

FALL 2008-2009

AMST 301-1

SEMINAR FOR MAJORS: The American Constitution

MARTIN REDISH TH 2-5 PM FALL QUARTER 2008

Course Description: This course will explore the textual, political and historical groundings of the United States Constitution. It will examine the role of the Supreme Court in the American political system and the structure and rationale of the theory of judicial review in a democratic society. Both Supreme Court decisions and scholarly articles will be read. The specific areas of constitutional law focused on include justiciability, federalism, separation of powers, and equality.”

AMST 310

STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: History of American Higher Education

WILLIAM HAARLOW W 1-4 FALL QUARTER 2008

The only western institution older than the university is the Church. Yet the history of education, especially higher education, has always been a minor field within history. Education is universally regarded as essential to individual and social improvement, yet relatively few people are familiar with its history and its philosophical underpinnings. For example, Weinberg students graduate with a bachelor of arts, but what does that mean? What constitutes a liberal arts education? What exactly are the liberal arts? Hint: traditionally, there are seven of them.

Course Description: This course will study both the growth of colleges and universities and the major social factors and philosophical rationales that have shaped their development. Although relevant material from the classical and medieval periods will be discussed, emphasis will be placed upon the historical development of higher education in the United States. It is anticipated that the design and conduct of this course will provide participants with an understanding of the traditional and emerging patterns and roles of universities and other major institutions of higher education. Special stress will be placed upon the changing concept of "university" from its medieval beginnings through its contemporary variations. Through research, readings, discussions and seminar lectures, students will investigate the evolving aims, structure, functions, curriculum, administration, financing and student and faculty roles inherent in the university concept.

In developing this informational and conceptual perspective, students should more specifically:

- a. Increase their understanding of the relationship between institutions of higher education and social, economic, political and religious currents.
- b. Strengthen their ability to evaluate and interpret historical sources.
- c. Broaden their academic knowledge base via reading, research and discussion.
- d. Gain perspective into the historical context of value positions and ideological commitments that both sustain and produce conflicts within the contemporary university.
- e. Develop a deepened awareness of the domestic and foreign ideals and practices that have and are influencing the course of higher education in the United States.

Teaching Method: Class will be held twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Evaluation Method: Students will be graded on the basis of a book review, a review/analysis of research-based articles, a research team presentation, a term paper and class participation. Possible research team topics include: Women's Colleges, Coeducation and Feminism in Higher Education; The General Education Movements; Development of the Junior-Community College; Evolution of (and Problems in) Intercollegiate Athletics; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Religion in American Higher Education.

Reading: Students will be required to read a combination of books, articles and primary sources.

AMST 390-1

SENIOR PROJECT

KATE BALDWIN

T 1-4

FALL QUARTER 2008

Course Description: A year-long sequence to complete a thesis or field study required of majors.

AMST 394

VOTING RIGHTS ACTS: The Voting Rights Act of 1965: Unleashing the Power of the Ballot

JAMES WASCHER

M 6:30-9:30pm

FALL QUARTER 2008

Course Description: The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been described as the most effective civil rights legislation ever passed. This seminar will explore the background, adoption, implementation and consequences of the Act. At the outset, the course will focus on the means by which millions of African-Americans in the South were disenfranchised after the Civil War. The seminar will examine the ineffectiveness of prior federal legislation to protect black voting rights, and how the civil rights movement forced Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act in 1965. The course will also look at the efforts of both the Department of Justice and private parties to enforce the Act. Students will explore the profound impact of the Voting Rights Act upon electoral politics, not only in the Deep South but throughout the United States. The seminar will examine legislation that extended or expanded the coverage of the Act in 1970, 1975, 1982, 1992 and 2006, as well as important court decisions interpreting the Act. We will conclude with a discussion of the future of the Voting Rights Act, including such emerging issues as the disenfranchisement of felons, use of error-prone voting systems such as punch cards, and the application of the Act to claims that black governmental officials are in some cases excluding whites from meaningful participation in the electoral process. The class will view two films on the background of the 1965 Act early in the quarter, and also hear from guest speakers including civil rights activists, attorneys, and others having first-hand knowledge of the Act and its impact.

WINTER 2008-2009

AMST 301-2

SEMINAR FOR MAJORS: **Work, Labor, and Social Formation in the U.S.**

IVY WILSON

TH 2-5 PM

WINTER QUARTER 2009

Course Description: This seminar focuses on the relationship between labor and the discourse of social mobility in the U.S. In a broader sense, the course will use the history of work and labor in the U.S. to interrogate the meanings of citizenship, equality, and humanity. Topics under consideration will include race, immigration, and poverty through different moments in U.S. history including chattel slavery, the Industrial Revolution, the Haymarket affair, the International Workers of the World, the Great Depression, and post-WWII consumer America. Texts will include social theory such as William Graham Sumner, films such as Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* and Ken Loach's *Bread and Roses*, presidential treatises such as Franklin Roosevelt on the New Deal and Ronald Reagan's redefinition of unemployment, and contemporary non-fiction prose such as Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed* and the *New York Times* series "How Race is Lived in America."

