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21H.102 The Emergence of Modern America 1865-Present  
Spring 2003

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**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

**21H.102 Spring 2003**

**The Emergence of Modern America, 1865 to the Present**

This subject studies the changing structure of American politics, economics, and society from the end of the Civil War to the present. We will consider secondary historical accounts and primary documents to examine some of the key issues in the development of modern America: industrialization and urbanization; U.S. emergence as a global power; ideas about rights and equality; and the changing structures of gender, class, and race. This subject also examines the multiple answers that Americans gave to the question of what it means to be an American in the modern age. As a communications-intensive subject, students will be expected to engage intensively with the material through frequent oral and written exercises.

**Requirements:** The success of this class depends on the active participation of all students. Classroom participation (15%) represents a substantial portion of the grade, and will be evaluated in terms of preparation, participation in large and small group discussion, active listening, collaboration, and overall contributions to the class experience during the term. Needless to say, if you do not attend a class it is impossible for you to contribute to it. All students will take charge of discussion (10%) for a particular class session—labeled on the syllabus with the notation (\*PR)—in collaboration with the instructor; preparation includes a short presentation about a primary document of your choosing that relates to the readings for a particular class.

Writing assignments in this subject are frequent. Everyone will write two 5-6pp. essays (20% each), of which one must be revised in conjunction with me and/or the staff of the Writing Center. In addition, each student will write a longer 10-12pp. essay (30%) on a topic of your choosing. Preparatory writing exercises (5%) will help students develop a topic, a bibliography, and an argument in advance of the final paper itself. There is no midterm or final examination in this class.

Writing assignments are due on paper in person at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Extensions will be granted only for good reasons explained well in advance; computer malfunctions are never an acceptable excuse for a late submission. Adherence to standards of academic honesty is required; if you have any questions about how to go about your writing or cite your sources, don't hesitate to ask.

**Books:** Copies of all books have also been placed on reserve in the Humanities Library. Additional readings are available through handouts. Readings should be completed by the beginning of the class under which they appear, unless otherwise stated.

**\*\* CLASS OUTLINE \*\***

**WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION**

**Class #1: Introduction**

READING: None.

**WEEK TWO: RECONSTRUCTION**

**Class #2: Legacies of War**

READING: Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (1990), xi-xvi, 1-15, 104-123.

**Class #3: The Politics of Reconstruction (\*PR 1)**

READING: Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (1990), pp. 124-198.

You may want to look at the chapter on Reconstruction in Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America: A History of the United States* (2003), pp. 535-560, if there is anything that you want to examine in further detail, but you are not expected to read that as well.

**WEEK THREE: THE NEW INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY: CENTER AND MARGINS**

**Class #4: The “Winning” of the West**

WRITING: ROUGH DRAFT of first paper due at the beginning of class. We will spend most of the class working on peer editing.

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 564-573, 582-584, 599-602.

**Class #5: The New Industrial Society (\*PR 2)**

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 573-580, 584-588.

Andrew Carnegie, “How I Served My Apprenticeship” (1896), in *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays*, ed. Edward C. Kirkland (1962), pp. 3-13. [electronic reserve]

Russell H. Conwell, “Acres of Diamonds” (c. 1882), in *Acres of Diamonds* (1915). [electronic reserve]

William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883), pp. 7-24, 63-87. [electronic reserve]

## WEEK FOUR: WORK AND PLAY IN URBAN AMERICA

### Class #6: The Modern Labor Movement

WRITING: REVISED DRAFT of first paper due at the beginning of class.

READING: John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (1978), begin reading.

### Class #7: The Emergence of Consumer Culture (\*PR 3)

READING: John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (1978), finish reading.

Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 607-616, 633-638.

## WEEK FIVE: AMERICA IN THE WORLD

### Class #8: Immigrants Remake America (\*PR 4)

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 588-593, 603-604.

Anzia Yezierska, "How I Found America" (1920), in Gerald Shapiro, ed., *American Jewish Fiction: A Century of Stories* (1998), pp. 15-37. [electronic reserve]

### Class #9: The Wars of 1898 (\*PR 5)

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 661-662, 664-673.

Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," in *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (1902), pp. 1-21. [electronic reserve]

Mark Twain, "As Regards Patriotism" (1901), in Louis J. Budd, ed., *Mark Twain: Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches, and Essays, 1891-1910* (1992), pp. 474-478. [electronic reserve]

José A. Cabranes, "Some Common Ground," in Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall, eds., *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution* (2001), pp. 39-47. [electronic reserve]

## WEEK SIX: PROGRESSIVISM AND ITS LIMITS

### Class #10: In Search of Progressivism (\*PR6)

WRITING: FIRST DRAFT of second paper due at the beginning of class.

