

HRS/HIST 168: Images of America

Fall 2009

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Office: MND 2011B

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00, Monday 4:00-5:00 and by appointment

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Catalog Description: Interdisciplinary survey of the major events, trends and figures in American history viewed through the lenses of American literature, visual arts, architecture and music. The arts in America are studied in relation to major ideas, significant personalities, and important events from the period of the early republic to the present.

Section Description: Using literature (both fiction and non-fiction), elite and popular visual arts and artifacts, this course is meant to introduce students to American culture. Students are expected to read, write, and think about what it means to be an American, what values and assumptions Americans may hold in common, and whether American experiences reflect the existence of a distinct national character.

Learning Goals:

Successful students in HRS/HIST 168 will demonstrate:

- the ability to recognize, explain and analyze American cultural traditions
- an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of American experiences
- the ability to compare and contrast various artistic expressions
- the ability to think creatively and critically about the relationships of artistic expressions and their historical and cultural contexts
- the ability to use information from multiple disciplines analytically
- the ability to write clear, correct and informed prose

TEXTS:

Pearson Custom Library of American Literature (PCL)

Pohl. *Framing America* 2nd edition (FA)

Student's choice of one work from HRS/HIST 168 reading list (see attached)

EVALUATION:

- 3 tests/100 points apiece= 300 points
- writing assignments (totaling AT LEAST 5000 words):
 - paper 1 (4-6 pages): 100 points
 - paper 2 (4-6 pages): 100 points
 - paper 3 (4-6 pages): 100 points
 - paper 4 (4-6 pages): 100 points

**You may revise any of the first three papers for an improved grade. Revisions are due no later than one week after the papers are returned. The first version of the paper (with my comments) must be attached to the revision

- participation: 100 points---positive contributions to class discussion, homework, etc.

800-720 points/A

719--630 points/B

629-540 points/C

539-450 points/D

Below 450 points/F

PROFESSORIAL QUIRKS:

- The classroom door will be closed 5 minutes after the class period begins and NO ONE WILL BE ADMITTED ONCE THE DOOR IS "CLOSED."
- It is departmental policy that a maximum of one week of absences is allowable without penalty. You can not be successful in this class if you are unable to attend regularly.
- ALL assignments are due at the start of the class meeting. Any work offered after the first 5 minutes will be considered "late" and the penalty for late work is 10 points/day (even if turned in late on the due date).
- TESTS: two of the tests will have take-home essay sections due at the start of the in-class test period. No make-up tests will be offered without a verified excuse. All make-ups are administered by the Testing Center for a fee.

CALENDAR

WEEK 1/August 31 and September 3: Opening remarks: art and culture

WEEK 2/September 8 and 10: FIRST ENCOUNTERS

Read: FA: pp. 18-20, 27-40

PCL: pp 1-2

Choose the book of your choice from the READING LIST

WEEK 3/September 15 and 17: FEELING COLONIAL

Read: FA: pp. 58-60, 62-69, 74-78

PCL: pp. 3-45

READING LIST book

WEEK 4/September 22 and 24: THE EARLY REPUBLIC

READ: FA: pp. 82-86, 91-95, 101-109, 116-125

PCL: pp.54-64

READING LIST book

WEEK 5/September 29 and October 1: 19TH CENTURY LANDSCAPES

READ: FA: pp. 144-176

READING LIST book

****Paper 1 due at start of the class meeting on October 1****

WEEK 6/October 6 and 8: DEFINING OURSELVES: IMAGES OF DEMOCRACY

READ: FA: 176-188, 198-203

PCL: pp. 46-53, 66-90

READING LIST book

****Test 1: October 8****

WEEK 7/October 13 and 15: THE "DARK SIDE"

READ: FA: pp. 209-223

PCL: pp. 65, 91-94, 157-219

Finish READING LIST book

NB: NO CLASS MEETING ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15.

WEEK 8/October 20 and 22: THE IDEA OF THE "REALLY" REAL

READ: FA: 254-256, 266-272, 294-297

PCL: 95-155

****Paper 2 due at the start of the class meeting on October 22****

WEEK 9/October 27 and 29: THE GILDED AGE

READ: FA: pp. 274-294, 302-314

PCL: pp. 220-233

****Test 2 essay question handed out in class on October 29****

WEEK 10/November 3 and 5: THE RISE OF 'MODERN' AMERICA

READ: FA: pp. 322-332, 337-342 (recommended: 380-384)

PCL: 156

READING LIST B book

****Test 2: November 5/essay due at start of exam period****

WEEK 11/November 10 and 12: WWI AND THE 'JAZZ AGE'

