

Bowie State University
Department of History and Government
Course Outline for
American Intellectual History-H-400

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Fall 2009

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MLK 218: Office Hrs: 10-11 a.m. and 2-5 p.m. Tues & Thurs.; Wed. by Appointment

Course Prerequisite: History 201 or 202 or special permission of the instructor

Required Texts:

Richard, Carl J., *Battle for the American Mind: A Brief History*, Rowman-Littlefield, 2008

Hutton, Frankie, *Rose Lore: Essays in Cultural History and Semiotics*, Lexington Books, 2008.

Hutton, Frankie, *Greatest of My Dreams*, Pearson Publishing, 2009

Suggested Reading: *Book of the Sun* by Marcell Jankovics, translated by Mario Fenyo and *America's Communal Utopias* edited by Donald E. Pitzer

Course Description and Scope

Throughout the semester we will be concerned with the history of ideas and critical thought about ideas and concepts, some old, some new, some primordial. Thus, toward success in the course, students are expected to develop the habit of thinking critically about all of the readings, lectures, films, power point presentations and discussions that take place during the course of the semester. Obviously, an open mind is critical to examination of ideas and concepts from the perspective of an intellectual. In this course the mission is to think “outside the box” about ideas presented and to make sense of them through critical reading, discussion and exceptional reflection to be followed up with exceptional, concise writing about the ideas under consideration. In the context of the course, we strive not to judge ideas based on preconceived notions, but to consider all or any discussed ideas based on their own merit. Students who are not prepared to think critically and to write a series of 3 grammatically tight, well organized short papers are not likely to be “happy” in the course. We will begin with traditionally American concepts such as Puritanism, democracy and the United States Constitution as these are themes that every educated American ought to know at least something about as they set a foundation for what we today call America. We will also consider some of the reform and utopian groups that have made their mark in America. Then we veer into more global ideas such as semiotics and larger metaphysical themes that have influenced at least significant segments of the American mind.

We will also consider the “green” mind—a global topic that is concerned with **environmental and natural resource awareness**. Environmentalism is truly our theme “across the curriculum” because the environment is an area that impacts all of us at BSU and nationally. Always, the focus of the course is ideas and critical thought. The essential model or base to be used as we consider various, diverse ideas is the “three philosophies” model—that is theism, humanism and skepticism—as proffered by Carl Richard in the introduction to his book THE BATTLE FOR THE AMERICAN MIND. The three short required papers should bring into consideration theism, humanism and skepticism, pragmatism and metaphysics as a foundation to synthesize thinking about old and new ideas that we will consider during the course of the semester. Please note: Class participation is expected of each student. Growth in the course hinges not solely on the professor’s lectures, films and other materials, but also on student interaction and sharing thoughts about ideas. Bonus points (up to 5 per session) may be earned for high caliber oral synthesis of readings, lectures and discussions as demonstrated immediately in class.* Late attendance is not appreciated because it disrupts the flow of the course—that is lectures, films, presentations and discussions that go on

during class. Students must take responsibility for managing their work in the course and for listening for announcements of possible changes in schedules, exam dates, etc. It is strongly recommended that each student keeps a dated journal of each session—that is to take copious notes and especially to note their own high quality input in discussions. One or two related field trips may occur; bonus points may be earned for short papers connected with these.

Competencies Required for Success in the Course

- a.. written and oral communication are both essential
- b. Analysis and discussion of critical issues and major themes in the history of ideas
- c. Make interpretations and present those ideas in writing; three short formal papers with reference notes
- d. scientific and quantitative reasoning
- e. application of historical methods of inquiry during investigations, especially utilizing the philosophies set down by the author of the primary text and other concepts as provided by the professor.