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 617-625, 638-640, 694-706.

*Lochner v. New York*, 198 U.S. 45 (1905). [electronic reserve]  
*Muller v. Oregon*, 208 U.S. 412 (1908). [electronic reserve]

**Class #11: Violence in the Postwar South**

READING: James Allen, et al., *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (2000), on reserve in the Humanities Library.

Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (1901), pp. 217-237. [electronic reserve]

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), pp. 36-50. [electronic reserve]

**WEEK SEVEN: WAR AND DEPRESSION**

**Class #12: War, Revolution, and the Flapper (\*PR 7)**

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 720-731, 741-749.

Warren I. Susman, "Culture Heroes: Ford, Barton, Ruth," in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (1984), pp. 122-149. [electronic reserve]

**Class #13: The Great Depression (\*PR 8)**

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 752-758, 761-767, 770-778.

LISTENING: Lewis Allan, "Strange Fruit," perf. Billie Holliday. [electronic reserve]

WRITING: REVISED DRAFT of second paper due at the beginning of class.

**WEEK EIGHT: WORLD WAR II**

**Class #14: World War II**

VIEWING: *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (1980).

**Class #15: The Legacies of War (\*PR 9)**

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 814-844. Everyone will be responsible for a section of this chapter, although you should read any parts of it that you need to help you learn about World War II.

Henry R. Luce, "The American Century" (1941) in John K. Jessup, ed., *The Ideas of Henry Luce* (1969), pp. 105-120. [electronic reserve]

United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). [electronic reserve]

WRITING: REVISED ESSAY for group one due in class.

## WEEK NINE: THE COLD WAR

### Class #16: The Cold War as a Political Crisis (\*PR 10)

READING: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, 2d ed. (1999), pp. ix-xxvi, 1-29, and 80-203, begin reading.

Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 847-879, 882-913. Read only those sections that you need to help you understand *Homeward Bound*.

### Class #17: The Cold War as a Cultural Crisis (\*PR 11)

READING: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, 2d ed. (1999), pp. ix-xxvi, 1-29, and 80-203, finish reading.

Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 847-879, 882-913. Read only those sections that you need to help you understand *Homeward Bound*.

WRITING: REVISED ESSAY for group two due in class.

## WEEK TEN: THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

### Class #18: The Emergence of the Civil Rights Movement

READING: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1968), pp. 1-117.

Flannery O'Connor, "Everything That Rises Must Converge," in *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (1965), pp. 3-23. [electronic reserve]

### Class #19: What the Civil Rights Movement Did (\*PR 12)

READING: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1968), 261-384.

Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 921-922, 933-935, 943-944, recommended as background reading.

WRITING: REVISED ESSAY for group three due in class.

## WEEK ELEVEN: WHY WERE WE IN VIETNAM?

### Class #20: Vietnam (\*PR 13)

READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 952-957, 968-971.

Lyndon B. Johnson, "Speech at Johns Hopkins University" (1965), in George Katsiaficas, ed., *Vietnam Documents: American and Vietnamese Views of the War* (1992), pp. 200-205. [electronic reserve]

Tim O'Brien, "On the Rainy River," in *The Things They Carried* (1990), pp. 39-61.

## WEEK TWELVE: THE SIXTIES AND BEYOND

### Class #21: The Sixties and Its Legacies (\*PR 14)

- READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 944-945, 957-967.
- Allen Ginsberg, "America" (1956), in Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*, 2d. ed. (1988), pp. 1216-1218. [electronic reserve]
- Betty Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," in *The Feminine Mystique* (1964), pp. 15-32. [electronic reserve]
- Wendell Berry, "The Ecological Crisis as a Crisis of Character," in *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (1977), pp. 17-26. [electronic reserve]

### Class #22: The Seventies: From Watergate to Disco (\*PR 15)

- READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 978-981, 984-988, 993-999, 1003-1007.

## WEEK THIRTEEN: THE NEW CONSERVATISM

### Class #23: The Reagan Revolution (\*PR 16)

- READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 1008-1011, 1014-1034. Everyone will be responsible for a section.
- Eric Liu, *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998), begin reading.

### Class #24: A Changing America (\*PR 17)

- READING: Eric Liu, *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998), finish reading.

## WEEK FOURTEEN: THE NEXT AMERICAN CENTURY?

### Class #25: The American Dream in a Global Age (\*PR 18)

- READING: Pauline Maier, et al., *Inventing America* (2003), pp. 1044-1048.
- Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for Twenty-First-Century Capitalism* (1992), pp. 3-9, 43-57, 119-135, 301-315. [electronic reserve]

### Class #26: The American Dream after September 11

- WRITING: FINAL PAPER due at the beginning of class.