

HI 215: History of American Thought, Spring 2010

Tues/Thurs 10:00-11:15 am, Rm S-122

<http://www.tonahangen.com/wsc/hi215/>

Dr. Tona Hangen

Sullivan 327-B x8688

e: thangen@worchester.edu**course description – America: what’s the big idea?**

An introduction to the field of American intellectual history, engaging with ideas, intellectual movements and thinkers in the American past. The course will consider key questions about American identity and thought, including democracy, equality, racial and gender justice, the American dream, American character, and national unity. How do ideas inform the American experience? Which ideas have particular traction in American thought? Can ideas even have a history? What is the role of “thought” in American history? What thinkers have made an indelible contribution to American intellectual life?

objectives and learning goals

This course assumes some basic knowledge of the American past, and will give you an opportunity to explore American thought both in historical context and by tackling broad ideas and questions that span across time and culture. You will engage with a wide variety of thinkers, ideas, intellectual movements, and key texts. By the end of the course, you will be familiar and conversant with major intellectual movements and thinkers of the American past.

An important goal is to achieve integrative learning that connects ideas and thinkers throughout the course, and to go under the surface to deep intellectual grappling with the ideas and texts. You accomplish this goal through class discussion, keeping a reflective learning journal, and conducting your own independent thinking, research and writing. The course will point you towards important ideas and thinkers and will guide you through major intellectual movements, but your learning will depend on your commitment to engage with the ideas and texts both in and outside of class.

reading list

Sheila L. Skemp, *Judith Sargent Murray: A Brief Biography with Documents* (ISBN 0312-115067)

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (ISBN 978-0451529459)

Martha H. Patterson, *The American New Woman Revisited: A Reader 1894-1930* (ISBN 978-081354296-6)

David Howard-Pitney, *Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s* (ISBN 978-0312395056)

Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (ISBN 978-0374528492)

In addition, we will read widely from many other American thinkers and intellectual historians. Some of those readings are online in the public domain, while others will be posted to Blackboard or to the course blog as PDFs. While it’s always a good idea to print the PDFs or be able to access them in full text on your laptop in class, if you take good notes and craft thoughtful discussion questions you’ll be productive in class even without the full text in hard copy.

I will maintain course information and materials in two places: on Blackboard, and also on an open-access blog (<http://www.tonahangen.com/wsc/hi215/>). That way, if the Blackboard server is ever down, our work goes on as usual. Bookmark the course blog, and get in the habit of checking it for updates. You can subscribe to its RSS feed, and you can also add its Google calendar to your own Google calendar for easy access to assignment deadlines.

grading

This course involves extensive reading, writing and discussion. You will be expected to read and digest 30-75 pages a week (sometimes more), and to write approximately 20 pages over the course of the term, in addition to maintaining a learning journal in ePortfolio format. You will need to put in consistent effort during the whole semester. To take advantage of multiple learning styles, and to help create a community of learning in this classroom, I will assess your learning in several different ways.

- **Attendance and class participation (20%)** – I take attendance in each class session. You should be prompt, present, and ready for discussion each day. I expect class discussion will be lively, respectful, and substantive.
- **Learning Journal ePortfolio (30%)** – You’ll create an ePortfolio using GoogleSites and permit me online access to it. During the semester, you’ll be adding to the site as a way to journal your learning, grapple with texts and ideas, and keep notes on the thinkers and intellectual movements we study. At various points in the term, I will check in on your ePortfolio and note your progress, and at the end you’ll receive an overall grade of the ePortfolio’s quality, depth, and scope.

You’ll notice that half your grade involves showing up prepared for class, and maintaining an ongoing learning journal to demonstrate your active engagement with the readings outside of class. The remaining half of your grade comes from your writing, research, and contributions to the field of intellectual history, in the form of three projects. Each project has portions which are due before the final due date, so pay attention to the deadlines in the syllabus and submit work on time.

- **Rhetorical analysis of a major speech (10%)** which explores American ideals (due Feb 25)
- **Curriculum Project (15%)** developing a unit of lessons centered on primary source analysis, for either a 5th grade or a 10th/11th grade classroom, tied to the Massachusetts State Frameworks for History and Social Studies (due April 1)
- **Research project (25%)** tackling one “big idea” in American thought and tracing it through at least 4 different thinkers from different time periods. Your final paper can take one of two forms: either a standard research paper, or a more creatively structured format, such as a dialogue, drama, or imaginary roundtable interview in which your chosen thinkers are placed in direct conversation, with you as the moderator. Part of this paper’s grade will come from the proposal and early drafts, and part from the final version (due April 27)

