

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
Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m.
Boyer 138

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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:

Walter Berns, *Making Patriots*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. ISBN 0226044386.
Martha C. Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* Boston: Beacon Press, 2002. ISBN 080704329X.
Scott John Hammond, et. al., eds., *Classics of American Political and Constitutional Thought: Reconstruction to the Present*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2007. ISBN 0872208850.
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:

Martha C. Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (2002)

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

Harvey C. Mansfield, "The Teaching of Citizenship" (1984)

available online through JStor

Howard Zinn, "The Scourge of Nationalism" (2005)

<http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0516-29.htm>

John D. Roth, *Choosing Against War: A Christian View* (2002) - chapter 5: "In God We Trust--The Dilemmas of Christian Citizenship"

on reserve

Richard Mouw, "Patriotism as Idolatry" (2002)

http://www.beliefnet.com/story/101/story_10114_1.html

Peter C. Meilaender, "Christians as Patriots" (2003)

http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=440&var_recherche=patriotism

Wilfred M. McClay, "The Mixed Nature of American Patriotism" (2003)

available online through Academic Search Premier

David P. Gushee, "What's Right About Patriotism" (2006)

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/july/4.48.html>

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
- Milton Friedman, "Economic Freedom, Human Freedom, Political Freedom" (1991)
<http://www.calculemus.org/lect/07pol-gosp/frlect.pdf>
- 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/~benenson/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)
<http://tiger.uic.edu/depts/hist/hull-maxwell/vicinity/nws1/documents/html/subobj/subjective.htm>
- Herbert Hoover, *American Individualism* (1922) - selections
<http://www.hooverassociation.org/amid.htm>
- Herbert Hoover, "Campaign Speech on Rugged Individualism" (1928)
Hammond, pp. 395-403
- Michael J. Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self" (1984)
Hammond, pp. 794-803
- Amitai Etzioni, "The Responsive Community: A Communitarian Perspective" (1996)
available online through JStor
- Wilfred M. McClay, "Individualism and Its Discontents" (2001)
<http://www.vqronline.org/articles/2001/summer/mcclay-individualism-its-discontents/>

Oct. 16 - The Activist State at Home

READING:

William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe To Each Other* (1883) - selections

http://wps.prenhall.com/wps/media/objects/107/109902/ch17_a3_d1.pdf

Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909) - selections

Hammond, pp. 296-314

Theodore Roosevelt, "The New Nationalism" (1910)

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=501>

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)

<http://www.marxists.org/subject/humanism/mills-c-wright/letter-new-left.htm>

John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (1958) - chapter 18: "The Theory of Social Balance"
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

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974) - selections

Hammond, pp. 780-785

Roberto Unger and Cornel West, "Progressive Politics and What Lies Ahead" (1998)

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

Alfred J. Beveridge, "The March of the Flag" (1898)

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1898beveridge.html>

Theodore Roosevelt, "Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine" (1904)

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=56&page=transcript>

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)

<http://www.midwinter.com/lurk/making/warprayer.html>

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

Paul Berman, "A Friendly Drink in a Time of War" (2004)

<http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=399>

Patrick J. Buchanan, "Whose War?" (2003)

http://www.amconmag.com/03_24_03/cover.html

Howard Zinn, "America's Blindness" (2006)

<http://alternet.org/waroniraq/34984/>

Nov. 6 - The Meaning of Democracy**first draft of research paper DUE****READING:**

Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (1925) - selections

Hammond, pp. 381-391

John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935) - selections

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

Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (1995) - chapter 4: "Does Democracy Deserve to Survive?"

on reserve

Jean Bethke Elshstain, "Democracy at Century's End" (1996)

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)

<http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/60spubs/67dialecticlib/67LibFromAfflSociety.htm>

Jerry Rubin, "A Yippie Manifesto" (1968)

<http://www.montgomerycollege.org/Departments/hpolscriv/yippiemanifesto.html>

Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals* (1971) - selections

Hammond, pp. 765-773

Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot* (1953) - chapter 1: "The Idea of Conservatism" on reserve

Russell Kirk, "May the Rising Generation Redeem the Time?" (1991)

<http://users.etaown.edu/m/mcdonaldw/LECT377.HTM>

Wilfred M. McClay, "Over the Counterculture" (2006)

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

Wilfred M. McClay, "Two Concepts of Secularism" (2000)

available online through Academic Search Premier

Stephen L. Carter, "Beyond Neutrality" (2000)

available online through Academic Search Premier

Stanley Hauerwas et. al., "The Naked Public Square Now" (2004)

available online through Academic Search Premier

David Brooks, "One Nation, Enriched by Biblical Wisdom" (2004)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/23/opinion/23BROO.html?ex=1395378000&en=29dd293924f39274&ei=5007&partner=USERLAND>

Randall Balmer, "Jesus Is Not a Republican" (2006)

<http://chronicle.com/free/v52/i42/42b00601.htm>

Kevin Phillips, "Theocons and Theocrats" (2006)

available online through Academic Search Premier

Michelle Goldberg, "Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism" (2006)

<http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2006/05/12/goldberg/>

D. G. Hart, *A Secular Faith: Why Christianity Favors the Separation of Church and State* (2006) - selections

<http://chapters.ivanrdee.com/15/666/1566635764ch1.pdf>

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.)

APPENDIX: PARTIAL LIST OF AMERICAN CRITICS

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
 Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) - poet
 Emma Goldman (1869-1940) - anarchist
 Paul Goodman (1911-1972) - writer
 Tom Hayden (b. 1939) - politician and political activist
 Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992) - economist and political philosopher
 Sydney Hook (1902-1989) - philosopher
 Jack Kerouac (1922-1969) - novelist and poet
 Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) - civil rights activist
 Russell Kirk (1918-1994) - political theorist and social critic
 Jeanne Kirkpatrick (1926-2006) - political scientist and politician
 Irving Kristol (b. 1920) - writer and political theorist
 Robert M. LaFollette, Sr. (1855-1925) - politician
 Christopher Lasch (1932-1994) - historian and social critic
 Walter Lippmann (1889-1974) - journalist
 Malcolm X (1925-1965) - minister and political activist
 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 A. Nisbet (1913-1996) - sociologist
 Michael Novak (b. 1933) - philosopher and theologian
 Robert Nozick (1938-2002) - philosopher
 Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) - minister and theologian
 David Riesman (1909-2002) - sociologist
 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