HIST: 351 American Radicalism: 1900-Present

Course Description

The United States has had a relationship with radical thought that predates the very revolution that created it. Social experimentation, intellectual exploration, and the freedom to create alternative communities are longstanding traditions in the American experience. Radicalism has been present in all phases of the making of the United States, and during the twentieth century, forces of nationalism, race, gender, modernity, and technology converged to create social movements, quests for liberation, and powerful ideologies.

This course will focus on the radicalism of the twentieth century. It will explore themes of gender, class, race, equality, liberty, power, and resistance. Though some secondary sources will be used, most course material will be the writing of the radicals themselves. Through historical analysis and critical thinking, we will examine and evaluate those who sought to bring fundamental change to the status quo in the United States.

Course Expectations

- Readings must be completed before class meets on the day that they are listed.
- Bring said readings to class, and be prepared to discuss the assigned material.
- Attendance to all class meetings is mandatory.
- Written assignments are to be submitted to Canvas. No late work accepted.
- I have ZERO TOLERANCE for academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and cheating will cause you to automatically fail the course and you will be reported.

Course Objectives

- Develop and understanding of the social, cultural, and political diversity of the United States in the twentieth century
- Track the lifespan of radical ideas by identifying how they became obsolete, normalized, or changed over time.
- Develop skills of interpreting and using primary and secondary historical texts
- Create a sense of historical contingency through interactive simulations
- Hone critical thinking, analysis, and argumentation skills.

Course Readings

- Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John McMillian, eds. The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition. (listed on schedule under RR)
- Danielle L. McGuire, At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance- a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black
- Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, Break Through: Why We Can’t Leave Saving the Planet to the Environmentalists.
- Various readings will be posted on Canvas (listed on schedule under CV)
Assignments

Book Review------------15%
Primary Source Journal---15%
Midterm-----------------25%
Final-----------------------25%
Participation--------------20%

Book Review: You will be required to write a book review for either *At the Dark End of the Street* OR *Break Through* (you will need to read both) that critiques the author’s work and places it within the context of radical thought in the United States. Keep in mind that these are reviews, not summaries. Each review should be between 1,000 – 1,500 words.

Primary Source Journal: The journal will be made up of brief, pithy explanations of the primary source documents. I would like just two or three sentences on the who-what-where-when of the documents and what you find historically interesting or important about them. Additionally, you will select two (2) of the primary source readings for each week and explain how they continue to have an impact on American society today. These journals will be collected on Thursday every week. Responses must be typed.

Midterm and Final Exam: On the last day of the second and fourth week you will take an in-class, written exam. It will cover material from the readings and lecture. The exam will have both an identification and essay component.

Participation: Attendance is mandatory and you will receive penalties against your final grade for any unexcused absences. Additionally, regular participation in class discussion is required to receive credit for participation. There will also be in-class activities, including an intensive roleplaying game, where enthusiastic engagement will factor into your final participation score.

Grading Rubric

A: Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument, in addition to being well executed and reasonably free of errors.
B: Work that satisfies main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality.
C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria.
D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards, but which exhibits some engagement with the material.
F: Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or disregard for the assigned question.

This class is not graded on a curve.
Accessibility

The University of Oregon works to create inclusive learning environment. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Radicals of the Early 20th century

**Begin Reading At the Dark End of the Street**

M- Introduction and Origins
   Readings: CV (Canvas) – Defining Radicalism, Introduction chapter

T- Class and Labor at the beginning of the century
   Readings: RR- Docs 73, 74, 75, 77

W- Race and Gender Radicalism in Early 20th c
   Readings: RR- Docs 55, 56, 76, 84, 85, 90

R- In Class Activity – Gilded Age Negotiations Game

Week 2: The Great Depression, The Great War, The Great Generation

M- The Great Depression: Socialism, Anarchism, Corporatism
   Readings: RR- Docs 80, 81, 82, 84

T- World War II and the silent radical
   Readings: CV – “Conscientious Objectors Explain their Reasons for Refusing to register for the Draft” (1941) and Anderson’s Conflicts between White Women and Black Women and their Employers.” From Major Problems in World War II;

Chapter scan of Erasmo Gamboa’s Mexican Labor & World War II; Selections from O’Neil’s A Democracy at War

W – The 1950s: Conformity and Dissent
   Readings: RR – Docs 91, 100, 112

**Book Review for At the Dark End of the Street must be submitted before class begins!!!**

R – Midterm Exam
Week 3: The 1960s: The Radical's Decade

**Begin Reading Break Through**

M – Modern Feminism  
   **Readings:** RR – Docs 101, 102, 103, 107
T – The Long Civil Rights Movement: MLK to Black Power  
   **Readings:** RR – Docs 93, 95, 96, 97.
W – Anti-War and Student Movements  
   **Readings:** RR - Docs 113, 115, 117, 120, 121.
R – Backlash: Conservative Response to the Sixties  
   **Readings:** CV – Excerpts from Barry Goldwater’s *Conscience of a Conservative*, Video  
    clips of William F. Buckley interviews, Kent State Shooting; Richard Nixon’s inauguration address.

Week 4: From the Ashes: New Radicals and the New Normal

M – LGBTQ  
   **Readings:** RR – Docs 134, 137, 140, 142, 143
T – The Reagan Era, Environmentalism, and Welfare Rights  
   **Readings:** RR –Docs 127, 131; Discussion of *Break Through*
   **Readings:** TBA

**Submit Book Review on Break Through before class.**

R – Final Exam