

Professor: Angus Burgin (burgin@jhu.edu)
Office hours: Monday 12pm–2pm, Gilman 304 (<https://calendly.com/burgin/office-hours>)

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Office hours: Tuesday 10am–11am, Wednesday 3pm–4pm, Gilman Atrium (<https://calendly.com/i-anand/office-hours>)

AMERICAN THOUGHT SINCE THE CIVIL WAR

Overview:

This course surveys the history of ideas in an American context since the Civil War. Readings and discussions will explore the interplay between belief and uncertainty, modernity and tradition, unity and diversity, science and religion, and egalitarianism and individualism.

Learning Objectives:

Students in this course can expect to learn:

- how to comprehend difficult texts;
- how to situate texts in their social and intellectual context, in order to better understand the author's intended meaning;
- how to critique and defend complex philosophical arguments in oral debate;
- how to develop forceful written arguments that acknowledge and illuminate the subtlety of their subjects;
- how to relate historical ideas to contemporary problems; and
- how to track the development of ideas over broad expanses of time, and to recognize antecedents for contemporary social philosophies.

Grading:

25%: participation
25% in-class writing (5% per assignment, with the lowest grade dropped)
5%: first essay draft
10%: first essay (4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font)
15%: second essay (4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font)
20%: third essay (7-9 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font)

The grades of late papers will be lowered one level for each day they are late (e.g., a grade of B becomes a B- if one day late, a C+ if two days late, etc.).

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 101 Shaffer, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

Assignments:

During ten class meetings, students will be randomly assigned into two or more groups that will be asked to participate in **debates** *for* or *against* the ideas expressed by specific authors on the syllabus. The topics for these debates will be distributed in the week before the class meeting.

The **in-class writings** will ask students to explain, analyze, and compare the arguments in readings completed for the course. The prompts will always be based on discussion questions that have been previously distributed.

The **first essay** will ask students to develop a surprising argument about one of our readings based in part on an analysis of the context in which it was written. Students will be expected to draw on at least one primary source and at least one secondary source beyond the assigned course readings.

The **second essay** will ask students to develop a formal proposal that establishes the guiding principles and/or philosophical justification for a new venture based on the ideas of one or more of the authors encountered in the course.

The **third essay** will ask students to produce the transcript of an imagined podcast conversation between three or more theorists on the syllabus.

Individual Meetings:

All students will be expected to meet with Professor Burgin in the first week of classes, to share information about their academic background and interests, as well as their goals for the semester.

Academic Integrity:

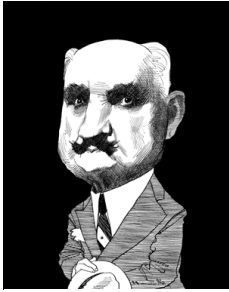
The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the internet and artificial intelligence, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Please report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student conduct by calling the Office of the Dean of Students at 410-516-8208 or via email at integrity@jhu.edu. For more information, see the Homewood Student Affairs site on academic ethics: <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/>.

Texts:

All course readings are available on electronic reserve.

Monday, January 23: University Life after the Civil War

Wednesday, January 25: Darwinism in an Age of Industry



George Santayana

Reading:

- *William Graham Sumner, "Sociology" (1881), in *Collected Essays in Political and Social Science*, 77-97.
- *Lester Frank Ward, "Mind as a Social Factor" (1884), *Mind* 9, no. 36, 563-573.

In class:

- *Debate:* Sumner v. Ward on the social implications of Darwinism.

Monday, January 30: Victorian Culture and Modern Morals

- *Walt Whitman, "Democratic Vistas" (1871), in *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Prose*, pp. 929-69.
- *George Santayana, "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy" (1913), in *Winds of Doctrine*, 186-215.

In class:

- First paper topics distributed.



Walt Whitman

Wednesday, February 1: Reforming the Cult of Domesticity



Charlotte Perkins Gilman

- *Charlotte Perkins Gilman, selection from *Women and Economics* (1898), 58-75.
- *Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solitude of Self" (1892), in *Elizabeth Cady Stanton Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writings, Speeches*, ed. Ellen Carol DuBois, 246-254.

In class:

- In-class writing assignment #1.

Monday, February 6: The Problem of Poverty in the Gilded Age

- *Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1898), preface, ch. 1-7, 12, 14, 18, 22, 25, 28, postscript.
- *Jane Addams, selection from *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1892), 115-127.

In class:

- *Debate:* Bellamy's social vision.



Elizabeth Cady Stanton

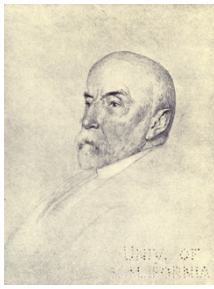
Wednesday, February 8: The White City and the Image of the West

- *Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *The Frontier in American History* (1893), 1–38.



Frederick Jackson Turner

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 12:00PM: FIRST PAPER DRAFTS DUE



Henry Adams

Monday, February 13: Antimodernism as Impulse and Theory

- Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (1918), ch. 1, 4, 22, 25, 31, 33–35.

Wednesday, February 15: Varieties of Pragmatism

- *Charles Peirce, “The Fixation of Belief” (1877), *The Popular Science Monthly* 12, 1–15.
- *William James, “The Will to Believe” (1897), in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, 1–31.
- *William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), lectures 2 and 6.

In class:

- *Debate:* James on pragmatism.



William James

Monday, February 20: The Politics of Progressivism

- Walter Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery* (1914), introduction and ch. 1–3, 8–10, 13–16.