Critical Analysis and Reasoning

- *a. Apply skills in analysis, synthesis and problem solving
- *b. Apply logical reasoning in the examination and in the presentation of 3 short papers
- *c. Apply organization and sound reasoning in the completion of papers and input in classroom discussions

Course Learning Objectives:

This course is designed to enable students to:

- 1.demonstrate competency in writing a 3- three page (single spaced) research/synthesis papers with sound reasoning
2. present an oral summary of three short synthesis papers to the class using power point technology and/or Graphics to enhance the presentation—5-7 minutes short presentation.
3. evaluate references which are based on sound scholarship (primary and secondary sources)
4. distinguish between primary and secondary sources
5. identify sound historical argument
6. encourage students to organize their thoughts and to think critically and not narrow mindedly
7. to introduce students to the concept of **environmentalism** or the “green mind”, including such global issues as carbon monoxide emissions, ocean pollution, global warming, etc.
8. using a power point presentation, introduce students to world class individuals who have made a difference in the fields of environmental protection, global warming, etc.

Student Expected Outcomes:

1. Write 3- three page synthesis papers of an intellectual idea from the grid in this course outline, including one concerned with **environmentalism or preservation of natural resources**
2. Deliver 3 oral presentations based on 3 essays
3. Participate in class discussions on the themes provided in this course outline
4. Pass two written examinations covering lectures, films shown in class and assigned readings.

Instructional Modes

Traditional Experiences: lecture/discussion, drill, video, power point, group work, essay writing; organized oral presentations

Assessment/Grading Procedures

Traditional Assessment will consist of 3 short critical thought papers and 2 exams—all counting equally—that is 20% each. (see grid and specific guidelines below for short papers)

(a) Learning objectives will be measured by 2 tests covering assigned textbook readings, 3 - two to three page, typewritten, Critical Thought research papers; to be completed in excellent form with full utilization of primary and secondary sources.

attainment of an overall average of "C" or better. Students may earn bonus points 20 bonus points for perfect on-time attendance for every class. Showing up late for a session automatically disqualifies one for these bonus points. In this regard, each student must be present for roll call and/or to sign the class roster and the very beginning of class. All items listed under expected outcomes will count equally.

(b) Up to 30 Bonus points may be available for students who seize the opportunity to attend selected lectures or take selected field trips that are connected with intellectual ideas considered during the course of the semester. Students should listen for announcements regarding such opportunities which may also be posted on Blackboard.

(c) Students may also be given the opportunity to participate in a short, critical self evaluation of their work in the course near the end of the course. If this opportunity presents itself, it must be organized and typewritten.

Letter Grade values:

A= 90-100, B= 80-89, C= 70-79, D = 60-69, F= below 60.

Guidelines for Short Papers--- 3 major short papers are required.

These papers are to be the student's best critical thought based on a well thought and organized angle that is well devised and substantiated---based on Richard's 3 philosophies and/or the concepts of pragmatism or metaphysics as applied to the ideas as presented in the Thematic Grid in this course outline. There is no need for a cover sheet; your name, the date and course number should be on each paper of your paper. A theme or thesis statement should be the heading of your paper. There ought to be some specific idea about the subject matter that you decide to address and flush out in an organized fashion as thoroughly as you can, without rambling. The key to success in writing the papers is your own organized thought and following the guidelines for the paper! Your professor is delighted to give you guidance for this paper and even suggestions, if so needed. Late papers will be penalized 20 pts. Off for each session late. Give a lot of thought to your paper in advance. See the professor during office hours far in advance of due dates, if needed, for guidance. Separate, detailed guidelines for the 3 short "Critical Thought" papers will be distributed in class. Use Turabian's Handbook exactly for endnotes. No bibliography is needed for these short papers.

