

Syllabus for Survey, 512:104, Development of the US Since 1865

James Livingston, Spring 2016

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the contours of American history since the Civil War. But you're already familiar with these contours, having taken required courses in high school—or just having inhabited this part of the planet. What are we doing here in this classroom? Why will I be lecturing?

Thanks to the Internet, you've got as much information (facts) at your disposal as I do. So I'd better not be doing names and dates, or offering you a grand narrative. No, the point here is to learn how to disagree with each other, because to be an American is to argue about what it means to be an American. We have no national origin, religious orientation, linguistic affinity, or racial stock in common: all we have to bind us are the stories we tell about where we came from, and these are various, to say the least.

My larger purpose is to persuade you that there is no difference between interpretations of the past and the past as such. The distinction between historiography and history is meaningless, in my view, and I hope to convince you that I'm right. Still, my role is not to teach you what to think, but how to think historically.

There are only two required books:

Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train* (1973)

James Livingston, *The World Turned Inside Out* (2009); I return any royalties to you at the end of the semester, so keep your receipt.

The other readings will be available at the Sakai site, through JSTOR, or at listed websites.

Your grade will be derived from a midterm and a final, both take-home exams that will ask you to write two essays on topics covered in class, roughly ten pages total for each exam. I'll keep track of the arguments in class by appointing note-takers for every class session. These secretaries will summarize the argument of the lecture, and offer criticisms of it, at the subsequent class session. We'll go from there.

Week 1 Orientation

Week 2 What is History?

READ: "Monumenta Historica Germaniae" ca. 1072; James Livingston, "What is Called History at the End of Modernity?" S-USIH website, parts I-IV

Week 3 The Second American Revolution

READ: W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* (1935), chapter 4

Week 4 The Great Stalemate, 1870-1900

READ: James Livingston, "Social Analysis of Economic History" AHR 1987

Week 5 The Rise of Corporate Capitalism, 1890-1920

READ: Martin J. Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism* (1988), pp. 1-40

Week 6: The Intellectual Earthquake, at Home and Abroad

READ: James Livingston, *Pragmatism, Feminism, and Democracy* (2001), chapter 3; Jane Addams, "A Modern Lear" (1894)

Week 7: The Watershed of the 1920s

READ: John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (1929)

MIDTERM

Week 8: The Great Depression and Its Consequences

READ: James Livingston, *Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Revolution* (1994), chapter 4

Week 9: War and Revolution Abroad, 1941-1949

READ:

Week 10: Decolonization and Disorder at Home, 1940-1960

READ: M. L. King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom*; Malcolm X, *Writings*

Week 11: Cultural Revolution, 1955-1975

READ Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train*

Week 12: The Ending of the American Century, 1973-2003

READ: James Livingston, *The World Turned Inside Out*

Week 13: Their Great Depression and Ours, 2008-2016

READ: Livingston, *Inside Out*, Appendix

Week 14: Whose Lives Matter?

READ: Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*; Jelani Cobb, from *The New Yorker*

Week 15: Retrospect and Prospect