

History 12
Fall 2008
MW 1:00-2:25
CT 16, Harrison-McCann

McMahon
Hubbard Hall 11
smcmahon@bowdoin.edu; ext. 3241

UTOPIA: INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES IN AMERICA, 1630-1997

This seminar examines the evolution of utopian visions and utopian experiments in American history. It begins with John Winthrop's 1630 vision of a "City upon a Hill," explores the proliferation of both religious and secular communal ventures between 1780 and 1920, and concludes with an examination of 20th-century counter-culture communes, intentional communities, and dystopian separatists. Primary source readings include official statements of vision and purpose by a variety of charismatic leaders; personal accounts by members, both loyal and apostate; descriptions and evaluations by "informed" contemporaries; and utopian fiction. We will read scholarly analyses by historians to help us locate those documentary readings in their historical contexts. Together, the assigned readings, class discussions, and essay assignments are designed to introduce students to the resources and methods of historical inquiry and critical analysis, and to provide opportunities for students to strengthen their writing skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS. The seminar consists of two class meetings each week. The reading assignments for each class should be completed by that class meeting. The online *History 12 Reading Guide* for the course provides questions to help focus your reading for the class discussions. Most of the reading assignments come from the essay collection and monographs assigned for the course. The rest of the assignments (journal articles and primary documents) are available as e-reserves through the Library Reserves link on *Blackboard* or by link to an online source or database from the *Reading Guide* on *Blackboard*. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase the assigned books from the bookstore; a copy of each of the assigned books is on reserve in the library.

Class participation and oral presentations: You are expected to attend class and to come to all class meetings ready to participate in a discussion and analysis of the readings [35% of final grade]. In addition, each student will give a 5-7 minute work-in-progress report on their research and analysis for their research paper at the end of the semester [5% of final grade].

Essays: Students will write three essays during the first half of the course (the first assignment is required; students will choose two out of three additional assignments). These assignments give students experience in drafting, revising, and editing a short (2-3 page) focused essay and teach students how to subject primary source materials to critical analysis [together, 40% of final grade]. During the second half of the course, students will design a research project, pursue their research, and draft and revise a five-page research paper [20% of final grade].

All students are expected to read, understand, and abide by the rules of citation outlined in *Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgement* (Dartmouth College, 1998).

BOOKS: Donald E. Pitzer, ed., *America's Communal Utopias* (1997)
Charles Nordhoff, *American Utopias*, Foreword and Afterword by Robert Fogarty (1993)
[originally published as *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (1875)]
Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888)
Frances Fitzgerald, *Cities on a Hill: A Journey Through Contemporary American Cultures* (1981, 1983, 1986)

The History 12 online Reading Guide, Electronic Reserve Reading Links, and other online Resources can be found on Blackboard Academic Suite at <http://blackboard.bowdoin.edu/>, or at <http://www.bowdoin.edu/faculty/s/smcmahon/courses/hist012/index.shtml>

WEEK 1.

9/8 INTRODUCTION

9/10 UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES—INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

Readings:

Robert Fogarty, "Foreword," and Charles Nordhoff, "Introduction," in Nordhoff, *American Utopias*, xiii-23

Paul S. Boyer, "Foreword," and Donald E. Pitzer, "Preface" and "Introduction," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, ix-13

WEEK 2.

9/15 UTOPIAN VISIONS: REVISING COMMUNITY, FAMILY, GENDER ROLES

Readings:

Yaacov Oved, "Communes and the Outside World: Seclusion and Involvement," *Communal Societies* 3 (1983), 83-92. (e-reserve)

Jeanette C. Lauer and Robert H. Lauer, "Sex Roles in Nineteenth-century American Communal Societies," *Communal Societies* 3 (1983), 16-28. (e-reserve)

Instructions for writing the short essays (LINK)

Early Ventures

9/17 EARLY UTOPIAN VISIONS AND EXPERIMENTS

Document:

John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity" (1630) in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*. (LINK)

Reading:

Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Communitarian Societies in Colonial America," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 14-36

Bring draft of first essay to class (required)

Utopian Ventures in the Early Republic

WEEK 3.

9/22 MILLENNIALISTS AND RADICAL GERMAN PIETISTS: The Rappites Of Harmony and the Separatists of Zoar

Readings:

Karl J.R. Arndt, "George Rapp's Harmony Society," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 57-87

Charles Nordhoff, "The Harmonists of Economy" and "The Separatists of Zoar," *American Utopias*, 63-113

First 2-3 page essay due (required)

9/24 THE COMMUNITY OF TRUE INSPIRATION AT AMANA

Readings:

Jonathan G. Andelson, "The Community of True Inspiration from Germany to the Amana Colonies," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 181-203

Charles Nordhoff, "The Amana Society," *American Utopias*, 25-59

WEEK 4.

