

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History

History 901
Proseminar in American History

Carl Kaestle
Fall, 1992

American social and cultural history: 1860-1940

Scope of the course:

In this course we will examine historical works about the lives of ordinary people from about 1860 to 1940. Our effort will be to explore the behavior and beliefs of non-elite people, their daily activities, crucial life-course decisions, and their reactions to major social transformations that affected their lives.

The common readings fall under three themes: emancipation, industrialization, and cultural production. Students will have an opportunity to explore a topic of their choice during a three-week independent reading unit in the middle of the semester.

Methodological emphasis:

Although this is not a course in methodology, there will be continual attention to methodological problems encountered in studying ordinary people in the past. Despite an outpouring of interesting recent work on social and cultural history, our knowledge on many matters is rudimentary and precarious. Thus, methodology will be one of our central concerns.

Assignments:

In addition to reading the assigned works carefully and contributing to the general discussion, each student will prepare three papers. One of these papers will report on work done and insights gained during the independent reading period.

Paperback books to purchase:

- Leon Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long (Vintage)
- Lawrence Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness (Oxford)
- Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Sorrow, Labor of Love (Basic)
- Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, et al., Like a Family (North Carolina)
- John Bodnar, The Transplanted (Indiana)
- David Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas (Texas)
- Lawrence Levine, Highbrow/Lowbrow (Harvard)
- Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements (Temple)
- Roland Marchand, Advertising and the American Dream (California)
- Joan Shelley Rubin, The Making of Middlebrow Culture (North Carolina)

The Kaestle book, Literacy in the United States (Yale, \$35) is currently available only in hardback. You can buy it at the University Bookstore if you wish, but I will also place several copies on reserve.

Class meetings:

The seminar meets on Tuesday mornings, from 10:00 until 12:00. Please inform me in advance if you must miss any session.

Office hours:

My office hours are from 1:30 to 3:00 PM on Tuesdays in Room 215 Education Building, or by appointment. My phone numbers are: 263-2394 (History), 262-2812 (Education), or 238-5910 (home).

Reading assignments:

Week 1 Introduction to the course
September 8

UNIT ONE: EMANCIPATION

Week 2 The short-run, grassroots impact
September 15

READ: Leon Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (New York, Alfred Knopf, 1979).

Kaestle: writing tips and stylistic exhortations

Supplementary reading:

- W. E. B. Dubois, Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880 (New York, Russell & Russell, 1935, Atheneum pb., 1962).
William Gillette, Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1979, pb).
Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pb).
Jacqueline Jones, Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873 (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1980).
Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877 (New York, Harper & Row, 1988).
James McPherson, The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964, pb)
William S. McFeeley, Yankee Stepfather: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968, Norton, pb).

Week 3
September 22

Cultural evolution

READ: Lawrence Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (New York, Oxford University Press, 1977, pb).

On tape: Folk materials as evidence

Supplementary reading:

Richard M. Dorson, American Folklore (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1959).

Richard M. Dorson, American Folklore and the Historian (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1971).

Gene Bluestein, The Voice of the Folk: Folklore and American Literary Theory (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1972, pb).

John W. Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (New York, Oxford University Press, revised edition, 1979, pb).

Thomas Webber, Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865 (New York, Norton, 1978, pb).

Week 4
September 29

Black women and work

READ: Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (New York, Basic books, 1985, pb).

Supplementary reading:

Jacqueline Jones, The Dispossessed: America's Underclass from the Civil War to the Present (N.Y.: Basic, 1992)

Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York, Partheon, 1976, pb).

William H. Harris, The Harder We Run: Black Workers Since the Civil War (New York, Oxford University Press, 1982, pb).

Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States (New York, Oxford University Press, 1982, pb).

Julie A. Mathaei, An Economic History of Women in America: Women's Work, the Sexual Division of Labor, and the Development of Capitalism (New York, Schocken Books, 1982, pb).

David M. Katzman, Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America (New York, Oxford University Press, 1978, pb).

Leslie Woodcock Tentler, Wage-Earning Women: Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States, 1900-1930 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1979, pb).

UNIT TWO: CAPITALISM AND CULTURE IN THE INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

Week 5
October 6

Ethnic clash: the Chicano experience

READ: David Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987)

Presentation: the state of Chicano history (guest)

Supplementary reading:

Richard Griswold del Castillo, The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979, pb).

Albert Camarillo, Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1979, pb).

Guadalupe San Miguel, "Let All of Them Take Heed": Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981 (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1987).

Mario T. Garcia, Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981).

Vicki Ruiz, Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

Rodolfo Acuna, Occupied America: A History of Chicanos (New York, Harper & Row, third edition, 1988, pb).

Mario T. Garcia, Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, & Identity, 1930-1960 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989)

Week 6
October 13

Immigration

READ: John Bodnar, The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985, pb).

