

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY FULLERTON**  
**Honors 201A**

Fall, 2004  
MW: 2:30-3:45  
LH 315A

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UH 514  
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Office Hours: MW: 5:30-6  
Thursday 4-7  
Tuesday and Friday: By Appointment

*In vain were nails driven through my hands,  
I remember my crucifixion and bloody coronation  
I remember the mockers and the buffeting insults  
The sepulchre and the white linen have yielded me up  
I am alive in New York and San Francisco,  
Again I tread the streets after two thousand years.  
Not all the traditions can put vitality in churches  
They are not alive, they are cold mortar and brick,  
I can easily build as good, and so can you:-  
Books are not men-*

Walt Whitman  
"Song of Myself"

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW:**

This course is the first semester of a two-semester sequence that examines the historical development of American institutions, culture and values. The description of Jesus in the poem by Walt Whitman comes close to summarizing several persistent themes in the development of American culture. The philosophy of Jesus is a philosophy of progress, but Whitman takes that for granted. He is not interested in Jesus as a philosopher or Jesus as a martyr, but Jesus as a practical man who lives with other men to create cooperative endeavors. Harold Bloom (1994) has called the poem "our largest literary representation of resurrected man." To a large extent that is how Americans, from the beginning, have imagined themselves. Although Americans inherited political philosophy from Europe, its application in the new world changed the fundamentals of that philosophy. Recognizing America's "exceptionalism," John Locke stated, "In the

beginning was America.” And, as Louis Hartz (1954) has argued, Americans were freed from the feudal traditions of the European continent, and were thus able to develop liberalism without the constraints of conservatism.

The secular commitment to liberalism in America has always been influenced by religion. In the beginning, the Puritans wrote of America as God’s plan being revealed in history. As Ruland and Bradbury (1991) have argued, the Puritans believed that they were following biblical types and that, to a large extent, Americans were God’s chosen people. It is impossible to understand American political thought without an understanding of its religious foundation. Although secular liberalism with its notion of earthly progress and religion have often diverged in American thought, both intellectual traditions have often come together and, in fact, have reinforced one another on numerous occasions in our history.

By the 1950’s and 60s, the prevailing attitude among historians and social scientists was that American political thought was generally derivative. In other words, it was widely believed that Americans adopted the political philosophy of Locke and arrived at a liberal consensus that with a few exceptions, has been largely unchallenged in American history. Over the course of the next year, we will attempt to understand the exact nature of this consensus and the seriousness of dissent to the liberal tradition.

Many scholars believe that there is really “very little original” in American political thought. Intuitively, this makes very little sense to me, particularly now when current politics are placing real strains on our constitution. It is during times such as these that prevailing theories need to be re-examined. According to Seymour Lipset (1996), Americans have a specific “creed” that consists of a commitment to liberty, equality, individualism, populism, and *laissez-faire* economics. Since these values are often in conflict with one another, we must understand how they are prioritized before we can carry on meaningful public policy debates. For example, new ideologies such as postmodernism, feminism, and conservatism have recently challenged the liberal consensus and have insisted that we re-order our priorities. Unless we can understand the development of American values and how they have been prioritized throughout our history, we cannot satisfactorily understand contemporary policy debates about taxation, welfare, affirmative action, medical care, foreign policy, and domestic security.

During the Fall Semester we will begin our discussion of “American Exceptionalism” by considering how events such as revolution, values such as individualism and equality, and movements such as religion have shaped what it means to be an American. We will conclude by examining how the meanings of America have been translated into political identity and ideology.

## **References:**

- Bloom, Harold. 1994. *The Western Canon*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Hartz, Louis. 1955. *The Liberal Tradition in America*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1996. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Ruland, Richard and Malcolm Bradbury. 1991. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*. New York: Penguin Books

Any attempt at a complete bibliography would be overwhelming, but over the years I have found Vernon L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, to be a superior reference.

### **BOOKS:**

Dahl, Robert. 2001. *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Pioneers*. New York: Signet.

Hollinger, David A. and Charles Capper. 2001. *The American Intellectual Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2 Volumes.

Jacoby, Susan. 2004. *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism*. New York: Henry Holt.

McCarthy, Cormac. 1992. *Blood Meridian*. New York: Vintage.

McPherson, James M. 1991. *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Note: 1** . Volume 2 of Hollinger and Capper and Susan Jacoby's book will be used in the Spring Semester as well as the Fall.

2. \*Denotes that the reading can be found in Hollinger and Capper. Readings from periodicals can be accessed by using JSTOR.

### **GRADES AND EVALUATIONS:**

1. The first meeting of each week will be devoted to a lecture that gives an overview of the topic(s) under discussion for the week, and the second meeting will be devoted to discussion. In order to facilitate discussions, each student will prepare five (5) three page essays during the course of the semester. This means that approximately 6 of the essays will be presented each week. The essays should be posted on Blackboard 24 hours before they are due. Each essay will count for 10 points.
2. There will be a "take home" mid-term and final. A question will be posted one week in advance, and the exams are due on the designated day. The exams should be between 5 and 7 pages in length. Please read the guidelines for all written assignments. Each exam will be worth 25 points.
3. Attendance at each class session is mandatory. Any absence, not approved in advance, will result in a final grade reduction.

