

NORAM1510: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN STUDIES, SPRING 2012

Lecturer: Hilde Løvdal

E-mail: hildlov@ilos.uio.no

Phone: 22858294

Office: Niels Treschows hus, room 723

Office hours: by appointment.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory (minimum 80%).

Preparing for lectures and seminars is expected and necessary for the semester to be informative and interesting. As Benjamin Franklin says - "Diligence is the Mother of Good-Luck." Both lectures and seminars will require that students engage with the teaching. The lectures and seminars will not be passive learning, but interactions between lecturer and students. **Always bring along the material** that will be discussed in class. Remember: when you sign up for a class, you sign a social contract where your lecturer offers his/her time, knowledge, and skills and you offer your attention, questions, and engagement with the material we will discuss. It is also a social contract between you and your fellow students. Your questions and your insight may help other students – and vice versa. I therefore strongly encourage you to form your own study groups in addition to the lectures and seminars.

EXAMINATION

You are required to write **two 5-page papers** for this class. You will receive your grades based on both essays. Hence, you will not receive a separate grade on your first essay, but **one final grade** (A-F). However, you will get feedback (I repeat: *not* a formal grade!) and advice when you turn in a draft of your paper. Your draft must be a proper, substantial text – with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. It is impossible to give constructive feedback to simply a list of "stuff I plan to write about." You will then get two weeks to revise your paper before the final deadline.

For writing tips, please consult Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *"They Say / I Say" The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (W.W. Norton, 2008).

Deadlines:

Essay 1:

Drafts due February 14, returned February 21

Final essays due March 13

Essay 2:

Drafts due May 8, returned May 15

Final essays due May 30

SCHEDULE

We will meet 14 times over the semester in 8 lectures and 6 seminars – i.e. we will meet either for a lecture or for a seminar each week.

Lecture 1: January 17:

Readings

Primary

Skard, Sigmund, *Trans-Atlantica: Memoirs of an Americanist* (Universitetsforlaget, 1978) (Excerpt on Fronter)

Secondary

Moen, Ole O. "American Studies in Norway: Past and Present," *European Journal of American Studies* 1 (2006) <http://ejas.revues.org/1083>

Key themes: formalities; what is American Studies?

Lecture 2: (January 24)

Readings

Primary

The Virginia Ordinance http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/va04.asp

The Mayflower Compact http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mayflower.asp

John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity,"

<http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html>

Transcripts from the trial of Anne Hutchinson,

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/bdorse1/41docs/30-hut.html>

The Declaration of Independence http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/declare.asp

The US Constitution http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/usconst.asp

Secondary:

Armitage, David. "The Declaration of Independence in World Context," *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 8. No. 3, *The Atlantic World* (Apr. 2004), 61-66.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25163686>

Key themes: different visions for the Americas, founding the United States of America/defining an American nation

Lecture 3: (January 31)

Readings

Primary

J. Hector Crevecoeur, "What is an American" in *Letters from an American Farmer*,

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/CREV/letter03.html>

Alexis De Tocqueville, "The Example of the Americans Does not Prove That a Democratic People Can Have No Aptitude And No Taste For Science, Literature, or Art" and "How Americans Understand the Equality of the Sexes" in *Democracy in America*

(http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/ch1_09.htm and http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/ch3_12.htm)

Frederic Jackson Turner, "1. The Significance of The Frontier in American History" in *The Frontier in American History* (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/home.html>)

Ruth B. Moynihan and Susan Armitage, *So Much to be Done Women Settlers on the Mining and Ranching Frontier*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998 (Excerpts shared on Fronter)

Key themes: defining an American nation cont., the West, the imagined and the real Frontier

Lecture 4 (February 7)

Readings

Primary

Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands on an Angry God" (Shared on Fronter)

Ralf Waldo Emerson, "Self Reliance" (Shared on Fronter)

John Wesley, "Self-Denial" <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-48-self-denial/>