9/29 MOTHER ANN LEE AND THE EVOLUTION OF SHAKER BELIEFS AND THEOLOGY

Readings:

Priscilla Brewer, "The Shakers of Mother Ann Lee," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 37-56

Charles Nordhoff, "The Shakers," *American Utopias*, 117-151, (skim 214-231), read 232-256

10/1 SHAKERS: REVISING COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND GENDER ROLES

Reading:

Charles Nordhoff, "The Shakers," *American Utopias*, 151-179, skim: 179-214

Document:

W. D. Howells, "A Shaker Village," *The Atlantic Monthly* XXXVII (June 1876), 699-710, in *Making of America Collection*, Cornell University Library. (LINK)

Further reading:

Flo Morse, "In the Nineteenth Century: Some Literary Visitors" [Dickens, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Artemus Ward], in Flo Morse, *The Shakers and the World's People* (1987), 184-209. (e-reserve)

Bring draft of second essay to class

Seeking a Perfect Society: Nineteenth Century America

WEEK 5.

10/6 SECULAR COMMUNITIES: ROBERT OWEN AND NEW HARMONY

Reading:

Donald E. Pitzer, "The New Moral World of Robert Owen and New Harmony," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 88-134

Documents:

Robert Owen, "Address delivered April 27, 1825," *New Harmony Gazette*, in David Brion Davis, *Antebellum American Culture* (1979), 445-447. (e-reserve)

Robert Owen, "Address delivered May 6, 1827 to the people of New Harmony," reprinted in Paul Brown, *Twelve Months in New Harmony* (1972), 98-106. (LINK)

Second 2-3 page essay due

10/8 SECULAR COMMUNITIES: SOCIALIST AND ANARCHIST COMMUNITIES

Reading:

Carl Guarneri, "Brook Farm and the Fourierist Phalanxes: Immediatism, Gradualism, and American Utopian Socialism," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 159-180

Documents:

Albert Brisbane, "Social Waste and the Benefits of Association," from *Social Destiny of Man: or, Association and Reorganization of Industry* (1840), in *The Annals of America*, vol. 6, 544-548. (e-reserve)

Albert Brisbane, "Exposition of Views and Principles," *The Phalanx* I (Oct. 7, 1843), in David Brion Davis, *Antebellum American Culture* (1979), 450-452. (e-reserve)

WEEK 6.

10/13 FALL BREAK

10/15 NEW ENGLAND: TRANSCENDENTALISM AT BROOK FARM

Reading:

J.B. Wilson, "The Antecedents of Brook Farm," *New England Quarterly* 15.2 (1942), 320-331. (JSTOR)

Documents:

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England," from *Emerson, Lectures and Biographical Sketches* (1904; notes written 1867, first published 1883), 325-370, *American Transcendentalism Web*, Virginia Commonwealth University. (LINK) [Focus on the section on Brook Farm at the end of the Notes, pp.359-370 in the 1904 edition.]

Note: read one or more of the following:

Nathaniel Hawthorne, from *Passages from the American Note-books of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Vol. II (1868), [April 13-October 17, 1841], 1-49, *Online Books Page*, University of Pennsylvania Library, at Eldritch Press. (LINK) [Note: focus on the entries from April 13-September 3, 1841]

Joel Myerson, "Memoranda and Documents: James Burrill Curtis and Brook Farm [1842-43]," *New England Quarterly* LI.3 (1978), 396-423. (JSTOR)

Joel Myerson, ed., "Rebecca Codman Butterfield's Reminiscences of Brook Farm [1843-47; written c. 1890s]," *New England Quarterly* 65.4 (1992), 603-630. (JSTOR)

Ora Gannett Sedgwick, "A Girl of 16 at Brook Farm," *Atlantic Monthly* 85.509 (March, 1900), 395-404. (LINK)

Further reading: Louisa May Alcott, "Transcendental Wild Oats [Fruitlands]" (from *Silver Pitchers*, 1876), *American Transcendentalism Web*, Virginia Commonwealth University. (LINK)

Bring draft of third essay to class

WEEK 7.

10/20 JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES AND ONEIDA

Readings:

Lawrence Foster, "Free Love and Community: John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Perfectionists," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 253-278

Charles Nordhoff, "The Oneida and Wallingford Perfectionists," *American Utopias*, 259-301

Document:

John Humphrey Noyes, "The Oneida Community" (1848), from John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (1870), in *The Annals of America*, vol. 7, 403-409. (e-reserve)

Third 2-3 page essay due

10/22 ONEIDA: PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE

Readings:

Marlyn Klee-Hartzell, "The Oneida Community Family," *Communal Societies* 16 (1996), 15-22. (e-reserve)

Ellen Wayland-Smith, "The Status and Self-Perception of Women in the Oneida Community," *Communal Societies* 8 (1988), 18-53. (e-reserve)

Instructions for writing a short research paper in history (LINK)

WEEK 8.

