

THE AMERICAN DREAM IN AN AGE OF GLOBAL CAPITAL, 1865-2020

HIST 4030H

Dr. Hamilton
Fall 2013
TR 9:30-10:45am
LeConte Hall, Room 320

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Office Hours: Thurs. 12:30-3pm,
and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is the American Dream? Satisfying, remunerative work and the promise of upward mobility? The material and psychological security provided by comfortable housing, nutritious food, good health, and educational opportunities for one's family? The pleasures of enjoying leisure time and stimulating entertainment, rather than having one's life defined entirely by work? All of these desires have shaped the culture and politics of American capitalism since 1865, and all have been crucial in defining America's past, present, and future role in a global economy. This course will explore the struggles, conflicts, and achievements of the workers, managers, consumers, political leaders, intellectuals, novelists, and participants in mass social movements who defined and redefined the American Dream over the long twentieth century. What was gained and lost for workers, owners, and consumers through the rise and fall of Fordist industrial capitalism? How have democratic ideals and U.S. domestic and foreign policies been shaped by the shifting demands of corporate capitalism? What rights and responsibilities does the corporation have in a democratic polity? Does the American Dream stand a chance in an era of multinational corporations, lax government regulation, decimated labor unions, and individualistic consumerism? Is the American Dream *fact or fiction*? Readings and lectures will examine these issues within a global context, as we investigate the interconnections of American society with worldwide transformations of migration patterns, corporate expansion and transnational commerce, and the perils and promises of "free enterprise."

COURSE OBJECTIVES and REQUIREMENTS

Objectives

This is a reading-intensive course in which students will gain breadth and depth of knowledge about historical American political economy. Students will improve their skills in reading, writing, and discussing complex ideas at an advanced level. Good writing is learned in part by reading extensively and intensively, so we will do a significant amount of reading (up to 300 pages per week).

Attendance

Attendance at *every* class meeting is expected. I will take attendance daily, and all absences are considered unexcused, period. After your fourth absence from class, I will deduct *one percentage point* from your final course grade for each subsequent absence. If you encounter any issues in your personal or academic life that prevent you from attending class on a regular basis, you should contact me immediately.

Discussion / Responses / Quizzes

As this is a seminar-style course, our main task is to actively engage in discussion of the assigned readings; thus, 35% of your final grade will be based on discussion participation. Students are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Readings should be completed by the start of each class meeting. To facilitate discussion, each student will write **three** 250-400 word (1-2 double-spaced pages) responses to the readings during the course of the semester. Up to five pop quizzes and/or in-class writing assignments will also be administered to assure the reading is being done.

Writing Assignments / Final Exam

There will be three formal essay assignments in addition to the reading responses. The first is a 750- to 1000-word paper on a theme suggested by Dr. Hamilton. The second is a research paper of 1750 to 2000 words on a topic of your choosing, due before the end of the semester. The third is a comprehensive final take-home exam that will cover course readings, lectures, films, and discussions. More detailed information on the various writing assignments will be posted on ELC-NEW as the semester progresses.

Late Papers

Students will be penalized 10 points (out of 100) for every day that an assignment is late. No paper extensions will be granted.

Note on Requirements

Please note that the course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. This means that course readings and requirements are subject to change at the professor's discretion.

Academic Integrity

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. In short, do not plagiarize. Any infringement of the University's Academic Honesty Code—no matter how minor—will result in full disciplinary action. Visit the following website for more information: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>

Grading

Discussion / Responses / Quizzes	35%
Short paper	15%
Research paper (including presentation)	35%
Final take-home exam	15%

READING LIST

The following books are required reading, and will be available for purchase at the bookstore (or online), as well as placed on hold in the library. Books marked with a dagger (†) are also available as eTexts (see ELC-NEW), though you will likely prefer to have them in physical paper as they are quite inexpensive. Other documents, marked in the schedule by an asterisk (*) will be made available on ELC-NEW as PDFs. If you would like to avoid downloading the PDFs on a slow internet connection, simply provide me with a CD-R or USB flash drive and I will copy them for you.

†Horatio Alger, Jr., *Ragged Dick* (Penguin Classics, 1985 [1868]).

Anzia Yeziarska, *Bread Givers* (Persea, 2003 [1925]).

†Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* (New York: Signet Classics, 2007 [1922]).

Louis Hyman, *Debtor Nation: The History of America in Red Ink* (Princeton, 2011).