90-100 = A

80-90 = B

70-80 = C

60-70 = D

### **GUIDELINES FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. All written assignments are to be typed and double-spaced. Please use Times Roman font 12.
2. Number all pages.
3. Please use a title page. No binders, folders, etc.
4. Please use one inch margins all around.
5. The first paragraph should contain a thesis statement and the outline of your paper. Do not delay this until later paragraphs. The thesis statement should contain a description of the topic you are examining, and how you will examine it. You should also make some statement about why your topic is important, or why anyone should read your paper.
6. The body of your paper should present the substance of your argument. In longer research papers you should always include a review of the relevant literature.
7. The conclusion should bring together the various parts of the paper and lead to your final analysis or judgment about the question. Please indicate whether your research has left important questions unanswered, or where future research might begin.
8. Do not cite a dictionary to define terms. The purpose of this class is to learn to conceptualize terms.
9. Become accustomed to using a style manual. I prefer that you use the *American Political Science Review* style of embedded citations. You should refer to a recent issue of the *APSR*. For unusual style or formatting questions please use the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
10. Always include a bibliography. For your term paper please annotate the bibliography.
11. If you cite the Internet make sure your citation conforms to the proper style.
12. In conducting your research please use scholarly, peer-reviewed journals. There is simply a lot of “junk” on the internet and you should not develop the habit of citing large numbers of unreviewed sources. Please use the search engines provided by the library.
13. I recommend that for longer papers you make use of headings and subheadings in order to demarcate different sections of your paper. In using this procedure, it will help you outline your work.
14. Do not double space twice between paragraphs.
15. Pencil or ink corrections are not acceptable.
16. Avoid slang and popular colloquialisms. Develop the habit of using a Thesaurus.
17. Employ the services of the University Writing Lab.
18. Writing is revision.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

I encourage cooperation and collaborative learning. However, all written work must be your own. The CSUF catalogue states: “Plagiarism is defined as the act of taking the specific substance of another and offering it as one’s own without giving credit to the source. When sources are used, acknowledgement of the original author or source must be made following standard scholarly practice.” Plagiarism includes lack of proper citations as well as the purchasing of papers from a service or another student. In addition, copying text from internet sources is plagiarism. If I suspect academic

dishonesty I will use an on-line program that detects plagiarism. If you are ever uncertain, please ask.

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE:**

**August 23-25:** American Exceptionalism: A commentary on history, culture and institutions.

Reading Due: Tocqueville, Alexis. 1969. *Democracy in America*. New York: Doubleday. Volume 2, Part 1, Chapters 1-21.

**August 30-September 1:** Religion and the Meaning of America

Reading Due: \*John Winthrop. "A Model of Christian Charity." \*John Cotton. "A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace."

**September 6: No Class, Labor Day**

**September 8, 13 and 15:** Revolution and the Meaning of America

Reading Due: \*Jonathan Edwards. "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." \*Thomas Paine. "Common Sense." \*Thomas Jefferson. "The Declaration of Independence." Jacoby, Chapters 1 and 2.

**September 24: Please plan on attending the Conference "Perspectives on Democracy" to be held at CSU Fullerton. At minimum, please plan on attending the 10:30 panel "The State of Democratic Theory."**

**September 20, 22, 27, 29:** Law and the Meaning of America

Stephen Vincent Benet. "The Devil and Daniel Webster."  
James Fenimore Cooper. "The Pioneers."

**October 4, 6:** American Constitutionalism

\*James Madison. "Federalist 10 and 51."  
Robert Dahl. *How Democratic is the Constitution?*

**October 8: Mid-Term Due**

**October 11, 13:** The Second Great Awakening and the Peak of American Individualism.

Reading Due: \*William Ellery Channing. "Unitarian Christianity." \*Charles Grandison Finney. "Lectures on Revivals of Religion." \*Ralph Waldo Emerson. "The Divinity School Address."  
Jacoby, Chapter 3.

**October 18, 20:** Equality and the Meaning of America

Reading Due: \*Sarah Grimke. "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Woman." \*Orestes Brownson. "The Laboring Classes." \*Frederick Douglass. "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

**October 25, 27, November 2, 4:** The Second American Revolution

\*John C. Calhoun. "A Disquisition on Government."

James M. McPherson. "Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution."

Jacoby, Chapter 4.

**November 9, 11:** The Frontier and the Meaning of America

\*Frederick Jackson Turner. "The Frontier in American History."

Cormac McCarthy. "Blood Meridian."

**November 16, 18:** : The Industrial Revolution, Manchester Liberalism, and "The Freethinking Opposition."

\*William Graham Sumner. "Sociology." \*Lester Ward. "Mind as a Social Factor."

Jacoby, Chapters 5 and 6.

Walt Whitman. "Leaves of Grass."

**November 22-26: Winter Recess**

**November 29-December 1:** Political Ideologies in America: Liberalism and Republicanism.

Smith, Rogers M. 1993. "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Tradition in America." *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 87, No. 3 (Sep., 1993): pp.549-566

Kloppenber, James T. 1987. "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Discourse." *The Journal of American History*. Vol. 74, No. 1 (June, 1987): pp: 9-33.

(For a thorough discussion of American Republicanism please check *The American Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4 "Republicanism in the History and Historiography of the United States. (Autumn, 1985).

**December 6-8:** The Third Great Awakening: Religion as a Progressive Force.

Reading Due: Jacoby, Chapters 7 and 8.

\*Elizabeth Cady Stanton. "The Solitude of Self."

\*Jane Addams. "The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements."

**December 15: Final**