In class:

- In-class writing assignment #2.

Wednesday, February 22: Legal Realism and Social Reform

- *Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., “The Path of the Law” (1897), in *American Thought, Civil War to World War I*, ed. Perry Miller, pp. 184–206.
- *Louis Brandeis, selections from *Brandeis on Democracy* (1905–1922), pp. 25–36, 51–66, 94–102.

In class:

- *Debate:* Holmes v. critic on jurisprudence.



Oliver Wendell Holmes

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 12:00PM: FIRST PAPERS DUE

Monday, February 27: The Intellectuals and the War



Randolph Bourne

- *John Dewey, “What America Will Fight For,” *New Republic*, 18 August 1917, pp. 68–69.
- *John Dewey, “Philosophy and Democracy” (1918), in *The Middle Works, 1899–1924*, Vol. 11, 41–53.
- *Randolph Bourne, “Trans-National America” (1916), *Atlantic Monthly* 118, 86–97.
- *Randolph Bourne, “Twilight of Idols” (1917), *The Seven Arts* 11, 688–702.

In class:

- *Debate:* Dewey v. Bourne on pragmatism and war.
- Second paper topics distributed.

Wednesday, March 1: Double-Consciousness and the Cosmopolitan Ideal

- W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), ch. 1, 2, 3, 9, 13, 14.

In class:

- In-class writing assignment #3.





H.L. Mencken

Monday, March 6: Conservatism in a Liberal Society

W.E.B. DuBois

- *H. L. Mencken, selection from *Notes on Democracy* (1926) in Mason and Baker, eds., *Free Government in the Making*, pp. 638–43.
- *John Crowe Ransom, “Reconstructed but Unregenerate” (1930), in *Twelve Southerners, I’ll Take My Stand*, 1–27.
- *Whittaker Chambers, selection from *Witness* (1950), 3–22.

Wednesday, March 8: The Vital Center

- *Reinhold Niebuhr, selection from *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944), 9–41.
- *Hannah Arendt, “Ideology and Terror” (1953), *The Review of Politics* 15, no. 3 (1953), 303–327.
- *Daniel Bell, “The End of Ideology in the West” (1960), in *The End of Ideology*, 393–407.



Daniel Bell

In class:

- *Debate:* Chambers v. Neibuhr on religion and modernity.



James Baldwin

Monday, March 13: Mass Culture and the Pathology of Normalcy (Ibanca Anand)

- *Clement Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” (1939), *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5, 34–49.
- *James Baldwin, “Everybody’s Protest Novel” (1949), in *Notes of a Native Son*, 13–22.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 12:00PM: SECOND PAPERS DUE

**NO COURSE MEETING: PLEASE COMPLETE THE MIDSEMESTER SURVEY
AND ENJOY THE BREAK!**

Monday, March 27: Civil Rights and the American Dilemma

- *Gunnar Myrdal, selection from *An American Dilemma* (1944), 3–12, 24–25.
- *Harold Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American” (1962), in *Rebellion or Revolution?*, 74–96.

In class:

- In-class writing assignment #4.



Harold Cruse

Wednesday, March 29: The Moral Life of Markets



Milton Friedman

- *Friedrich Hayek, “Equality, Value, and Merit,” in *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), pp. 85–102.
- *Milton Friedman, selection from *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), 7–21.

In class:

- *Debate:* Hayek v. Friedman v. critic on the role of markets in society.

Monday, April 3: Left Critiques of Liberalism

- *C. Wright Mills, “Letter to the New Left” (1960), *Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills*, 247–259.
- *Herbert Marcuse, selection from *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), 1–18.

In class:

- *Debate:* Bell v. Mills on ideology.

Wednesday, April 5: Cold War Capitalism (Ibanca Anand)



Noam Chomsky

- *W. W. Rostow, selection from *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1960), 4–16.
- *Noam Chomsky, “The Responsibility of Intellectuals” (1967), in *American Power and the New Mandarins*, 323–366.

In class:

- *Debate:* Chomsky v. critic on the social responsibility of intellectuals.
- Third Paper topics distributed.

Monday, April 10: The Redistribution of Rights

- *John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness,” *The Philosophical Review* (1958).
- *Derrick Bell, “Racial Realism,” *Connecticut Law Review* (1992), 363–379.

In class:

- Debate: Rawls’s universal principles of justice.

Wednesday, April 12: Truth and Meaning in the Postwar Sciences

- *Thomas Kuhn, selection from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), 144–159.
- *Clifford Geertz, “Ideology as a Cultural System,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), pp. 193–233.

In class:

- In-class writing assignment #5



John Rawls

Monday, April 17: Gender Equality, Gender Difference



Judith Butler

- *Betty Friedan, selection from *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), 127–137, 140–141, 145–146.
- *Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1989, Routledge edition 2006), pp. 1–22.

In class:

- Friedan v. Butler on feminist coalition-building.

Wednesday, April 19: The Norms of Postmodernity

- Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), viii–22, 44–95, 189–98.

In class:

- In-class writing assignment #6.



John Perry Barlow

Monday, April 24: Technologies of Identity



bell hooks

- Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,” *Socialist Review* 80 (1985).
- bell hooks, “Postmodern Blackness,” *Postmodern Culture* 1, no. 1 (1990).
- John Perry Barlow, “A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace” (1996).

Wednesday, April 28: Community in an Age of Fracture

- *Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone,” *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995), pp. 65–78.
- *Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union” (2008).

*** MAY 10, 12:00PM: THIRD PAPER DUE ***