Session Outline, Course Content (Learning Units and Themes

(Some Session Themes are Subject to Change)

Weeks One and Two September 3 and 10

Course Orientation and Puritanism

Puritanism, Lecture on Edmund Morgan's *Puritan Dilemma*/

See portion of film "Scarlet Letter"

Required Reading: "Puritanism as a Literary Force" (1917) by H. L. Mencken

Submit one page outline on paper 9/10

PLEASE NOTE: critical thought paper #1 on some aspect of Puritanism due promptly at 5 p.m. on 9/17

Week Three, September 17

Short Presentations on Critical Thought Papers on Puritanism

Utopian/ Reform Groups/ : Shakers, Oneidas, Transcendentalists, Hutterites, Theosophists

See excerpts from 2 Films on Transcendentalism and Theosophy

Abolitionists/ Abolitionism as a Movement: William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, John Brown

Week Four, Sept. 24

Democracy and the United States Constitution

In prep for this lecture, please peruse the Constitution and read Hutton's Chapter 6 in the *Greatest of My Dreams*

Exam #1 Sept. 24th (Exam will cover Richard book, lectures, films, other assigned readings)

Weeks Five and Six, October 1 and 8th

Professor will be attending a conference on Oct. 1st

Guest Lecturer

Week 7, October 15

Museum Field Trip, Baltimore

(Bonus points may be earned for a trip to the Amaranthine Museum Lecture Series)

Week 8, Oct. 22nd

Power Point Presentation/ Lecture on Semiotics--- important symbols in the universe.

In prep for this session, please read Hutton's book *Rose Lore* and peruse Mario Fenyo's translation of Jankovic's, *Book of the Sun*

Also helpful is the *Penguin Book of Symbols*

Select a symbol for your next Critical thought paper; advise the professor

Weeks 9, Oct. 29th African Americans in United States History

Thought of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Malcolm X or other Blacks who've made significant contributions to American history.

Read: excerpts of the books: *I May Not Get There With you: The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Michael Eric Dyson; Read the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

Read "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"---available on line and to be read in class

Apply the essay written by William James (1907) entitled "Pragmatism" to the life and work of MLK
Peruse chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 Hutton's *Greatest of My Dreams*--- taking note of the lives of other African Americans who have served. How does pragmatism apply to the work of these people?

Critical Thought Paper #2 Due: Nov. 5th---pay closer attention to guidelines

Week 10, Nov. 5th

Alien Agenda---Jim Marrs

"Chariots of the Gods" Erich von Daniken (1972); UFOs

Short Critical Thought Paper related to this session is due Dec. 3rd. (See grid)

Weeks 11 and 12---Nov. 12th and 19th

Environment and Natural Resources:

Oil, Water (all aspects)

Hurricanes/ Tornados

Earth's vibration/ makeup

See Films on Water and Hurricane Katrina and/ or clips from

Al Gore's film "Inconvenient Truth"---See *NYTimes Magazine* April 19, 2009 "The Green Mind"

Exam # 2---Exact date TBA; probably the 19th; additional field trip also possible in mid-November

Week 13, Nov. 25 and 26---Thanksgiving Break

Week 14, December 3rd

Oral Presentations of Research paper # 3 on an Environmental/ Natural Resource or UFO topic

Week 15; December 10th--- Last Class meeting

Final Exam; Wrap Up and Course Evaluation/ Optional Student's Self Evaluation Due

Note: Your required three, 2-3 page paper topics must be original and relate to some idea within the grid presented here in the course outline. Successful papers ought to make use Richard’s ideas (humanism, theism, skepticism or pragmatism, metaphysics)) as a base on which to set a foundation to examine ideas below and will adhere to guidelines given in this course outline and further by the professor. The papers ought to be single spaced; no cover sheet is needed; be sure to type your name on each page, as well as the title of your paper; also ensure that you follow directions closely for full credit. Again, the 3 papers are to be single spaced, two to three pages only, well organized, grammatically correct and critically thought. Be prepared to give a 5-10 minute presentation of the paper in class. It’s best to ask the professor to pre-approve your topic. **Any form of Plagiarism**—that is stealing the ideas/words of other scholars, journalists from the internet or elsewhere and using them as your own will result in an automatic “F”. Be careful and scrupulous about giving proper attribution and credit to others for their thoughts and words.