10/27 JOSEPH SMITH AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

Reading:

Brian Berry, "Mormonism," in Berry, *America's Utopian Experiments*, Ch. 6, pp.64-82. (e-reserve)

William M. Kephart, "The Mormons," in *Extraordinary Groups: The Sociology of Unconventional Life-Styles*, 2nd ed. (1982), 233-253. (e-reserve)

Dean L. May, "One Heart and Mind: Communal Life and Values among the Mormons," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 135-158

10/29 MORMONS: DOCTRINE AND EXPERIENCE

Documents:

Joseph Smith, "Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith" (1838), "Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, including Plurality of Wives" (1843), in *The Pearl of Great Price* (reprinted Salt Lake City, 1888), 83-110, 123-136, or The Official Internet Site of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*

Ann Eliza Young, *Wife No. 19, or the Story of a Life in Bondage* (1875), Ch. V, XVII, 98-109, 290-305, or at www.angelfire.com

Bring draft of fourth essay to class

WEEK 9.

11/3 LIBRARY TOUR: meet at Bookhenge, first floor of Hawthorne-Longfellow Library
Fourth 2-3 page essay due

11/5 THE END OF CHARLES NORDHOFF'S 1874 TOUR and his comparative view and review of communistic efforts in the United states

Reading:

Charles Nordhoff, "The Icarians," "The Bishop Hill Colony," "The Cedar Vale Commune," "The Social Freedom Community," "Three Colonies—Not Communistic," "Comparative View and Review," *American Utopias*, 333-418.

Guidelines for the work-in-progress presentations (LINK)

11/7 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES: Discuss research prospectuses

WEEK 10.

11/10 JEWISH AGRICULTURAL COMMUNES AND COOPERATIVE FARMING

Readings:

Pearl W. Bartelt, "American Jewish Agricultural Colonies," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 352-374

Research paper prospectus due

11/12 UTOPIAN VISIONS IN FICTION

Document: Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888)

WEEK 11.

11/17 SOCIAL GOSPEL, THEOSOPHY, SOCIALISTS, AND SECULAR ALTERNATIVES

Readings:

J. Gordon Melton, "The Theosophical Communities and Their Ideal of Universal Brotherhood," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 396-418

Robert V. Hine, "California's Socialist Utopias," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 419-431

Contemporary Utopias

11/19 COUNTERCULTURE (1960S) AND INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES (1970S)

Readings:

Jefferson P. Selth, "Document: The Ashram of Graton Road: Morning Star Ranch, A California Commune in the 1960s," *Communal Societies* 4 (1984), 204-211. (e-reserve)

Ellen Broslovsky, "Just to Breathe: Personal Recollections of Synanon founder, Charles E. Dederich," *Communal Societies* 20 (2000), 97-108. (e-reserve)

Melanie Arcudi and Pauline Meyer, "The Brotherhood of the Sun, 1969-1985: A Memoir," *Communal Societies* 5 (1985), 82-88. (e-reserve)

WEEK 12.

11/24 VISIONARY COMMUNITIES: 1980s

Reading:

Frances Fitzgerald, *Cities on a Hill* (1986), "Rajneeshpuram," 247-381.

(If you have time, skim "Introduction," 1-24, "Starting Over," 383-414.)

11/26 THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 13.

12/1 WORK-IN-PROGRESS REPORTS

12/3 WORK-IN-PROGRESS REPORTS

12/5 WORK-IN-PROGRESS REPORTS

Note: this Friday class is the make-up class for Wednesday of Thanksgiving week.

Five-page research paper: penultimate draft due

WEEK 14.

12/8 FROM UTOPIA TO DYSTOPIA: People's Temple [Jonestown, Guyana, November 1978]; Branch Davidians [Waco, Texas, April 1993]; Heaven's Gate [San Diego, California, March 1997]

Readings:

Gairdner B. Moment, "From Utopia to Dystopia: The Jonestown Tragedy," in Moment and Kraushaar, *Utopias: The American Experience* (1980), 215-228. (e-reserve)

John R. Hall, "Jonestown and Bishop Hill: Continuities and Disjunctures in Religious Conflict," *Communal Societies* 8 (1988), 77-89. (e-reserve)

12/10 CONCLUSION, OR HOW TO DESIGN A UTOPIAN COMMUNITY

Readings:

Graham Meltzer, "Cohousing: Linking Community and Sustainability," *Communal Societies* 19 (1999), 85-100. (e-reserve)

Jack Crittenden, "Veneration of Community," *Communal Societies* 9 (1989), 105-122. (e-reserve)

Further reading:

Jon Wagner, "Success in Intentional Communities: The Problem of Evaluation," *Communal Societies* 5 (1985), 89-100. (e-reserve)

Five-page research paper due: Tuesday, Dec. 16, noon.