

History 240
Radicalism in America: From the Revolution to Occupy Wall Street

University of Illinois at Chicago
 Science and Engineering South 138

Spring 2020
 Tues. and Thurs. 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

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Course Description: This course offers a survey of radical social movements in the United States from the American Revolution to the present. We'll consider what "radicalism" means, the different forms of radicalism that have challenged the structures and boundaries of American society in different periods, and the relation between radicalism, reaction, and reform. For the purposes of this course, radicalism refers to ideas, campaigns, and movements aimed at fundamental transformation of the American social order as opposed to piecemeal changes and policies. Radicalism can arise from widely divergent and opposing political perspectives, and it can be driven by grassroots popular dissent or by elite efforts. Through most of American history, however, the most influential and sustained radical movements have arisen in opposition to the power of entrenched wealth and privilege.

Required Books:

The following books are available at the UIC Bookstore and on reserve at the Daley Library.
 Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (2016)
 Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (2007)
 James Weinstein, *The Long Detour: The History and Future of the American Left* (2003)
 Dorothy Sue Cobble, Linda Gordon, and Astrid Henry, *Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women's Movements* (2014)
 Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Campbell McMillian, eds., *The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition* (2003)

Graded Work:

1. *Book critiques.* (30 percent of course grade.) Students must write two 4-6-page (double-spaced, 12-point font) critiques of any two of the four assigned books (other than *The Radical Reader*). See the schedule of topics and readings below for the due dates. Each critique must identify and analyze, in depth and detail, the author's *main argument, supporting analysis, basic narrative, and primary evidence*; it must also carefully consider what the book suggests, reveals, or illuminates about the history of American radicalism more broadly. Each critique is worth 15 percent of the course grade. You are welcome to write critiques of more than two of the books, in which case only your two highest grades will count toward your course grade.

2. *Short report.* (15 percent of course grade.) Students must choose one event, issue, or movement in the history of American radicalism and prepare a 4-6-page (double-spaced, 12-point font) written report as well as a 5-minute oral report, to be presented in class on a date to be agreed on with the instructor. The topic for the report may be chosen from the list of possible topics to be handed out separately, or students may select another topic with the instructor's approval. The report is to be based on reading of at least two primary sources (produced by the historical actors themselves) and two secondary sources (articles or books by historians or other scholars).

3. *Exams.* (50 percent of course grade.) There will be a take-home midterm exam and a take-home final exam, each worth 25 percent of the course grade.

4. *Class participation.* (5 percent of course grade.) All students are expected to complete the assigned reading before class each week and to participate consistently and actively in class discussion. A grade of "C" will be given for consistent attendance, with no more than two unexcused absences; a grade of "B" for consistent participation; and a grade of "A" for especially well-prepared and active participation throughout the semester.

Academic Honesty: All assignments that you turn in must be strictly your own work. It is essential that you cite fully and specifically all sources and resources of any kind that you use. Any instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will result in a grade of "F" for the assignment and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability and require special arrangements or accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. I will be happy to make an appointment to meet with you.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Unit I. "To Begin the World Again": Radicalism in the New Republic

Week 1 (Jan. 14 and Jan. 16). American Revolutions: Contested Meanings of Independence
Reading: *Slave's Cause*, chs 2-4; *Radical Reader*, docs. 5 (Slave Petitions), 7 (Thomas Paine), 9 (Abigail Adams)

Week 2 (Jan. 21 and Jan. 23). Agrarian Radicalism: Republican Demands for Redistribution of Property
Reading: *Slave's Cause*, chs 7-9; *Radical Reader*, docs. 16 (Thomas Skidmore), 18 (Robert Owen), 58 (Frances Wright)

Week 3 (Jan. 28 and Jan. 30). Women's Rights: Challenges to Patriarchy
Reading: *Slave's Cause*, chs 11-13; *Radical Reader*, docs. 42 (Sarah Grimké), 43 (Margaret Fuller), 44 (Seneca Falls Convention)

Week 4 (Feb. 4 and Feb. 6): Abolitionism: Struggles Against Slavery

Reading: *Populist Vision*, Introduction and chs. 1, 3-4; *Radical Reader*, docs. 21 (Henry David Thoreau), 28 (David Walker), 38 (Frederick Douglass)

Film: "The Abolitionists"

First book critique (*Slave's Cause*) due Feb. 4.