Key theme: self and the sacred, American spirituality

Seminar 1 (February 14 and 17) Drafts due February 14

Readings

Primary

Seneca Falls Convention, "The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" (1848), <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html>

Frederic Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July" (1852) <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=162>

Bread and Roses, "Declaration of Women's Independence" (1970) in *Dear Sisters*. (Shared on Fronter)

Lepore, Jill. "The Commandments: The Constitution and Its Worshipers," *The New Yorker*. January 17, 2011.

http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2011/01/17/110117crat_atlarge_lepore

Key theme: uses of the Declaration of Independence, the US Consitution

Seminar 2 (February 21 and 24) Drafts Returned February 21

Readings

Secondary

Graff and Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say* (familiarize yourselves with major themes in the book).

Desmond Morris, *Making Americans*, "Introduction"

Key theme: structuring, rewriting papers. Writing workshop. In-class writing exercise. Bring pen and paper!

Lecture 5 (March 13) Final papers due

Readings

Primary

Sojourner Truth, *Ain't I a Woman* <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth-woman.asp>

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (chapters I, X, and XIV)

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/jacobs/hj-site-index.htm>

W.E.B DuBois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" in *The Souls of Black Folk*,

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DUBOIS/ch01.html>

Secondary

Fath Davis Ruffins, "Sites of Memory, Sites of Struggle" in *Major problem in African American History*, Vol 1. (Shared on Fronter)

Key themes: African Americans and/in American culture, dealing with memory/history.

Lecture 6 (March 20)

Readings

Max Weber, "The Spirit of Capitalism"

(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/weber/WeberCH2.html>)

Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanac* (<http://www.vlib.us/amdocs/texts/prichard36.html>)

Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth* (Excerpt shared on Fronter)

Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps* (Excerpt shared on Fronter)

Horatio Alger, *Ragged Dick* (Excerpt shared on Fronter)

Key theme: money and American culture

Seminar 3: (March 27 and 30)

Readings

Primary

Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, chapter XI "Immigrants and Their Children," (available as e-book through Bibsys)

Secondary

Desmond King, *Making Americans* (chapters 2 and 3)

Key theme: immigration and the American experience in the early 20th century

Lecture 7: (April 10)

Readings

Primary

John F. Kennedy, "Address to the American Association of News Editors" (Shared on Fronter)

Ronald Reagan, "Remarks on an Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast" (Shared on Fronter)

Secondary

Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (1955). (Excerpts shared on Fronter)

Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion" (1967), *Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Winter 1967, Vol. 96, No. 1, pp. 1-21.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/20027022.pdf?acceptTC=true>

Key theme: civil religion

Seminar 4 (April 17 and 30)

Readings

Billy Graham, "The Unfinished Dream" (Shared on Fronter)

Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" and "Letters from a Birmingham Jail" (Shared on Fronter)

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet" (Shared on Fronter)

Cezar Chaves, "Lessons from Dr. Martin Luther King" (Shared on Fronter)

Key theme: roots of resistance, visions of justice in 1960s/1970s USA

Seminar 5 (April 24 and 27)

Readings

Primary:

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (Excerpt shared on Fronter)

Secondary

Joanne Meyerowitz, "Competing Images of Women in Postwar Middle Class Culture" and Gisela Bock "Challenging Dichotomies in Women's History" in *Major Problems in American Women's History*, Second edition. (Shared on Fronter)

Key theme: gender in American culture

Seminar 6 (May 8 and 11) Drafts due May 8

Readings:

Primary

The US Constitution, (<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/default.asp>)

Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)

http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0381_0479_ZO.html

Loving v. Virginia (1967)

http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/search/display.html?terms=loving%20v.%20virginia&url=/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0388_0001_ZO.html

Roe v. Wade (1973)

http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0410_0113_ZS.html

Bowers v. Hardwick (1986)

http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0478_0186_ZS.html

Lawrence v. Texas (2004)

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-102.ZS.html>

Key theme: love and the law

Lecture 8 (May 15) Drafts returned

Summing up the semester. General remarks on your papers.

May 30: *Final essays due.*