

HISTORY 165-001 THE AMERICAN IDENTITY

Monday and Wednesday, 10 to 11 AM

Two lectures and one discussion section per week

Spring 2006

Sheldon Hackney

The terrorism of 9-11-01 and subsequent events, especially “Operation Freedom” in Iraq and the controversies surrounding our detention of enemy combatants, have caused us to think as never before about who we are and what values should shape our behavior in our dangerous and shrinking world. This course will examine the ideas Americans have about themselves as a nation and how our self-conception has changed over time. It will ask students to identify those values and beliefs that Americans think they share with other Americans, and it will trace the changing answers to the question, who belongs and who doesn’t? In addition, such topics as the following will be explored in their historical context: what is the American dream and who may pursue it; is there an American national character; does America have a transcendent purpose; how is an American hero supposed to act and how can one spot villains; why metaphors of identity, such as Melting Pot or Mosaic, are useful and why they fail; and whether it is possible to know what it means to be an American given our dynamically evolving cultural, ethnic and racial diversity?

DATE	ASSIGNMENT
Jan. 9	Defining the Subject
Jan. 11	Imagining America Andrea Simon, “Talk To Me” (film in class)
Jan. 16	Perspectives Michael Kammen, <u>People of Paradox</u> , 97-116.
Jan. 18	Identity Politics Todd Gitlin and Respondents, “The Rise of Identity Politics,” from Michael Berube and Cary Nelson, <u>Higher Education Under Fire</u> , 305-325 (BB) Glenn Loury, <u>The Anatomy of Racial Inequality</u> , 157-169.
Jan. 23	English Subjects and American Citizens Jonathan Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity.” (BB) Colin Calloway, <u>New Worlds For All</u> , 178-198.
Jan. 25	America on the Eve of the Revolution “Declaration of Independence” “Preamble to the Constitution” Michael Zuckerman, “Tocqueville, Turner, and Turds,”

- Jan. 30 America Transformed
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 1.
- Feb. 1 Europeans Tell Us Who We Are
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 2.
- Feb. 6 The Rise of the Middle Class
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 3.
- Feb. 8 Collective Memory
Michel Kammen, Mystic Chords of Memory, 3-90.
- Feb. 13 The Young Nation
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 4.
- Feb. 15 Republicanism or Liberalism
Sheldon Wolin, The Presence of the Past, Intro. & chs. 1 & 2.
Christopher Lasch, The True and Only Heaven, 162-176.
- Feb. 20 The Nation Reformed
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 5.
“The Mormon Story,” (film in class)
- Feb. 22 The Gilded Age
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 6.
- Feb. 27 Progressivism/Utopia
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 7.
- March 3 through March 12 SPRING BREAK
- Mar. 13 Progressivism/World War I
Peter Berkowitz, “Liberalism Strikes Back.”
Chester E. Finn, Jr., “Herbert Croly and the Cult of Governmentalism.”
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 8.
- Mar. 15 The Melting Pot
Gary Gerstle, “Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans.”
David Hollinger, “National Solidarity at the End of the 20th Century.”
Randolph Bourne, “Trans-Nationalism.”
Christopher Lasch, The True and Only Heaven, 353-359; 382-411.
- Mar. 20 The New Deal

- Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 9.
- Mar. 22 World War II
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 10.
- Mar. 27 Cold War
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 11
- Mar. 29 The Sixties/Civil Rights
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 12
- Apr. 3 The Sixties/New Left
Robert Pinsky, An Explanation of America, excerpts.
- Apr. 5 The Sixties/Interpretation
“Understanding the Sixties,” (film in class)
- Apr. 10 Morning in America
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, chapter 13
- Apr. 12 Crisis of Cultural Authority
Robert Wiebe, Self Rule, 247-266.
Oz Guinness, The American Hour, 147-238.
- Apr. 17 What Kind of Unum?
Nathan Glazer, “Multiculturalism and a New America”
Richard Rodriguez, Hunger of Memory.
- Apr. 19 An Inclusive Grand Narrative?
Frank Luntz, “Americans Talk About the American Dream.”
- April 21 Final Day of Classes
Apr. 24-26 READING DAYS
April 27 – May 5 FINAL EXAMINATIONS
May 19 COMMENCEMENT

MATERIALS

Available for purchase at the Penn Book Center at Sansom and 34th St. are:
Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom.
Richard Rodriguez, Hunger of Memory.

All other assignments can be found in the bulk pack available for purchase at
Campus Copy, 39th and Walnut, and also on our Blackboard website.