

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History

Semester II Year 86

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
571-001	Undergraduate Studies in US History: Perry Miller: The Life of the Mind	Cohen

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Considered by many scholars as America's foremost historian, Perry Miller is must reading for people who need a shot of intellectual stimulation in the morning to get themselves going. An authority on literature, religion, and law in America from the colonial period to the Civil War, he is perhaps best known as the founder of modern Puritan studies. This course uses Miller's work as a way to investigate both the intellectual (especially the religious) history of early America and the historian's (self-appointed) role as social critic, for much of Miller's work, involved though it is with the mental gymnastics of bygone ages, offers a critique of modern American civilization. The seminar is dedicated to the proposition that college affords one the opportunity to read and discuss great books, and no one has captured either the mind of early America or that exquisitely anguished perambulation through the psyche that we call thinking better than Miller. One caveat: like any controlled substance, Miller gives one's system quite a jolt; the class should not be taken by anyone who believes that the American minds can be understood by reading People and Cliff Notes .

LECTURES

none

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

short papers
no exams

GRADING SYSTEM

A-F

REQUIRED READINGS

Perry Miller, The New England Mind (2 volumes)
Orthodoxy in Massachusetts
Jonathan Edwards
Errand Into the Wilderness
The American Mind