History is vital or dead … according as it is or is not presented from the sociological standpoint. When treated simply as a record of what has passed and gone, … there is no motive for attending to it. The ethical value of history teaching will be measured by the extent to which it is treated as a matter of analysis of existing social relations—that is to say as affording insight into what makes up the structure and working of society…. Only a mind trained to grasp social situations … can get sufficient hold on the realities of this life to see what sort of action, critical and constructive, it really demands.

John Dewey

Overview

This course was previously taught by the great labor historian Selig Perlman and then the famous emigré sociologist Hans Gerth. Gerth’s old syllabus is on file in the sociology department office, and Perlman’s lectures have been published as Selig Perlman's Lectures on Capitalism and Socialism (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976).

The primary goal of the course is to examine the historical development of capitalism, socialism, and democracy in the United States, paying close attention to how the past shapes subsequent politics and policy outcomes. Throughout the semester, we will try to see what social and political theory have to say to American history and vice versa. The course is organized chronologically in several parts, including the Progressive era; the New Deal; postwar challenges to and criticisms of the New Deal, from the left and the right; the Great Society, the civil rights movement, and the New Left; and the rise of the New Right since the 1970s. As the course moves forward in time, we revisit some general questions that help to give the course thematic unity and coherence. These include questions about the changing and contested meanings of democracy, the relationship between capitalism and democracy, why there has been no significant socialist movement or labor party in the United States, and how the meaning and boundaries of American citizenship have changed over time.

Course Requirements

Reading: Students are required to read about 80 pages per week on average. If you are unable or unwilling to do this much reading consistently, you should drop the course now. Please read each assignment before class.

Attendance and participation: Class time will be devoted to a combination of lecturing and discussion. Students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive on time, and
participate in class discussions based on the readings. You do not need to explain or justify occasional absences, but frequent tardiness, absences, or lack of participation will affect your grade. You are encouraged to raise questions, which counts as participation.

Mid-term and final papers: You are required to write a mid-term paper and a final paper, 5-7 pages each. You may write on any course-related topic of your choice, but the paper must have a clear thesis, be well organized, engage at least two assigned authors, and be typed and double-spaced. Please see “Guidelines for Writing Papers” (hand-out) for further instructions. I encourage you to speak with me about your ideas before you write your papers.

Academic misconduct: Please consult http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html before proceeding in this course. Please also consult the hand-out “Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Acknowledging Sources,” available at the Writing Center (6171 Helen C. White Hall). You are expected to be familiar with these guidelines before you submit any written work in this course. All papers will be screened for plagiarism, and any instance of plagiarism or other misconduct will be dealt with strictly according to university policy.

Grading: Your overall grade for the semester will be calculated on a 100-point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of contribution to class discussions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term paper (due Oct. 20)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper (due Dec. 17)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = 95-100, AB = 90-94, B = 85-89, and so forth.

There is no final exam during exam week.

If you are taking the course for honors or graduate credit, please see the instructor regarding special requirements.

Reading Assignments

The following books are available from the University Book Store and on reserve at College Library.


All other required reading assignments are available in PDF format through Learn@UW <https://learnuw.wisc.edu/>.
Students who are unfamiliar with twentieth-century American history may wish to consult an introductory textbook such as *Inventing America* (New York: W. W. Norton).

**I. HISTORICAL LEGACIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

**Sep. 3 - Introduction to the course**

**Sep. 8 – The liberal tradition in America**
Held, *Models of Democracy*, third edition, 56-60, 62-65 (Citizenship and the constitutional state), 70 (The idea of protective democracy), 70-75 (The problem of factions), 79-81 (Liberty and the development of democracy), 93-95 (Summary remarks). The rest of the chapter is recommended.


Recommended:

**Sep. 10 – The Knights of Labor and American exceptionalism**


Recommended: Sinyai, *Schools of Democracy*, 17-49.

**Sep. 15 – Why no socialism in America?**

Recommended:

**Sep. 17 – A “precocious social spending regime” in America?**
Recommended:


II. THE PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1890-1920

Sep. 22 – Labor in the Progressive era


Sep. 24 – Political influence without political participation?

Sep. 29 – New modes of participation: interest group politics


Oct. 1 – New modes of participation: direct and deliberative democracy


Oct. 6 – Political mobilization on the right


Oct. 8 – Participatory or elite democracy?


Recommended: Cronin, *Direct Democracy*, 207-222.
Oct. 13 – Restricting political participation

**III. THE NEW DEAL, 1932-1941**

Oct. 15 – Great Depression and New Deal


Oct. 20 – Explaining the New Deal
**MIDTERM PAPER DUE**

Oct. 22 – Explaining the New Deal

Oct. 27 – The New Deal as an expansion of citizenship rights

Oct. 29 – The New Deal and divided citizenship

Nov. 3 – Rights, race, and New Deal unemployment relief

Recommended: Goldberg, *Citizens and Paupers*, chapters 4-5.

**IV. CONSOLIDATING, TRANSFORMING, AND CHALLENGING THE NEW DEAL, 1941-1968**

Nov. 5 – Labor’s growth and accommodation

Nov. 10 – Class, state, and power in America

Nov. 12 – Pluralism or power elite?


Nov. 17 – The welfare state and its (conservative and radical) discontents


Nov. 19 – The civil rights movement and the War on Poverty

Nov. 24 – Postwar stability to political crisis

*** THANKSGIVING RECESS NOV. 26-29 ***

V. THE RISE OF THE RIGHT

Dec. 1 – Cultural changes: Populism transformed

Dec. 3 – Cultural changes: The religious right

Dec. 8 – Economic changes: The transformation of American capitalism

Dec. 10 – Political changes: De- and re-alignment of voters

Recommended:

Dec. 15 – Health care reform revisited

FINAL PAPER DUE THURSDAY, DEC. 17, AT 12:05 P.M.