientific Awakenings I

To read for today:

-Jonathan Edwards, Selections from “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (1741) and selections from *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections (AIT)*

Informal Reading Response:

-See Moodle.

Week 4: Religious and Scientific Awakenings

T 2/8: Eighteenth-Century Religious and Scientific Awakenings II

To read for today:

-Benjamin Franklin, selections from his *Autobiography (AIT)*

TH 2/10: In-Class Quiz 1 & Primary Source Workshop I

-No reading for today, but see Moodle for any instructions.

Week 5: American Enlightenments

T 2/15: American Enlightenments I

To read for today:

-Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, *The Ideas that Made America: A Brief History*, chapter 2.

-See Moodle.

TH 2/17: American Enlightenments II

-See Moodle.

Informal Reading Response:

-See Moodle

****Assignment #1 Draft Due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 2/20****

Week 6: Political Thought of the American Revolution I

T 2/22: Writing Workshop for Assignment #1

TH 2/24: Political Thought of the American Revolution

To read for today:

-See Moodle.

Week 7: Political Thought of the American Revolution II

T 3/1: Keywords of the American Revolution

To read for today:

-See Moodle.

****Assignment #1 Due by 11:59pm on Tuesday 3/1****

TH 3/3: Political Thought of the American Founding Moment

To read for today:

-See Moodle.

Week 8: Who is an American? What Is America?

T 3/8: Jefferson Takes on Theories of Degeneracy

To read for today:

-Comte de Buffon, "Of the Animals of the New World," *Natural History* (1749-1788) (Moodle)

-Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "Query XIX" (1787) (Moodle)

-J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, "What Is an American?" (1782) (Moodle)

TH 3/10: Quiz 2 & Primary Source Workshop II

-No reading for today, but see Moodle for any instructions.

Week 9: Perspectives on the Legacies of American Enlightenments

T 3/15: The Limits of the Enlightenment & the Equality of the Sexes

To read for today:

-Judith Sargent Murray, "On the Equality of the Sexes," (1790) (*AIT*)

-Ruth Bloch, "The Origins of Feminism and the Limits of Enlightenment," *Modern Intellectual History*, vol. 3, no. 3 (November 2006): 473-494 (Moodle)

TH 3/17: Defining Race and Racial Difference

To read for today:

-Samuel Stanhope Smith, Selection from *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (1810) (*AIT*)

-See Moodle

Informal Reading Response:

-See Moodle

Spring Break ~ Enjoy!

Week 10: Antebellum Reforms

T 3/29: Protestant Awakenings

To read for today:

- Ratner-Rosenhagen, *The Ideas that Made America: A Brief History*, chapter 3.
- See Moodle

TH 3/31: Feminism, Domesticity, and the “Woman Question”

To read for today:

- Catharine Beecher, “A Treatise on Domestic Economy,” (1841) selections (*AIT*)
- Leslie Butler, “‘The Woman Question’ in the Age of Mass Democracy,” in *The Worlds of American Intellectual History*, chapter 2 (Moodle)

Informal Reading Response:

- See Moodle

Assignment #2 Draft Due by 11:59pm on Friday, 4/1

Week 11: Transcendentalism

T 4/5: Individual Meetings with Professor to Discuss Assignment #2 Drafts (some meetings will also take place outside of class on Monday and Wednesday of this week)

TH 4/7: Nineteenth-Century Transcendentalism

To read for today:

- See Moodle

Week 12: Democratic Problems and the Problem of Democracy

T 4/12: Democratic Problems and the Problem of Democracy

To read for today:

- See Moodle

Assignment #2 Due by 11:59pm on Tuesday, 4/12

TH 4/14: Quiz #3 & Primary Source Workshop III

- No reading for today, but see Moodle for any instructions.

Week 13: Interpreting the Founding Documents in an Age of Slavery and Abolition

T 4/19: Southerners Rethink the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution

To read for today:

-See Moodle

TH 4/21: Frederick Douglass, American Intellectual

To read for today:

-See Moodle

Informal Reading Response:

-See Moodle

****Assignment 3 Drafts Due by 11:59pm on Sunday 4/24****

Week 14: Writing & Presentations Week

T 4/26: Writing Workshop 3 | Student Presentations on Assignment #3

TH 4/28: Student Presentations on Assignment #3

Week 15: The Civil War and the Making of Modern America

T 5/3: Mass Death, Darwin, and the Making of Modern America | Student Presentations on Assignment #3

To read for today:

-Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address (1865)

-Adam Gopnik, *Angels and Ages: A Short Book about Darwin, Lincoln, and Modern Life* (Knopf, 2009), selections.

TH 5/5: Course Conclusions

****Assignment #3 Final Draft Due by 11:59pm on Sunday, May 8th****