Thematic Grid for Short Papers (2-3 pages, Single Spaced)
I. Short Critical Paper #1 Traditional---Draft and Oral Presentations: Due Sept. 17th with short presentation (5 minutes); final paper due: Sept. 24th
Option A---Puritanism – Peruse - <i>The Battle for the American Mind</i> by Carl Richard and read the first 5 pages of each chapter thoroughly; peruse the rest of the book with certain understanding of Richards ideas on theism, humanism, etc.
OR, Option B: one of the Utopian or Reform groups/Communitarianism: Shakers, Hutterites, Oneidas, or reform groups such as the abolitionists
II. Short Critical Paper #2 on Some Aspect of Semiotics ; Due, Oct. 29nd
Semiotics/ Metaphysics/ Sacred Geometry –Peruse Hutton’s book <u>Rose Lore: Essays in Cultural History and Semiotics</u> for this segment; read last 4 chapters of the book thoroughly and apply them to your critical thought paper
Sun : <u>Book of the Sun</u> by Marcell Jankovics, translated by Mario Fenyo) Roses String Theory Cross Dodecahedron
III. Short Critical Paper #3; Natural Resources/ Environment OR Alien Agenda/ Erich von Daniken’s “Chariots of the Gods”; Due: Dec. 3rd.
Oil/ Coal Water--- all and any aspects of this precious element Hurricanes/ Tornados
Books to Consider for this section: Thom Hartman’s <i>Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight</i> Jim Marr’s the <u>Alien Agenda</u> ; see other selections that may be helpful on page 4 of this course outline

Selected Reading

The Great Awakening in New England by Edwin Scott Gaustad

War and Liberty by Geoffrey R. Stone

The Rise of American Democracy by Sean Wilentz (2007)

The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop by Edmund S. Morgan (1958)

Penguin Book of Symbols

Alien Agenda by Jim Marrs (2000)

Voices of Freedom: A Documentary History, Volumes 1 and 2 by Eric Foner

American Ideas: Source Readings in the Intellectual History of the United States, Volumes 1 and 2 by Gerald N. Grob and Robert Beck (1963)

Liberty, Equality, Power, Volumes 1 and 2 by Murrin Johnson, McPherson and others

Outsiders in 19th Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives by Frankie Hutton

The Book of the SUN by Marcell Jankovics, translated by Mario Fenyo 2001

The Rise of American Democracy: Democracy Ascendant, 1815-1840 by Sean Wilentz

United States Environmentalism Since 1945: A Brief History With Documents by Steven Stoll (2007)

The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight by Thom Hartmann

Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63 by Taylor Branch

I May Not Get There With you: The True Martin Luther King, Jr. by Michael Eric Dyson

America's Communal Utopias edited by Donald E. Pitzer

Greatest of My Dreams by Frankie Hutton

The United States Constitution

Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America (2009) by Douglass Brinkley

The Evolution of God (2009) by Robert Wright (book suggests there is room for a merger of science and the divine)

Forbidden History: Prehistoric Technologies, Extraterrestrial Intervention and the Suppressed Origins of Civilization edited by J. Douglas Kenyon

Forbidden Religion: Suppressed Heresies of the West, edited by J. Douglas Kenyon

11:11 The Time Prompt Phenomenon: The Meaning Behind Mysterious Signs, Sequences and Synchronicities by Marie D. Jones and Larry Flaxman

How the World is Made: The Story of Creation According to Sacred Geometry by John Michell and Allan Brown

History Is Wrong by Erich von Daniken

God Theory: Universes, Zero-Point Fields and What's Behind It All by Bernard Haisch (*Astrophysicist and NASA funded scientist in Light Research*)

Occult America: The Secret History of How Mysticism Shaped Our Nation by Mitch Horowitz (shows that many Americans, including Frederick Douglass, Abe Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt have known about the nation's "secret" history.)

Admiral Byrd's Secret Journey Beyond the Poles: Land Without a Horizon, Secrets of the Hollow Earth by Tim R. Swart (contains the lost journals of Nikola Tesla)

Cymatics by Hans Jenny (*a great book on sacred geometry metaphysics and sound healing*)

The American Intellectual Tradition, Volumes I and II edited by David Hollinger and Charles Capper (this book is currently a staple in Intellectual history)