AMST 310-0-20

STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: **The Politics of Race in the Major Novels of William Faulkner**

JULIA STERN

T 2-5 PM

WINTER QUARTER 2009

Course Description: This course will involve the close reading of Faulkner's four great tragic novels of race and identity, *The Sound and The Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Light in August* (1932), and *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936). Until very recently, these works have been considered central to the canon of modernist fiction and read as meditations on the tortured consciousness of the artist (TSATE, AILD, A.A!) or the dilemma of the outsider adrift in an alienating world (LIA). Saturating Faulkner's novels are images of the anguished history of race relations in the American South from the 19th Yet the tragic legacy of slavery, Faulkner's abiding subject, has been understood by critics as a figure for more abstract and universal moral predicaments. Our investigation seeks to localize Faulkner's representation of history – particularly his vision of slavery and the effects of the color line – as a specifically American crisis, embodied in the remarkable chorus of narrative voices and visions that constitute his fictive world. century to the Great Migration and Great Depression.

AMST 310-0-21

STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: **Bad News**

LARRY STUELPNAGEL

W 2-5 PM

WINTER QUARTER 2009

Scott Hall 313

847-491-4853; 312-503-8529

lls768@northwestern.edu

Lecture: Kresge 4310

Course Description: Bad News. That is what Americans are experiencing as a result of the corporate media mergers that took place in the closing years of the last century. Today there are six major companies that control much of what people read, hear and see. Those firms are AOL-Time Warner, General Electric, Walt Disney, News Corporation, Viacom/CBS, and Bertelsman.

As the firms passed from largely family owned to publicly traded companies, the pressure for profit from Wall Street has led to cutbacks in the size of the firm's news divisions and a change in news story values that have "softened" the types of news that people see on television.

This course will begin with an examination of the monetary forces that are driving the industry away from its primary mission of information. Critics, of whom the professor is one, contend that the drive for increasing profits is coming at the expense of both the quality and quantity of news that appear on television and radio, newspapers and magazines, and the Internet. The ever-diminishing number of news providers is also threatening democracy by limiting the number of voices that can be heard in our society.

We will examine the impact of these mergers on several areas of news coverage and public discussion:

1. Privacy and scandal, particularly the stories about President Bill Clinton.
2. The transformation of how the press has covered wars from Vietnam to the new Gulf War. Has the media gone from watchdog to lapdog?
3. Race. Former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley has said, "America is a nation obsessed with the interplay between African Americans and White Americans." We will examine how the press has covered the issue of race in America and how the press deals with the issue in its own newsrooms.
4. Politics. Reporting of scandals and personality has replaced critical evaluations of policy. The "horse race" with its poll-driven coverage is now the norm. We will examine the phenomenon through the lens of the 2000 and 2004 presidential races.

Evaluation Method (s): Your grade will be determined in the following way; 25% for an OP-Ed piece on a subject of your choice that is germane to the class and approved by the professor; 35% for a 10-15 page term paper; 25% take home examination; 15% class participation. **No P/N.** I do not grant extensions for any written assignments. They are due at the beginning of the class as noted on the syllabus. Failure to make the deadline will result in a lower grade for that assignment.

AMST 390-2

SENIOR PROJECT

KATE BALDWIN

T 12-2 PM

WINTER QUARTER 2009

Course Description: A year-long sequence to complete a thesis or field study required of majors.

SPRING 2008-2009

AMST 301-3

SEMINAR FOR MAJORS: Subtitle

JOSEF BARTON W 2-5 PM SPRING QUARTER 2009

Course Description: TBA

AMST 310

STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: The Plan of Chicago

CARL SMITH TTH 3:30-4:50 SPRING QUARTER 2009

Course Description: The *Plan of Chicago*, whose centennial will be observed in 2009, is often called the Burnham Plan, after its principal author, leading architect Daniel Burnham (who lived in Evanston and whose firm designed several Evanston buildings, including Fisk Hall, as well as major buildings in Chicago and other American cities). Inspired by his triumphant success as director of construction of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, Burnham became a founder of modern American city planning, including proposals for Washington, Cleveland, and San Francisco, as well as Manila. The culmination of his career as a city planner was his work, with several other prominent Chicagoans, on the *Plan of Chicago*. Arguably the most influential document in the history of American urban planning, the *Plan* is the result of exhaustive thinking and extensive discussion. Published as a book, it is full of stirring prose and magnificent illustrations. It proposed many of the city's most distinctive features, including its lakefront parks and roadways, the Magnificent Mile, and Navy Pier. It established the concept of comprehensive city planning in the United States and encouraged the reconceptualization of urban life itself.

This course will first examine the creation of the *Plan*, its recommendations, and the extent of their implementation. Then, with the advice of the instructor, students will choose individual research projects relating to the *Plan*. They will have special access to relevant materials from the collections of the Chicago History Museum and the Art Institute, the latter of which holds the papers of Burnham and *Plan* co-author Edward Bennett. These will be available in digital form and photocopies, but students will also be encouraged to do research at CHM and AIC. The class will culminate in a symposium featuring its members' work, as well as the submission of the final papers.

Prerequisites: It is strongly advised that students have some background turn-of-the-twentieth-century American history, urban history, Chicago history, or American architecture. Any student interested in taking this class should speak with the instructor before registering. This is not intended to discourage anyone from taking it, but to clarify what the class entails and what kind of work is possible.

Teaching Method: Discussion, supervised research.

Evaluation: Final paper (20-25 pages), series of shorter assignments through the term directed at developing the final paper, participation in discussion.

Texts include: primary materials relating to the *Plan of Chicago*, including the text of the *Plan* itself; selected secondary materials, which will vary depending on choice of research topic.

AMST 390-3

SENIOR PROJECT

KATE BALDWIN

T 12-2 PM

SPRING QUARTER 2009

Course Description: A year-long sequence to complete a thesis or field study required of majors.