

REFORMS AND UTOPIAS IN 19TH CENTURY AMERICA

Course Number: HIS 450-01/HON 453-01

Credit Hours: 3

Meeting Place: Briggs 211

Meeting Time: 1:00-2:15 MW

Instructor: Roy E. Finkenbine

Office: Briggs 322

Office Hours: 11:00-12:30 MW

Office Phone: (313) 993-1016

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This course explores the origins, ideologies, tactics, and outcomes of major utopian communities and reform movements in the United States during the nineteenth century.

Given the level, enrollment, and content of this course, classroom time will usually be devoted to discussion of assigned readings, which are to be completed prior to the class for which they are assigned. At appropriate points, some classroom time will also be used for lecture, films, and student presentations. You are expected to participate in class by attending regularly, listening carefully, taking notes, asking pertinent questions, and contributing to class discussion.

Required Texts: You are required to purchase the following books, which are available at the University Bookstore on the McNichols Campus:

Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860*, rev. ed. (Hill and Wang, 1997).

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, ed. David W. Blight (Bedford Books, 1993).

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Signet Classics, 1981).

Charles Nordhoff, *American Utopias*, ed. Robert Fogarty (Berkshire House Publishers, 1993?).

Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*, ed. Daniel H. Borus (Bedford Books, 1995).

Other articles and handouts will be distributed in class at appropriate points during the term. These are included among the required reading for the course.

Evaluation: You will be evaluated on the basis of two exams (40% -- 20% each), two papers (40% -- 20% each, and class participation (20%). The instructor reserves the right to exercise some discretion in assigning final grades.

Both exams will be essay in nature and will require you to develop analytical responses to broad questions. The final exam will not be comprehensive. Makeup exams will be given only at the discretion of the instructor.

You will be required to write two analytical essays of approximately ten pages each. The first (due Feb. 15) will comparatively analyze the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as moral suasion documents of the antislavery movement. The second (due Apr. 5) will investigate a particular nineteenth-century utopian community to be chosen from a list provided by the instructor. Late essays will be penalized one letter grade, plus an additional letter grade for each week past the due date.

Separate handouts will explain each of the above assignments in more detail.

Your participation grade will be based on your general contribution to class discussion, evidence of your preparation for class, the clarity and effectiveness of your in-class presentation on a particular utopian community, and the regularity of your attendance.

Students taking this course as MLS 505 for graduate credit will be required to complete additional written work as determined in conjunction with the instructor.

Optional Field Trip: At some point during the term, we may plan a Saturday field trip to Battle Creek, Michigan. Battle Creek was a center of reform activity during the nineteenth century and has a number of sites memorializing Sojourner Truth, the Kellogg brothers, and underground railroad efforts. This field trip will be optional.

Attendance: Given the nature of this course, regular attendance in class is both expected and required. The instructor will take roll at each class. It is your responsibility to notify the instructor and provide documentation of any medical, funeral, legal, athletic, or other excused absences. You are allowed two unexcused absences. Additional unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade.

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating in any form (including *plagiarism*) is not permitted and may result in failure in the course. It may also be grounds for further university disciplinary action. Plagiarism consists of “submitting the words or style of another author or course without acknowledgement or formal documentation. Plagiarism occurs when specific phrases or entire passages, whether a sentence, paragraph, or longer excerpt, are incorporated into one’s own writing without quotation marks or documentation. One also plagiarizes by paraphrasing the work of another, that is retaining another writer’s ideas and structure, without documentation.” (UDM Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty).

Academic Support Services; those of you with learning difficulties, especially those with previously identified disabilities which might require accommodations, are urged to identify yourselves to the instructor as soon as possible. A variety of academic support services are available to you free of charge. This includes the writing center in Briggs 245 and tutorial assistance at the learning center in Briggs 17. Duplicate services are available in room G-1 of Marian Hall on the Outer Drive campus.

Calendar: Every effort will be made to adhere to the following schedule:

- Jan. 7 Introduction to the Course
Basic Definitions of Reforms and Utopias
- Jan. 9 The Economic, Social, and Political Contexts
Reading: Walters, *American Reformers*, pp. xiii-xix, 3-19
Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, chap. 1 (handout)
- Jan. 14 The Intellectual and Religious Contexts
Reading: Walters, *American Reformers*, Chap. 1
Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, chap.2 (handout)

UNIT ONE: REFORMS

- Jan 16 Moral Suasion and Antebellum Reform Movements
HANDOUT/DISCUSSION OF FIRST PAPER ASSIGNMENT
- Jan 21 MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
- Jan. 23 Antislavery
Reading: Walters, *American Reformers*, chap. 4 (pp. 77-94)
Jane H Pease and William H. Pease, “Two Abolitionisms”
(handout)
- Jan. 28 Film: Frederick Douglass: *When the Lion Wrote History*
(to be shown from 1:00-2:30 p.m.)
- Jan. 30 Moral Suasion In Slave Autobiography
Reading: Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
(entire)
- Feb. 4 Women’s Rights
Walters, *American Reformers*, Chap. 5 (pp. 103-115)
- Feb. 6 Temperance
Reading: Walters, *American Reformers*, Chap. 6 (pp. 125-136, 140-146)
David S. Reynolds, “Black Cats and Delirium Tremens”
(handout)
- Feb. 11 Sex, Diet and Health
Reading: Walters, *American Reformers*, chap. 7 (pp 147-158)
Carrie McLaren, “Porn Flakes” (handout)
- Feb 13 Moral Suasion in Antislavery Fiction
Reading : Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (entire)

FIRST PAPER DUE FEB. 15

- Feb. 18 Reforming Social Institutions: “The Discovery of the Asylum”
Reading: Walters, *American Reformers*, chaps. 8-9
- Feb. 20 Politics and Antebellum Reform Movements
Reading: Walters, *American Reformers* chaps 4 (pp 94-102 and 6 (pp. 136-140)
Lori D. Ginzberg, “Moral Suasion is Moral Balderdash” (handout)
- Feb. 25 Postbellum Reform Movements
- Feb. 27 **MIDTERM EXAM**
- Mar. 4-6 **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

UNIT TWO: UTOPIAS

- Mar. 11 Antebellum Utopian Communities: An Introduction
Reading: Walters, *American Reformers*, chaps. 2-3
HANDOUT/DISCUSSION OF SECOND PAPER ASSIGNMENT
- Mar. 13 Film: *The Shakers: Hands to Work, Hearts to God*
- Mar. 18 Shaker Communities
Reading: Nordhoff, *American Utopias*, pp. x111-xvi, 117-256
Priscilla J. Brewer, “The Shakers of Mother Ann Lee” (handout)
- Mar 20-
Apr. 3 **STUDENT PRESENTATIONS ON UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES**
Reading: Nordhoff, *American Utopias*, pp. 25-113, 259-349, 421-428
SECOND PAPER DUE APR. 5
- Apr. 8 Evaluating Antebellum Utopian Communities
Reading: Nordhoff, *American Utopias*, pp. 385-418
- Apr. 10 Postbellum Utopian Communities
- Apr. 15 Postbellum Utopian Literature
- Apr. 17 The Utopian Vision of Edward Bellamy
Reading: Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (entire)
- Apr. 23 **FINAL EXAM (2:00-3:50 p.m)**

This syllabus is provided as a guideline. The instructor reserves the right to make any necessary adjustments for the orderly progress of the course.