Discussion: broad works of synthesis

Supplementary reading:

- Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1951, pb).
- Thomas Archdeacon, Becoming American: An Ethnic History (New York, Basic Books, 1983, pb).
- John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1955, 2nd edition, Atheneum, 1963, pb).
- Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930 (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1977, pb).
- Hasia R. Diner, Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983, pb).
- Ronald Takaki, Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989)
- Moses Rischin, The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962, pb).
- David M. Reimers, Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, pb)

Week 7
October 20

The industrialization of the countryside

READ: Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly, Like A Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1987, pb).

Bonus discussion: oral history (guest)

Supplementary reading:

- Stephen Hahn and Jonathan Prude, eds., The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1985, pb).
- Jonathan Prude, The Coming of Industrial Order: Town and Factory Life in Rural Massachusetts, 1810-1860 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pb).
- Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860 (New York, Columbia University Press, 1979, pb).

- Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, pb).
- Jack Temple Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1987, pb).
- Don S. Kirschner, City and Country: Rural Responses to Urbanization in the 1920s (Westport, CN, Greenwood Press, 1970).

UNIT THREE; INDEPENDENT PROJECTS

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| Week 8
October 27 | Individual conferences |
| Week 9
November 3 | Social gathering, no seminar meeting |
| Week 10
November 10 | Oral reports (double session). |

UNIT FOUR: CULTURAL PRODUCTION, REPRODUCTION, AND RESISTANCE

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| Week 11
November 17 | <p>The stratification of culture</p> <p>READ: Lawrence W. Levine, <u>Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America</u> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988)</p> <p>Supplementary reading:</p> <p>T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," <u>American Historical Review</u> 90 (June, 1985), 567-593.</p> <p>Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America," <u>Media, Culture and Society</u> 4 (1982), 33-50 and 303-322.</p> |
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Christopher Wilson, "The Rhetoric of Consumption: Mass-Market Magazines and the Demise of the Gentle Reader, 1880-1920," in Fox and Lears, Culture of Consumption, pp. 39-64.

Herbert J. Gans, Popular Culture & High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste (New York: Basic Books, 1974)

Russell Lynes, The Lively Audience: A Social History of the Visual and Performing Arts in America, 1890-1950 (New York: Harper and Row, 1985)

Week 12
November 24

Advertising

READ: Roland Marchand, Advertising and the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940 (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, pb).

Supplementary reading:

Stuart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Roots of the Consumer Culture (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1976, pb).

Michael Schudson, Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society (New York, Basic Books, 1984).

Stephen Fox, The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators (New York, William Morrow, 1984).

Daniel Pope, The Making of Modern Advertising (New York, Basic Books, 1983).

Raymond Williams, "Advertising: The Magic System," in Williams, Problems in Materialism and Culture (London, Verso, 1980), pp. 170-195.

Week 13
December 1

Literacy and the reading public

READ: Carl F. Kaestle, Helen Damon-Moore, Lawrence C. Stedman, Katherine Tinsley, and William Vance Trollinger, Jr., Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading Since 1880 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

Discussion: history and policy

Supplementary reading:

- Cathy N. Davidson, ed., Reading in America: Literature & Social History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989)
- James D. Hart, The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950)
- Janice A. Radway, Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984)
- Sally Foreman Griffith, Home Town News: William Allen White and the Emporia Gazette (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)
- Christopher P. Wilson, The Labor of Words: Literary Professionalism in the Progressive Era (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985)

Week 14
December 4

Advertising

- READ: Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1986, pb).

Supplementary reading:

- Roy Rosenzweig, Eight Hours for What We Will: Work and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920 (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pb).
- John Kasson, Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century (New York, Hill & Wang, 1978, pb).
- Neil Harris, Humbug! The Art of P. T. Barnum (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973, pb).
- Perry Duis, The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920 (Champaign-Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1983).
- Lewis Erenberg, Steppin' Out: New York Night Life and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930 (Westport, CN, Greenwood Press, 1981, pb).

Week 15
December 15

Popularizing high culture

- READ: Joan Shelley Rubin, The Making of Middlebrow Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992, pb)

Supplementary reading:

- Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (Paris, 1979, Eng. Transl., Harvard University Press, 1984, pb)
- Norman Jacobs, ed., Culture for the millions? Mass Media in Modern Society (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1959)
- Lewis A. Coser, Charles Kadushin, and Walter W. Powell, Books: the Culture & Commerce of Publishing (New York: Basic Books, 1982)
- Burton J. Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America (New York: Norton, 1976)
- Thomas L. Bonn, Heavy Traffic & High Culture: New American Library as Literary Gatekeeper in the Paperback Revolution (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989)