

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN STUDIES

In this course we will trace the development of American civilization from the 17th-century to the present. Focusing our attention on four cultural "epochs" or "styles", we will examine enduring elements as well as characteristics that distinguish them from one another. The four cultural styles that we will look at are Puritanism (1600-1750), the Enlightenment (1750-1820), Victorianism (1820-1900), and Post-Industrialism (1900 to the present). Within each of these categories we will explore the shared ideas, values, and beliefs that were and are used to structure the relationship between self, society, and the universe, as well as the ways in which these shared assumptions give form to and are reflected in political, social, economic, educational, religious, legal, and leisure institutions, public ceremonies, and the arts. While our primary concern will be with the development of a dominant or mainstream culture, we will frequently turn our attention toward the emergence of sub- and counter-cultures that have challenged and reshaped it in fundamental ways.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town*
Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*
Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*
Robert N. Bellah, et. al., *Habits of the Heart*

All of these are paperback editions that can be purchased at the CSUF bookstore.

EXAMS AND GRADES

There will be an in-class midterm exam and an in-class final exam. The essay questions that you will be asked to write on will deal exclusively with the material derived from the readings, the lectures, and class discussions. The mid-term exam will count for 50% of the course grade, while the final exam will stand for the remaining 50%. Although class participation will not be given numerical weight in the formulation of the final grade, active and intelligent contributions to class discussion will be rewarded. In accordance with the General Education writing requirement, a portion of the mid-term exam will be a take-home assignment. Your response to the question asked will be typewritten (2-3 pages) and due in class on the date scheduled for the mid-term exam. Your grade on this assignment (10% of the mid-term grade) will be based not only on your examination of relevant course materials, but also on clarity of expression, organization of ideas, conceptual understanding, and grammar. You will be given the opportunity to rewrite and resubmit the assignment once it is returned to you. A plus/minus (+/-) grading system will not be used. **Make-up exams will only be given in cases of extreme and verifiable health or personal emergencies.**

It is assumed that you will do your own work. Plagiarism, the appropriation of the words of others without attribution, will not be tolerated. When you use the ideas of another author, you must cite your source. When you use the words of another author, you must use quotation marks as well as cite your source. The penalty for an act of "literary theft" will range from an F on the assignment in question to an F in the course. The University's policy on "Academic Dishonesty" can be found in UPS 300.021 (<http://senate.fullerton.edu/>) as well as in the current CSUF Catalog (2001-2003) on page 484.

LEARNING GOALS

American Studies 201 meets General Education "American History, Institutions and Values" requirement (II.B.1). In line with this university's "Goals of General Education," this course will: explore the historical development of American institutions and values and their impact on the individual and collective lives of Americans; assess the ways in which the Constitution of the United States and government under the Constitution have shaped American democracy and contemporary American society; explore the political culture of citizen participation in a democracy; examine important cultural, intellectual, moral, and political struggles that have shaped contemporary American society; and recognize the significance of the contributions of various ethnic and gender groups to American history, political institutions, and values within contexts of cultural accommodation and resistance.

LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

JANUARY 3-4

I. INTRODUCTION

- Culture as a Category of Analysis

II. THE PURITAN EXPERIMENT IN THE NEW WORLD

- Social, Economic and Political Institutions and Ideologies

Required Reading: Lockridge, chapters 1, 3, and 4

- Private Life--Sexuality, Gender-Identity, Marriage, Child-Rearing, Divorce and the Organization of Family Life
- Public Life--Entertainment, Ceremonies and the Arts
- Cosmology--The Individual's Relationship to Nature, God and the Universe; Attitudes Toward Death and the Afterlife

Required Reading: Lockridge, chapters 8 and 9

JANUARY 9-10

III. AN AMERICAN ENLIGHTENMENT

- Social, Economic and Political Institutions and Ideologies

Required Reading: Foner, chapters 1, 3 and 5

- Private Life

Required Reading: Benjamin Franklin, "Advice to a Young Man on the Choice of a Mistress"; Jefferson, "The Foundation of Morality"; Franklin, "Speech of Miss Polly Baker"

III. AN AMERICAN ENLIGHTENMENT (continued)

- Public Life

Required Reading: Foner, chapter 2

- Cosmology

Required Reading: Foner, chapter 4

JANUARY 11 MID-TERM EXAM

JANUARY 11-18

IV. VICTORIAN AMERICA

- Social, Economic and Political Institutions and Ideologies

Required Reading: Halttunen, chapters 1 and 2

- Private Life

Required Reading: Halttunen, chapters 3 and 4

- Public Life

- Cosmology

Required Reading: Halttunen, "Conclusion"

JANUARY 23-24

V. POST-INDUSTRIAL AMERICA AND THE EMERGENCE OF A CONSUMER CULTURE

- Social, Economic and Political Institutions and Ideologies

Required Reading: Halttunen, "Epilogue," and Bellah, chapters 1, 2, and 6

- Private Life

Required Reading: Bellah, chapters 3 and 4

- Public Life

Required Reading: Bellah, chapter 5

- Cosmology

Required Reading: Bellah, chapter 9

JANUARY 25 FINAL EXAM