READ: FA: pp. 370-379

PCL: 234-235, 236-243

WEEK 12/November 17 and 19: THE '30S AND WWII

READ: FA: pp. 388-40, 429-433

****Paper 3 due at the start of the class meeting on November 19****

WEEK 13/November 24 and 26: THE POST-WAR WORLD

READ: FA: pp. 456-471, 498-510

PCL: 244-260

NB: NO CLASS MEETING ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

WEEK 14/December 1 and 3: FROM POST WAR TO POST-MODERN

READ: FA: pp. 515-520, 523-546

PCL: pp. 261-273

Test 3 essay handed out in class on December 3*

WEEK 15/December 8 and 10: Catch up and Test 3

READ: FA: pp. 555-559

****Paper 4 due at the start of the class meeting on December 8**

****Test 3: December 10/essay due at beginning of exam period****

HRS/HIST 168

Images of America

Reading List

Students must choose one work from this list as an additional required text for the course. Begin reading your choice as soon as possible. PAPER 3 WILL DEFINITELY THE BOOK YOU CHOSE. You may also want to use the book you choose in paper 4 and as part of your final exam essay. **YOU MAY CHOOSE A BOOK THAT IS NOT ON EITHER OF THE LISTS---JUST CHECK WITH ME FIRST.**

Books published before 1918

ADAMS. The Education of Henry Adams
ALCOTT. Little Women
BROWN. Wieland
CHOPIN. The Awakening
COOPER. Last of the Mohicans
CRANE. The Red Badge of Courage
DOUGLASS. The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass
DREISER. Sister Carrie
FRANKLIN. Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
GILMAN. Herland
HAWTHORNE. The House of Seven Gables or Scarlet Letter
JACOBS. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
JACKSON. Ramona
JEWETT. The Country of Pointed Firs
MELVILLE. Moby Dick
STOWE. Uncle Tom's Cabin
THOREAU. Walden
TWAINE. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn OR Roughing It OR The Innocents Abroad
WHARTON. House of Mirth

Books published after WWI

ACKER. Empire of the Senseless	O'CONNOR. Wise Blood
ALEXIE. The Lone Ranger and Tonto. .	OKADA. NoNo Boy
ANAYA. Bless Me, Ultima	RODRIGUEZ. Hunger for Memory
ANDERSON. Winesberg, Ohio	STEGNER. Angle of Repose
BALDWIN. Tell Me how Long the Train's Been Gone	MORRISON. The Bluest Eye
BARTHELME. Snow White	STEINBECK. Grapes of Wrath
BELLOW. Herzog	TAN. Joy Luck Club
BULOSAN. America is in the Heart (non fiction)	UPDIKE. Couples
CATHER. Death Comes for the Archbishop	YEZIERSKA. The Bread Givers
CHANDLER. Farewell My Lovely	
CLEAVER. Soul on Ice (non fiction)	
DIDION. Run River	
DOCTOROW. Ragtime OR The Book of Daniel	
DUBOIS. The Souls of Black Folks (non-fiction)	
ELLISON. Invisible Man	
FITZGERALD. The Great Gatsby	
HELLER. Catch 22	
HEMINGWAY. For Whom the Bell Tolls	
HESS. Dispatches	
KEROUAC. On the Road OR Dharma Bums	
KINGSTON. Woman Warrior (non fiction)	
LESEUR. The Girl	
MAILER. The Executioner's Song OR The Naked and the Dead OR Marilyn	

HRS/HIST 168: Images of America
Paper 1/worth 100 points
DUE: beginning of class meeting on Thursday, October 1

Let's exercise your visual literacy:

Write this essay on any work of visual art you find in Francis Pohl's *Framing America* (you don't have to choose a work we've discussed in class.)

Begin your essay with a section titled "OBSERVATION." An observation is a statement that can be verified by consideration of specific evidence in the work of art under consideration. In this portion of your essay begin by asking yourself, "**what do I see?**"

What details attract your attention? You should begin this section with sentences that begin, "I notice that. . . ." Include information about:

- Your first impression of the work. What is memorable or convincing about the work?
- Additional details you notice—in particular, you might describe the textures, colors, shapes that stand out the most to you. Why did you notice them, why/how did they capture your attention? Where does your eye linger as you view the image?
- What is the work's subject or function?
- Is there an organizing motif or theme in the work? What has been included/what has been left out?

The second section of your essay should be titled "REFLECTIONS," "INFERENCES," or "INTERPRETATIONS". In this part of your essay, ask yourself, "**what can I reasonably infer from what I noticed about the work of art?**"

Remember to restrict your inferences/reflective ideas to what you observe. Write about:

- What response do you have to the work, and what elements cause that response?
- What do you think the maker/artist intended?
- What messages about class, gender, society, race, history, etc. does the work seem to send? Choose one as your focus.
- For whom was this work of art intended (who made up the potential/intended audience?)
- Anything else you think of that helps you explain the "power" and meaningfulness of the work of art you chose.

The final section of your essay should be entitled "CONCLUSIONS." In the conclusion of your essay, explain why you think the work of art you chose is important to understanding (something about) American history and culture.

