FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR: RADICALS AND REFORMERS IN AMERICA

This course is designed to introduce first-year students to important themes in American history during the 19th and 20th centuries. To accomplish that aim, the course examines the history of individuals and groups who wished to reform American society or culture, as well as those who offered radical alternatives to the accepted patterns of life in America. By this process, students will be exposed to many significant social and political movements in American history.

Through the vehicle of radicals and reformers in America, this course hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- Expose students to the art of critical reading and historical analysis.
- Reveal the interplay of various methods of historical inquiry (i.e., biography, social history, political history, cultural history).
- Examine the conflicts between the history of dominant and underrepresented groups, and discover the significance of the categories of race, class, and gender in American history.
- Allow students to develop their own interpretative framework for understanding social movements, as well as a framework for the meaning of such terms as reform, radical, conservative, etc.

The course is divided into three sections for an in-depth analysis of three active periods for radical and reform movements in America.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following books are required readings and are available at the College Bookstore:
- Daniel Pope, ed., *American Radicalism.*
- Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist.*
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland and Selected Stories.*
- Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings.*

Additional readings (both secondary and primary sources) are on electronic reserve. Reserve readings are required readings, not optional. Occasionally, the readings in the syllabus will be changed (with sufficient warning). Handouts may also be added to the required readings.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

The following books are available at the College Bookstore, and will be selected by students for the analytical paper during the second section of the seminar.
- Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives.*

The following books will also be available at the Bookstore, if you wish to purchase them. These will be available on electronic reserve, and general reserve at McCabe Library, so it is entirely *optional* whether you purchase them.

Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Harvey J. Kaye, eds., *The American Radical*  

Students who want background reading on any era, episode, or movement in American history, may consult either of these two sets of books:


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**  
**Class participation and Discussion Questions:** Students are expected to attend all class meetings, complete all readings, be prepared for discussion of the assigned reading each week, and read and comment on other students' papers when so assigned. Thoughtful preparation on the part of all students is essential for a seminar to be a positive learning environment for everyone. Hence, students will be asked to prepare discussion questions prior to each seminar meeting in which course readings will be discussed. Discussion questions (usually 2-4 questions) should be thoughtful queries designed to elicit further discussion from members of the seminar. They should not be questions of clarification. The professor may collect these on occasion.

**Short papers:** There will be several short papers assigned over the course of the semester (see class schedule). Handouts will be given to explain the expectations of the papers.  
- First short paper (2 pages) will be an analysis of a document by an antebellum-era reformer or radical.  
- Second paper (4 pages) will be an analytical essay on the topic of antebellum reform.  
- Third paper (6-9 pages) will be a longer analytical essay based on both the assigned and optional readings for one of the topics in the second section of the seminar. This paper will allow students to interpret one or more book-length primary sources on a given topic.

**Research Paper:** Students will write a research paper (10-12 pages) during the last third of the course, based on a historical analysis of primary and secondary sources. The research papers will be written on any given radical or reformer (or group of radicals or reformers) that the student chooses in consultation with the professor. Topics should be chosen with regard to the availability of sources on that person or group. Each student will make an oral presentation on his or her research during week 11, 12, or 13.
CLASS SCHEDULE:  

* = Reserve reading on electronic reserves

Week 1 - Jan. 22:  INTRODUCTION

PART ONE: ANTEBELLUM REFORM

Week 2 - Jan. 29: REFORMING THE REPUBLIC/ REFORMING THEMSELVES

Readings:
* Bruce Dorsey, Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City, ch. 3-5.

First short paper – Document Analysis – due at the beginning of class

Week 3 - Feb. 5:  CHALLENGES TO RACIAL SLAVERY AND PATRIARCHY

Readings:
Painter, Sojourner Truth: A Life, a Symbol.

Week 4 - Feb. 12:  Second short paper due at the beginning of class. Discussion. Workshop on Research and Library Skills

Readings:
Pope, American Radicalism, 50-122.
* Buhle, Buhle & Kaye, The American Radical: essay on Fanny Wright.
* David Walker, David Walker’s Appeal in Four Articles (1830).
* Other documents, to be announced.

PART TWO: TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY RADICALS AND REFORMERS

Week 5 - Feb. 19:  LABOR RADICALISM AND PROGRESSIVE REFORMERS

Readings:
Salvatore, Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist, esp. ch. 2-4, 6-9 (skim others).
Pope, American Radicalism, 123-69.

Additional Readings:
Riis, How the Other Half Lives.
Sinclair, The Jungle.
Week 6 - Feb. 26: RADICAL WOMEN

Readings:
Pope, American Radicalism, 200-231.
* Victoria Woodhull, The Scare-Crows of Sexual Slavery (New York, 1873)

Additional Reading:
Falk, Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman.

Week 7 - Mar. 5: ACTIVISTS FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

Readings:
Wells, Southern Horrors and Other Writings.
Pope, American Radicalism, 170-199.

Additional Readings:
Washington, Up From Slavery.
Du Bois, Souls of Black Folk.

Mar. 12 - SPRING VACATION

Week 8 - Mar. 19: Third short paper due at the beginning of class. Discussion.

PART THREE: 20TH-CENTURY REFORMERS AND RADICALS

Week 9 - Mar. 26: THE DEPRESSION AND THE MODERN ERA

Readings:
* Edward J. Larson, Summer for the Gods, ch. 3-4, skim ch. 8-9.
* Paul C. Mischler, Raising Reds, ch. 2-5.
* James Goodman, Stories of Scottsboro, ch. 1, 4-10.

Week 10 - Apr. 2: THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND BLACK POWER

Readings:
Weisbrot, Freedom Bound.
Pope, American Radicalism, 268-303.
* Documents: Fannie Lou Hamer, in My Soul is Rested.
    Huey Newton on the Black Panther Movement.
    Stokely Carmichael, Black Power (1967).
Week 11 - Apr. 9  STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPERS
Week 12 - Apr. 16  STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPERS
Week 13 - Apr. 23  STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPERS

PART FOUR: CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

Week 14 - Apr. 30:  RAP MUSIC AND AIDS ACTIVISM

Readings:
Rose, *Black Noise*.
Pope, *American Radicalism*, 304-344

Music:
- Students will be assigned to listen to various musical selections prior to class.

Research Paper Due:  Friday, May 3