Unit II. "A New Birth of Freedom": Radicalism in the Gilded Age

Week 5 (Feb. 11 and Feb. 13). Free Labor: Postbellum Battles Over Workers' Rights

Reading: *Populist Vision*, chs 5-7; *Radical Reader*, docs. 61 (Ira Steward), 63 (Colored National Labor Union), 66 (Henry George)

Week 6 (Feb. 18 and Feb. 20). Populism: Farmers and Workers Against Corporate Capital

Reading: *Populist Vision*, chs 8-9 and Conclusion; *Radical Reader*, docs. 65 (Knights of Labor), 67 (People's Party), 71 (William Jennings Bryan)

Week 7 (Feb. 25 and Feb. 27). Civil Rights, I: Resistance to Discrimination, Dispossession, and Disfranchisement

Reading: *Long Detour*, Introduction and chs. 1-4; *Radical Reader*, docs. 54 (Ida B. Wells-Barnett), 68 (Chinese Equal Rights League), 72 (Black Elk)

Second book critique (*Populist Promise*) due Feb. 25.

Unit III. "An Injury to All": Radicalism in the Early and Mid Twentieth Century

Week 8 (March 3 and March 5). Socialism: Democracy in Modern Industry

Reading: *Radical Reader*, docs. 74 (Industrial Workers of the World), 76 (Emma Goldman), 81 (Norman Thomas)

Midterm Exam due March 5.

Week 9 (March 10 and March 12). Civil Rights, II: Campaigns for Integration and Black Power

Reading: *Long Detour*, chs 5-7; *Radical Reader*, docs. 93 (Martin Luther King, Jr.), 95 (Malcolm X), 98 (Angela Davis)

Week 10 (March 17 and March 19). New Lefts: Student and Antiwar Movements

Reading: *Long Detour*, chs 8-10; *Radical Reader*, docs. 113 (Students for a Democratic Society), 120 (Students for a Democratic Society), 121 (Weather Underground)

Film: "Berkeley in the Sixties"

SPRING BREAK (MARCH 24 AND MARCH 26)

Unit IV. "The Personal is Political": Radicalism in the Late Twentieth Century

Week 11 (March 31 and April 2). Women's Liberation and Gay Rights: Politics of Gender and Sexuality

Reading: *Feminism Unfinished*, Prologue and ch. 1; *Radical Reader*, docs. 106 (Susan Brownmiller), 109 (Combahee River Collective), 138 (Radicalesbians)

Third book critique (*Long Detour*) due March 31.

Week 12 (April 7 and April 9). Modern Environmentalism: Reclaiming the Commons
 Reading: *Feminism Unfinished*, ch. 2; *Radical Reader*, docs. 127 (Rachel Carson), 130 (Barry Commoner), 131 (Peter Singer)

Week 13 (April 14 and April 16). Disability Rights: Individual Capacities and Social Welfare
 Reading: *Feminism Unfinished*, ch. 3 and Afterword; documents on Blackboard by Wolf
 Wolfsenberger, Frank Bowe, and Paul Longmore

Unit V. "We Are the 99 Percent": Radicalism and the Neoliberal Order

Week 14 (April 21 and April 23). New Rights: The Taxpayers' Revolt and the Tea Party
 Movement
 Reading: documents on Blackboard by Barry Goldwater, Phyllis Schlafly, and Jerry Falwell

Fourth book critique (*Feminism Unfinished*) due April 21.

Week 15 (April 28 and April 30). Occupy Wall Street: Resistance to Globalization and
 Financialization

Reading: documents on Blackboard by David Graeber, Alicia Garza, and Gerald Berk
 Film: "99%: The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film"

Final Exam due May 7.