Karen Ho, *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 13	Introduction to the Course: Fictions and Realities of American Capitalism
Aug. 15	Lecture: The Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism
Aug. 20	Discussion: Alger, <i>Ragged Dick</i> , chs. 1-13.
Aug. 22	Discussion: Alger, <i>Ragged Dick</i> , chs. 13-end.
Aug. 27	Lecture: The Labor Question Discussion: * Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," <i>North American Review</i> (1889); *Henry Demarest Lloyd, <i>Wealth against Commonwealth</i> (1894) [excerpts].
Aug. 29	Discussion: *Rosanne Currarino, "'Labor Wants More!' The AFL and the Idea of Economic Liberty," in <i>The Labor Question in America</i> (Urbana, 2010), 86-113.
Sep. 3	Lecture: Gender, Immigration, and the Boundaries of the American Dream
Sep. 5	Discussion: *Samuel Gompers, "Meat vs. Rice: Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion; American Manhood against Asiatic Coolieism: Which Shall Survive?" U.S. Senate, 57th Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 137 (1902); *Aristide Zolberg, "Global Movements, Global Walls: Responses to Migration, 1885-1925," in <i>Global History and Migrations</i> , ed. Wang Gungwu, (Boulder: Westview, 1996), pp. 279-307.
Sep. 10	Discussion: Yeziarska, <i>Bread Givers</i> , pp. xxi-xxxvi, 1-151.
Sep. 12	Discussion: Yeziarska, <i>Bread Givers</i> , pp. 155-297.

Sep. 17	Lecture: Mass Consumption and the Landscape of Desire
Sep. 19	Discussion: Hyman, <i>Debtor Nation</i> , 1-44. Paper I Due by 11:59pm – Upload to ELC-NEW
Sep. 24	Lecture: A Chicken in Every Pot? The Seduction of Mass Production Discussion: *Henry Ford, "Mass Production," <i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> (1926).
Sep. 26	Lecture: The Politics of Prosperity in the 1920s Workshop: Framing a Research Paper
Oct. 1	Discussion: Lewis, <i>Babbitt</i> , chs. 1-14.
Oct. 3	Discussion: Lewis, <i>Babbitt</i> , chs. 15-end.
Oct. 8	Lecture: The Great Depression and the Crisis of Global Capital Discussion: Hyman, <i>Debtor Nation</i> , pp. 45-72.
Oct. 10	Lecture: The "American Century" Discussion: *Henry Luce, "The American Century," <i>Life</i> , Feb. 17, 1941, pp. 61-65; *Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Four Freedoms" (1941).
Oct. 15	Discussion: *Friedrich Hayek, "The Road to Serfdom [abridged]" <i>Reader's Digest</i> , Apr. 1945, pp. 1-20; *Chester A. Bowles, <i>Tomorrow without Fear</i> (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), pp. 1-3, 30-49, 51-56, 84-86; *John Kenneth Galbraith, "The Theory of Social Balance," in <i>The Affluent Society</i> (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), pp. 251-261.
Oct. 17	Lecture: Come Alive! You're in the Pepsi Generation Workshop: Completing a Research Paper
Oct. 22	Discussion: Hyman, <i>Debtor Nation</i> , pp. 132-172.
Oct. 24	NO CLASS – RESEARCH DAY
Oct. 29	Film: "The Bunkers and Inflation," <i>All in the Family</i> (1974). Discussion: Hyman, <i>Debtor Nation</i> , pp. 173-219.
Oct. 31	Discussion: *Daniel Rodgers, "The Rediscovery of the Market," in <i>Age of Fracture</i> (Harvard, 2011), pp. 41-76; *Ronald Reagan, "Inaugural Address," Jan. 20, 1981; *Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on the Economy," Feb. 5, 1981.
Nov. 5	Discussion: Ho, <i>Liquidated</i> , pp. 1-72.
Nov. 7	Discussion: Ho, <i>Liquidated</i> , pp. 73-168.
Nov. 12	Discussion: Ho, <i>Liquidated</i> , pp. 169-248.
Nov. 14	Discussion: Ho, <i>Liquidated</i> , pp. 249-324.
Nov. 19	Presentations
Nov. 21	Presentations

Dec. 3	NO CLASS – "FRIDAY SCHEDULE IN EFFECT" Paper II Due by 11:59pm – Upload to ELC-NEW
Dec. 10	Final Exam Due to ELC-NEW by 11am

