HONR 497: Honors Senior Seminar
My Country, Right or Wrong? America and Its Critics
Messiah College

N.B. This syllabus can also be found on the “Q” drive accessible from computers in campus labs
path: “Q” drive > InstructorFiles > LaGrand_James > HONR 497 > HONR 497 (2007) syllabus

Fall 2007
instructor: Prof. J. LaGrand
Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m.
Boyer 138

office: Boyer 264
telephone: ext. 7381
e-mail: JLaGrand@messiah.edu
office hours: Mondays, 10:00-10:50 a.m.
Wednesdays, 10:00-10:50 a.m.
Thursdays, 1:20-2:35 p.m. & by apt.

DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:
America has in part been known by its critics. Many prominent writers have directed their attention
towards America and its flaws and shortcomings. But beyond this, these critics have not agreed. Is
America authoritarian or libertine? A secular wasteland or a theocracy? Wonderfully or woefully
individualistic? In this seminar, we will read and evaluate the work of a wide and diverse range of critics
of America, and in the process, develop a deeper understanding of American politics, society, and culture.
Particularly in our time, when public discourse too often degrades into juvenile shouting matches, there is
a need for thoughtful and informed critique. This seminar aims to foster just this kind of activity.

During the first few weeks, we will explore the broad framework of patriotism and nationalism,
considering together when it is appropriate to either support or oppose one’s country. Following this, we
will examine several different focuses of American criticism in both historical and contemporary
contexts. The areas of critique include capitalism, individualism, the activist state at home and abroad,
democracy, authority and order, religion in public life, and national identity.

REQUIRED READINGS:
Scott John Hammond, et. al., eds., Classics of American Political and Constitutional Thought:
Readings available online and on reserve.

REQUIREMENTS:
1) regular participation in class discussions
2) weekly journal entries in response to readings
3) research paper on a particular critic based on primary sources (20-25 double-spaced pages)
4) take-home exam (your piece of criticism) (8-12 double-spaced pages)

STANDARD OF EVALUATION:
The final grade for the course will be derived as follows:
participation 20%
journal entries 20%
research paper 40%
take-home final exam (your piece of criticism) 20%
JOURNAL ENTRIES:
Students are required to keep a journal to be used to respond to weekly readings. You have latitude in how you respond, but following are some questions you might ask yourself:
- What is the background or context to the reading?
- What is the author’s objective?
- Who is the author’s primary audience?
- What strategies (logical, rhetorical, etc.) does the author use?
- What are the problems in the author’s argument?
- In what ways is the author particularly insightful or interesting?
- Are you ultimately convinced by the author?
- How might someone unconvinced by the reading (either then or now) respond?
- How do the various authors for a week connect? Are they able to be synthesized in any way or are there profound differences among them?
- What are the present-day implications or applications of the reading?

You should write and submit a journal entry each week. This should be sent to the instructor’s email address (JLaGrand@messiah.edu) and is due at noon each Tuesday the class meets.

RESEARCH PAPER:
Each student will write a research paper of 20-25 double-spaced pages on an American critic of your choosing. You’ll find a partial list of critics below, although you should not be constrained by this list. Your paper must make extensive use of primary sources (i.e. the actual writings of the critic you’ve chosen.) It should not be primarily biographical, but rather focus on an individual’s thought and writings. The following is a list of deadlines for the research paper:
- Sept. 25 topic for essay due via email
- Oct. 9 tentative title of essay and bibliography due via email
- Nov. 6 first draft of research paper due
- Dec. 11 final draft of research paper due

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM (YOUR PIECE OF CRITICISM):
The final exam will be a take-home essay. You will write your own piece of criticism--focusing on some aspect of American politics, society, or culture in 8-10 double-spaced pages. This essay should include both a synthesis of relevant journal entries over the course of the semester and incorporate new material. You are encouraged to connect your essay to ways of thinking in part influenced by your religious commitments or your Christian worldview.

NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
Academic dishonesty of any kind (including cheating and plagiarism) violates the community standards of Messiah College, as well as those of the larger community of scholars into which you enter through this course. As such, any cases will be punished appropriately. However, please do not hesitate to talk to the instructor if you have questions about how to use or cite outside sources or about any other matter of academic practice. Messiah College’s academic integrity policy may be found here:
www.messiah.edu/academics/advising_handbook/academic_policies/integrity.pdf

NOTE ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:
Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services (Hoffman 101). If you have questions, call extension 5382.
SCHEDULE

[NOTE: ALL DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE]

Sept. 4 - Introduction to Course

Sept. 11 - Patriotism and Nationalism
READING:
Walter Berns, Making Patriots (2001)

Sept. 18 - Patriotism and Nationalism (cont.)
READING:

Sept. 25 - Patriotism and Nationalism (cont.)
READING:
John Phillips Souza, “The Stars and Stripes Forever” (1897)
    Hammond, pp. 217-218
Katherine Lee Bates, “America the Beautiful” (1913)
    Hammond, pp. 216-217
Woody Guthrie, “God Blessed America (This Land Was Made for You and Me)” (1940)
    Hammond, p. 461
H. L. Mencken, “On Being an American” (1922) - selections
    Hammond, pp. 427-436
Allen Ginsberg, “America” (1956)
    Hammond, pp. 588-589
    available online through JStor
Howard Zinn, “The Scourge of Nationalism” (2005)
    http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0516-29.htm
on reserve
    http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=440&var_recherche=patriotism
    available online through Academic Search Premier
Oct. 2 - Economic Freedom and Capitalism
READING:
Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (1879) - selections
    Hammond, pp. 144-156
Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) - selections
    Hammond, pp. 250-263
Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906) - selections
    Hammond, pp. 273-284
Eugene V. Debs, “Speech at Indianapolis” (1909) - selections
    Hammond, pp. 287-290
Eugene V. Debs, “Speech to the Court” (1918) - selections
    Hammond, pp. 373-374
Emma Goldman, “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For” (1911) - selections
    Hammond, pp. 337-343
Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) - selections
    http://jim.com/hayek.htm
Irving Kristol, “When Virtue Loses All Her Loveliness” (1970)
    Hammond, pp. 758-765
Penner debate between Ronald Sider and Michael Novak (2001)
    http://www.wheaton.edu/CACE/resources/discernment/GlobalizationChristianEthics.pdf - pp. 2-5 only

Oct. 9 - Individualism
READING:
John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity” (1839)
    http://web.utk.edu/~mfitzge1/docs/374/GNF1839.pdf
Abraham Lincoln, “Special Session Message” (1861)
    http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1861lincoln-special.html
Abraham Lincoln, “Speech to the One Hundred Sixty-sixth Ohio Regiment” (1864)
    http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/ohio.htm
Andrew Carnegie, “Wealth” (1889)
    http://alpha.furman.edu/~benson/docs/carnegie.htm
Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1889) - chapter 1
    http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/BELLAMY/ch01.html
Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements” (1893)
Herbert Hoover, *American Individualism* (1922) - selections
    http://www.hooverassociation.org/amid.htm
Herbert Hoover, “Campaign Speech on Rugged Individualism” (1928)
    Hammond, pp. 395-403
    Hammond, pp. 794-803
    available online through JStor
Wilfred M. McClay, “Individualism and Its Discontents” (2001)
Oct. 16 - The Activist State at Home
READING:
William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe To Each Other* (1883) - selections
Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909) - selections
Hammond, pp. 296-314
Theodore Roosevelt, “The New Nationalism” (1910)
Woodrow Wilson, “The New Freedom” (1912) - selections
Hammond, pp. 324-328
Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Commonwealth Club Address” (1932)
Hammond, pp. 403-409

Oct. 23 - The Activist State at Home (cont.)
READING:
C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (1956) - selections
Hammond, pp. 561-574
C. Wright Mills, “Letter to the New Left” (1960)
on reserve
Lyndon B. Johnson, “The Great Society” (1964)
http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/lbjthegreatsociety.htm
Ronald Reagan, “A Time for Choosing” (1964)
Hammond, pp. 674-679
Ronald Reagan, “Address before the Conservative Political Action Committee” (1974)
Hammond, pp. 817-822
Ronald Reagan, “First Inaugural Address” (1981)
Hammond, pp. 822-825
Hammond, pp. 780-785
Hammond, pp. 917-920
**Oct. 30 - The Activist State Abroad**

**READING:**
Josiah Strong, *Our Country* (1885) - selections
   [http://www.assumption.edu/users/McClymer/hi119net/Josiah_Strong1](http://www.assumption.edu/users/McClymer/hi119net/Josiah_Strong1)
Alfred J. Beveridge, “The March of the Flag” (1898)
   [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1898beveridge.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1898beveridge.html)
Theodore Roosevelt, “Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine” (1904)
Jane Addams, “Chicago Liberty Address” (1899)
   Hammond, pp. 263-265
Mark Twain, *The Curious Republic of Gondour* (1875) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 132-134
Mark Twain, “To the Person Sitting in the Darkness” (1901)
   Hammond, pp. 265-271
Mark Twain, “The War Prayer” (1905)
Robert LaFollette, “Address on Free Speech in Wartime” (1917) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 345-347
Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (1952) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 509-517
Jeanne Kirkpatrick, “Dictatorships and Double Standards” (1979) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 805-817
   [http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=399](http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=399)
   [http://www.amconmag.com/03_24_03/cover.html](http://www.amconmag.com/03_24_03/cover.html)