Daily: Present & Prepared (P&P)	20%
ePortfolio	30%
Speech analysis (due 2/25)	10%
Curriculum Project (due 4/1)	15%
Research Paper (due 4/27)	25%
Total	100

the fine print

Regarding plagiarism: Doing your own work is absolutely essential. In the field of history, this means that in EVERY paper, you must cite the sources of any information, quotations or ideas which are not your own work, using standard citation styles (Chicago Style or MLA). Let me be very clear. You cannot clip and paste text from the internet into your papers and pass it off as your own writing. You cannot turn in a paper someone else has written or that you have bought online. Plagiarized work will automatically get a zero on the assignment and may cause you to fail the class, at my discretion. I take such violations very seriously. Please familiarize yourself with and follow the college policy on Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

- My in-class technology policy: we will be busy in every class session, and we don't need any technological distractions. Silence your cell phones before you enter the classroom. If you choose to bring a laptop to class, I expect that you will be using it only for taking notes or accessing the course's relevant electronic documents to refer to during discussion.
- If you have a documented disability (learning or otherwise), and you need a reasonable accommodation made for you in this course, please consult with me immediately at the outset of the course so we can design a solution that will help you be successful in the course.

syllabus

#	Date	Topic	Reading	What's Due
1	T 1/19	Course Intro		
A New Nation, Conceived in Liberty				
2	Th 1/21	Words That Remade America	Wills, "Words that Remade America" [pdf]	GoogleSite setup
3	T 1/26	Intellectual History: the American Mind	Guelzo, "Is There an American Mind?" [pdf]	
4	Th 1/28	Revolutionary Women	Kerber "The Republican Mother" [pdf]	
5	T 2/2	Founding Fathers	Federalist Papers 10 and 51 [online]	
6	Th 2/4	Founding Mothers	JSM, Part 1 [txt]	
7	T 2/9	Speeches: American Idealism	Scott, "The Popular Lecture and the Creation of a Public in Mid-19 th C America" [pdf]	
Racial Justice				
8	Th 2/11	Abolition	Walker, Douglass, Grimke [online]	Speech chosen
9	T 2/16	Intellectual History of the Civil War	Menand [txt]	
10	Th 2/18	Racial Progressivism	Wells, "Lynch Law in America" and DuBois [online]	Biblio for Speech
11	T 2/23	Civil Rights Mvment(s)	King, Malcolm X I [txt]	
12	Th 2/25	Racial Justice	King, Malcolm X II [txt]	Speech Paper

#	Date	Topic	Reading	What's Due
All Men Are Created Equal: Gender Equity				
13	T 3/2	Female Emancipation	JSM, "On the Equality of the Sexes" (176-189) [txt]	
14	Th 3/4	From Seneca Falls to Suffrage	Seneca Declaration [online], ANWR: Part II [txt]	
15	T 3/9	The New Woman	ANWR Part I (29-54), Part IV-V (157-199) [txt]	
16	Th 3/11	Justice, Gender and the Family	Okin, <i>Justice, Gender and the Family</i> [pdf]	Curriculum Items
<i>3/15-3/19 Spring Break</i>				
Intellectual Currents and Turning Points in American Thought				
17	T 3/23	Thoreau: Transcendentalism	Walden [txt]	
18	Th 3/25	Dewey: Pragmatism	Menand [txt]; William James, <i>Pragmatism</i> Lecture II [Project Gutenberg online]	
19	T 3/30	Civil Disobedience, Civil Liberties	Thoreau [txt] Letter from Birmingham Jail [txt]	
20	Th 4/1	From the Bench	Whitney v. CA (1927) or Korematsu (1944)	Curriculum Unit
21	T 4/6	Howl: the 1960s, Liberty and Liberation	Ginsberg, "Howl" and 1960s manifestos [online]	
Mother of Exiles				
22	Th 4/8	Settlement and the Urban Intellectual	Menand [txt]	Big Idea chosen
23	T 4/13	Social Theory	ANWR: Part IX [txt]	
24	Th 4/15	Democracy v. Melting Pot	Kallen [online]	Research Precis
25	T 4/20	Harlem Renaissance: Black Thought	Survey Graphic 1925 [online] ANMR New Negro Woman [txt]	
26	Th 4/22	Cultural Pluralism	Aleinikoff, "Multicultural Nationalism" [online]	
Conversations, Presentations, Integration, and Reconciliation				
27	T 4/27	Day I		Research Paper
28	Th 4/29	Day II		"
29	T 5/4	Day III		"

1/12/2010