AMERICAN CULTURAL HISTORY, 1860 - PRESENT

Texts:
Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward
John Hope Franklin (ed.), Three Negro Classics
Sinclair Lewis, Babbitt
Richard Schickel, The Disney Version
Readings Packet (available at Kinko’s)

Assignments and Examinations:
There will be a "mid-term" examination, scheduled for June 29, and a final examination, scheduled for July 13. Class members who wish to do so may write a short (4-8 double-spaced, typewritten pages) essay-review based on additional reading on a subject of their choice, in lieu of taking the mid-term examination. Selections of appropriate books may be taken from the appended bibliography or made after consultation with the instructor. Those papers will be due no later than the day of the final, although the instructor encourages students to complete that assignment earlier in the course if possible. IMPORTANT NOTICE: University penalties for plagiarism can be severe. The paper must represent your own work, and all quoted or closely paraphrased material in a paper must be attributed clearly to the original source.

Course Outline and Readings

I. INTRODUCTION
Culture, Popular Culture, and History

II. THE CULTURE OF AMERICAN SPACE AND TIME
1. The Wests and the Frontier/
   Forms and Formulas in Popular Thought--the Western
   Reading: Ingraham, "Adventures of Buffalo Bill" - packet

2. The Rise of the City/
   The Utopian City of the Future in Fiction
   Reading: Bellamy, Looking Backward

3. The Rise of the Suburbs/
   Suburban Culture

III. THE CULTURE OF NEIGHBORS AND STRANGERS
1. Foreign Immigration in American Society/
   Acculturation and Assimilation in Popular Theater
   Reading: Vaudeville - packet

2. Blacks in White American Society/
   Images of Blacks in Popular Culture
   Reading: One of the Three Negro Classics (your choice)
3. Women's America/
   Changing Stereotypes in Popular Culture       June  28

   Examination, June 29

IV. THE CULTURE OF SUCCESS AND CRISIS
   1. The Success Syndrome in American Society/
      Rags to Respectability in Popular Culture
      Reading: Alger, "Adrift in New York" - packet       July  3
   2. The "New Era" of Prosperity, the 1920s/
      Cultural Images of the Businessman (Movie)
      Reading: Lewis, Babbitt                            July  5
   3. The Great Depression, the 1930s/
      Images in the Popular Culture                    July  6

V. THE CULTURE OF MASS MEDIA
   1. The Graphic Revolution/
      Life Imitates Art at the Movies
      Reading: Schickel, The Disney Version            July 10
   2. The Sounds of Social Change in Music/
      Sheet Music and Changing Values (Guest)
      Reading: Mooney, "Popular Music Since the 1920s" - packet July 11
   3. American Society Through the Comics             July 12

   Examination, July 13
Selected Bibliography

GENERAL WORKS

Bernard Rosenberg and David White (eds.), MASS CULTURE (1957).

THE PRINTED WORD

Freeman Lewis, PAPERBOUND BOOKS IN AMERICA (1952).
Frank Luther Mott, GOLDEN MULTITUDES (1947).
Raymond H. Shore, CHEAP BOOK PRODUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1870-1891 (1937).
Ron Goulart, AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF THE PULP MAGAZINE (1972).
THE DETECTIVE NOVEL

Dorothy Glover and Graham Greene, VICTORIAN DETECTIVE FICTION (1966).
Julian Symons, MORTAL CONSEQUENCES (1972).

THE WESTERN


SCIENCE FICTION

Kingsley Amis, NEW MAPS OF HELL (1960).
J. O. Bailey, PILGRIMS THROUGH SPACE AND TIME (1947).
Reginald Bretnor, MODERN SCIENCE FICTION (1953).
Basil Davenport, AN INQUIRY INTO SCIENCE FICTION (1955).
Sam Moscowitz, SEEKERS OF TOMORROW (1966).
Sam Moscowitz, SCIENCE FICTION BY GASLIGHT (1968).
COMICS

Stephen Becker, COMIC ART IN AMERICA (1960).
Walter Murrell, A HISTORY OF AMERICAN GRAPHIC HUMOR (1933, 1938).
Reinhold Reitberger and Wolfgang Fuchs, COMICS: ANATOMY OF A MASS MEDIUM (1971).
Martin Sheridan, COMICS AND THEIR CREATORS (1942).

POPULAR THEATER

Douglas Gilbert, AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE: ITS LIFE AND TIMES (1940).
Albert McLean, AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE AS RITUAL (1965).

MOVIES

Donald Bogle, TOMS, COONS, MULATTOES, MAMMIES, AND lifting: AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY OF BLACKS IN AMERICAN FILMS (1973).
Thomas Cripps, SLOW FADE TO BLACK: THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN FILM, 1900-1942 (1977).
Molly Haskell, FROM REVERENCE TO RAPE: THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN THE MOVIES (1974).

MUSIC

Christine Ammer, UNSUNG: A HISTORY OF WOMEN IN AMERICAN MUSIC (1980).
Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis, THEY ALL PLAYED RAGTIME (1966).
Larry Freeman, THE MELODIES LINGER ON (1951).
Isaac Goldberg, TIN PAN ALLEY (1930).
Lester Levy, GRACE NOTES IN AMERICAN HISTORY: POPULAR SHEET MUSIC FROM 1820-1900 (1967).

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Eric Barnouw, A TOWER IN BABEL: A HISTORY OF BROADCASTING IN THE UNITED STATES TO 1933 (1966).
Mary Jane Higby, TUNE IN TOMORROW (1968).
THE SUCCESS ETHIC

Arthur M. Schlesinger, LEARNING HOW TO BEHAVE: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF AMERICAN ETIQUETTE BOOKS (1946).
Dixon Wecter, THE HERO IN AMERICA (1941).
1840s many Americans became interested in his ideas, people should share work and living arrangements in these, movement died out quickly. Charles Fourier. French socialist who advocated sharing work and living arrangements. Americans adapted classical Greek styles during Jacksonian era to glorify the democratic spirit of the republic, columned facades graced entryways. Literature. many writers along with Transcendentalists helped to create a distinctly American type, became more nationalistic and eager to reader works of American writers about American themes. American culture has the power to captivate, inspire, and transform us. It brings us together we share it when we spontaneously recite lines from a favorite movie, dance to the same groove, or recreate a national sports moment on a neighborhood street. It enables us to understand and appreciate our differences some of the most vital expansions of our democracy, in fact, gained ground through pivotal cultural moments. It spurs important conversations, and can foster important historical change. The National Museum of America... Reader view.