**Nov. 6 - The Meaning of Democracy**

**first draft of research paper DUE**

**READING:**
Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (1925) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 381-391
   Hammond, pp. 416-426
Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Farewell Address” (1960)
   Hammond, pp. 575-577
Tom Hayden and SDS, “The Port Huron Statement” (1962) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 630-644
   on reserve
   available online through Academic Search Premier
Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, “Deliberative Democracy” (1998)
   available online through Academic Search Premier
Nov. 13 - Authority and Order
READING:
Herbert Marcuse, “Liberation from the Affluent Society” (1967)
Jerry Rubin, “A Yippie Manifesto” (1968)
  http://www.montgomerycollege.org/Departments/hpolserv/yippiemanifesto.html
Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals (1971) - selections
  Hammond, pp. 765-773
  on reserve
  http://users.etown.edu/m/mcdonaldw/LECT377.HTM
  available online through Academic Search Premier

Nov. 27 - Religion in Public Life
READING:
Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (1912) - selections
  Hammond, pp. 332-336
Ronald Reagan, “Address before the National Association of Evangelicals” (1983)
  Hammond, pp. 825-830
  available online through Academic Search Premier
  available online through Academic Search Premier
  available online through Academic Search Premier
Randall Balmer, “Jesus Is Not a Republican” (2006)
  http://chronicle.com/free/v52/i42/42b00601.htm
  available online through Academic Search Premier
  http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2006/05/12/goldberg/
Dec. 4 - National Identity
READING:
Twelve Southerners, *I’ll Take My Stand* (1930) - selections
   http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA01/White/anthology/agrarian.html
James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 596-603
Martin Luther King, *Stride toward Freedom* (1958) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 648-653
Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (1963)
   Hammond, pp. 653-662
Martin Luther King, “Lincoln Memorial Address” (1963)
   Hammond, pp. 662-664
Malcolm X, “Message to the Grass Roots” (1963)
   http://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/malcolmxgrassroots.htm
Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (1964)
   Hammond, pp. 664-674
Stokely Carmichael, “What We Want” (1966)
   Hammond, pp. 703-708
Roy Wilkins, “Address before the NAACP Convention” (1966) - selections
   Hammond, pp. 708-709

Dec. 11
research papers DUE; presentations of papers in class

Dec. 18
take-home exam DUE; presentations of papers in class (cont.)
Jane Addams (1860-1935) - settlement house worker and pacifist
Saul Alinsky (1909-1972) - community organizer
James Baldwin (1924-1987) - novelist
Daniel Bell (b. 1919) - sociologist
Robert Bellah (b. 1927) - sociologist
Stokely Carmichael (1941-1998) - political activist
Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) - industrialist
Herbert Croly (1869-1930) - reporter and writer
Dorothy Day (1897-1980) - social activist
Eugene V. Debs (1855-1926) - labor leader and Socialist Party candidate for President
John Dewey (1859-1952) - philosopher and educational reformer
Jean Bethke Elshtain (b. 1941) - political philosopher
Amitai Etzioni (b. 1929) - sociologist
Milton Friedman (1912-2006) - economist
John Kenneth Galbraith (1908-2006) - economist
Henry George (1839-1897) - political economist
Robert M. LaFollette, Sr. (1855-1925) - politician
Irving Kristol (b. 1920) - writer and political theorist
Russell Kirk (1892-1971) - theologian
Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) - philosopher
Dwight Macdonald (1906-1982) - social critic and philosopher
H. L. Mencken (1880-1956) - journalist
C. Wright Mills (1916-62) - sociologist
Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) - theologian
Robert Nozick (1938-2002) - philosopher
Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) - minister and theologian
Jerry Rubin (1938-1994) - social activist
Michael J. Sandel (b. 1953) - political philosopher
Upton Sinclair (1878-1968) - author and political activist
William Graham Sumner (1840-1910) - political writer and academic
Mark Twain (1835-1910) - writer
Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) - sociologist and economist
Paul C. Vitz (b. 1935) - psychologist
Roy Wilkins (1901-1981) - civil rights activist
Howard Zinn (b. 1922) - historian and social critic