HOUSEKEEPING:

- Use the name and maker of your work of art as the title of your essay
- Write 4-6 pages, double space your text with sufficient margins to allow me to write comments
- Highlight or underline your paper's topic sentence
- End your paper with a word count
- Staple the pages of your paper---no spines or covers, please

HRS/HIST 168
Images of America
PAPER 2/worth 100 points
DUE: Thursday, October 22

Do you agree or disagree with the idea that things made in the same time and place will "look" the same or reveal the same assumptions and values?

Write a short---4-6 pages---essay in which you support your position by comparing two American works of different genres (NOT two paintings or two buildings or two works of literature) and discussing their similarities or differences in terms of the relationship of how they look to a single specific American value or behavior.

The easiest way to complete this assignment would be to choose a time period or American value and then find your two works of art.

“HOUSEKEEPING” DETAILS:

- Underline or highlight your topic sentence
- Give your essay a title
- Staple the pages of your essay together
- Put a word count at the end of your essay
- Cite any resources you consult

HRS/HIST 168: Images of America
Paper 3/100 points
DUE: Thursday, November 19

You are disturbed to read in *The Sacramento Bee* that a local branch of the THOUGHT POLICE has targeted your HRS/HIST 168 reading list book as a "subversive, dangerous pieces of filth," and plans to toss all the copies they have confiscated from local school libraries into a bonfire on April 30th to celebrate Rush Limbaugh's birthday [a small political comment on my part].

You become so upset that you decide to join a lawsuit to stop the bonfire and file a "friend of the court" brief defending the READING LIST book you chose for this class. Your brief should be a 4-6 page essay that builds an organized, focused and logical argument for your book's value to understanding something (—you decide what) about American arts, ideas or cultural behaviors.

BE SURE YOU WRITE ABOUT:

*Place and Time: Discuss the physical setting and historical time period of the action in your book. There probably should be some important relationships between time, place, theme, plot and characters that will be relevant to your "save-the book" argument.

*Plot: What happens in your narrative (don't just list events, search for a pattern of selected, causally related events that contain some sort of identifiable conflict). For example, what is the major conflict in the story; what values/qualities does the author associate with each side of the conflict; how is the conflict organized? How is it resolved?

*Characters: Who are the main and subsidiary characters in your narrative? What are they like? Do they represent any American stereotypes or ideals?

*Theme: be sure you understand the difference between subject (topic) and theme. Subject is what the work of art is about--it can be stated in a phrase or word. Theme is what your book "says" about the subject--the theme should apply to the world of people's lives outside of the book. Usually the theme deals with one of four areas of human experience: what human beings are like; the nature of society and social life; the nature of our ethical responsibilities; what humankind's relationship is/should be to the world. NB: As you work on this, you need to keep in mind that there may be more than one theme in your book---just focus on the one you think are most important to your "American" argument and remember that there is NO single "right" way to do this part of the assignment (and that, of course, drives the THOUGHT POLICE crazy.)

You can add additional topics that you think might strengthen your argument.

If you like, you can consult 2-3 "outside experts" and quote them in your piece as long as you acknowledge them correctly.

THE USUAL HOUSEKEEPING DETAILS:

- Underline or highlight your topic sentence
- End your paper with a word count
- Staple the pages of your essay

HRS/HIST 168: Images of America
Paper 4/100 points
DUE: Tuesday, December 8

Choose two works of art, one from column A and one from column B. Write an essay in which you compare (how are they alike?) OR contrast (how are they different?) your choices.

COLUMN A/

- *Howl*
- *The New Colossus*
- *The Raven*
- *The Song of Myself*
- *Susie Asado*
- *We Wear the Mask*
- *The Yellow Wallpaper*
- your choice from the HRS/HIST 168 reading list
- your choice of a work of American literary art

COLUMN B/

- Allston. *Moonlight Landscape*
- Bartholdi. *The Statue of Liberty*
- deKooning. *Woman and Bicycle*
- Jenny. *Home Insurance Building, Chicago*
- Lin. *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*
- Rockwell. *Freedom From Want*
- Wright. *Guggenheim Museum, New York City*
- Your choice of a work of American visual art (architecture, sculpture, painting, film)

Include the following in your essay:

- **Identification:** maker, date, genre, taste culture, description/synopsis, history. . .etc. You may certainly consult “outside” experts (just be sure to cite them)
- **Evaluation:** What ideas do these works of art represent? What is important/meaningful/moving to YOU about these works? How do your choices reveal the value of art as an agent and index to American culture?
- **Analysis:** What, exactly do your materials reveal about American values, stereotypes, social behaviors, attitudes? What is American about these works? If you write about the works’ similarities, what (if any) consistencies in American culture or experiences do they reveal? If you contrast the two works, what do their differences suggest about changes or variations in American culture or experiences? What can we learn about the world in which we live today by have a deeper/”educated” understanding of your choices.

THE USUAL HOUSEKEEPING DETAILS:

- Underline or highlight your topic sentence
- End your paper with a word count
- Staple the pages of your essay