HRS/HIST 168: Images of America
(GE Area C3; Intensive Writing; Race & Ethnicity)
Summer 2010

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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. Prerequisite: Passing score on the WPE.

SECTION DESCRIPTION: Using literature (both fiction and non-fiction), elite, popular and folk arts and artifacts, this course is meant to introduce students to the ways in which the arts reveal how America defines itself. 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 the ways American works of art reflect distinct American historical, cultural and social experiences.

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 (FA)
Student’s choice of work from HRS/HIST 168 reading list
EVALUATION:

- 2 tests/100 points apiece = 200 points
  Tests will be divided into two parts: a take-home essay portion that will be due at the start of the in-class test period and an in-class test that will involve image identification and analysis and short answers

- 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

  **You may revise any of the first two 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.

  600-540 points/A
  539-480 points/B
  479-425 points/C
  424-370 points/D
  Below 370 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 cannot 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: FIRST ENCOUNTERS
- TUESDAY/JULY 13: OPENING REMARKS

- WEDNESDAY/JULY 14: WHAT WE “FOUND”
  FA: pp. 18-20, 27-40
  PCL: pp 1-2

- THURSDAY/JULY 15: FEELING COLONIAL
  FA: pp. 58-60, 62-69, 74-78
  PCL: pp. 3-45

WEEK 2: DEFINING THE NATION
- TUESDAY/JULY 20: THE EARLY REPUBLIC
  FA: pp. 82-86, 91-95, 101-109, 116-125
  PCL: pp.54-64

- WEDNESDAY/JULY 21: 19TH CENTURY LANDSCAPES
  FA: pp. 144-176
  READING LIST book

- THURSDAY/JULY 22: IMAGES OF DEMOCRACY
  FA: 176-188, 198-203
  PCL: pp. 46-53, 66-90
  READING LIST book
  **paper 1 due in class**
  **test 1 take-home essay handed out in class**

WEEK 3: 19th CENTURY CONFLICTS
- TUESDAY/JULY 27: TRANSCENDENTAL AMERICA?
  FA: chapter 3
  PCL: pp. 66-85, 95-155

  FA: 209-223 254-256, 266-272, 294-297
  READING LIST book

- THURSDAY/JULY 29: TEST 1
  **TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE AT START OF CLASS**

WEEK 4: THE RISE OF “MODERN” AMERICA
- TUESDAY/AUGUST 3: AMERICAN’NESS
  FA: 266-273, 294-297
  PCL: 157-219
- **WEDNESDAY/AUGUST 4: THE GILDED AGE**
  FA: pp. 240-245, 251-280, 288-300
  PCL: pp. 65, 86-94, 156, 220-233

- **THURSDAY/AUGUST 5: MODERN WAR-MODERN WORLD**
  PCL: pp. 234-243
  **paper 2 due in class**

**WEEK 5: DREAMS and REALITIES in a “MODERN” WORLD**

- **TUESDAY/AUGUST 10: THE DEPRESSION AND ART AS A SOCIAL DOCUMENT**
  FA: pp. 364-377, 381-408

- **WEDNESDAY/AUGUST 11: TECHNOLOGY AND THE POST-WAR WORLD**
  FA: pp. 388-40, 429-433

- **THURSDAY/AUGUST 12: YOUTH CULTURE**
  FA: pp. 456-471, 498-510
  PCL: 244-260
  **paper 3 due in class**
  **test 2 take-home essay handed out in class**

**WEEK 6: POST-MODERNISM??**

- **TUESDAY/AUGUST 17: THE POST-WAR WORLD**
  FA: pp. 456-471, 498-510
  PCL: 244-260

- **WEDNESDAY/AUGUST 18: FROM POST WAR TO POST-MODERN**
  FA: pp. 515-520, 523-546, 555-559
  PCL: pp. 261-67

- **THURSDAY/AUGUST 19: TEST 2**
  **TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE AT START OF CLASS**
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 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
TWAIN. 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
ALEXIE. The Lone Ranger and Tonto . .
ANAYA. Bless Me, Ultima
ANDERSON. Winesberg, Ohio
BALDWIN. Tell Me how Long the Train’s Been Gone
BARTHELME. Snow White
BELLOWS. Herzog
BULOSAN. America is in the Heart (non fiction)
CATHER. Death Comes for the Archbishop
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 . .
HESS. Dispatches
KEROUAC. On the Road
KINGSTON. Woman Warrior
LESEUR. The Girl
MAILER. The Executioner’s Song
O’CONNOR. Wise Blood
OKADA. NoNo Boy
RODRIGUEZ. Hunger of Memory
STEGNER. Angle of Repose
MORRISON. The Bluest Eye
STEINBECK. Grapes of Wrath
TAN. Joy Luck Club
UPDIKE. Couples
YEZIERSKA. The Bread Givers
HRS/HIST 168: Images of America
Paper 1/worth 100 points
DUE: beginning of class meeting on THURSDAY, JULY 22

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
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 an 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:

- If your two works of art are about the same set of values or ideas and are from different time periods (at least 50 years apart), you should disagree with the idea stated above;

- If your two works of art are from the same time period (within 50 years) and illustrate different values or concerns, you should disagree;

- If your two works of art are from the same time period (within 50 years) and show the same ideas or values, you should agree.

Be sure to be explicit about whether you agree or disagree (and why---that should form your topic sentence.)

“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, August 12

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 August 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 art, history, ideas or socio-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 in detail.

THE USUAL HOUSEKEEPING DETAILS:
   Underline or highlight your topic sentence
   End your paper with a word count
   Staple the pages of your essay