

# American Radicalism I

## Course Description: History 350—Winter 2016

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Class meets: 12:00-1:20 Tuesdays and Thursdays in 101 Living Learning Center South

History 350 (American Radicalism I) focuses on issues, activities and ideas concerning movements for political, social and cultural change in the United States from the American Revolution through about 1900. This course does not assume previous course work in American history; there are no prerequisites. (A second course, History 351, covers movements and ideas from the early twentieth century to the present. It was offered Fall 2015 but the two courses are independent of each other.)

There are four main topics we'll be studying this term:

1. Was the American Revolution a radical social movement? In particular, we'll look at the activities and ideas of Tom Paine, who deserves the title of the first international revolutionary.
2. What were the characteristics and the significance of slave revolts in the American South? In particular, we'll examine the revolt Nat Turner led in Virginia in 1831.
3. What were the origins, strategies and effects of the nineteenth century movement for women's rights? In particular, we'll look at the life and career of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, an unsurpassed leader of that movement.
4. How did radical labor movements in the late nineteenth century challenge the growth of industrial capitalism? In particular, we'll look at the Haymarket bombing in Chicago in 1886 and at its aftermath.

### Books:

We'll be reading all or major portions of the following four books. They should all be available at the U of O Bookstore. Used copies of all of them are also likely to be available at local bookstores or on the web.

Tom Paine, *Common Sense* (I've ordered an inexpensive edition but any edition will do, and it's also on the web at <http://www.bartleby.com/133/> or <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/PaiComm.html>.)

Stephen B. Oates, *The Fires of Jubilee*

Vivian Gornick, *The Solitude of Self: Thinking about Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

Martin Duberman, *Haymarket: A Novel*

[I've also ordered some copies of two different novels, William Styron, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, and Frank Harris, *The Bomb*. You'll need one only if you choose a particular paper topic option. Don't buy either until you've decided that option is the one you want to choose. The paper

topic options will be posted by week three of the term.]

**Requirements:**

- A. An in-class midterm exam. Midterm is worth about 25% of your grade. Essay plus brief identification items.
- B. A short paper (4-6 pages typed double-spaced suggested length) worth about 25% of the course grade. I'll supply paper topic options by week three of the term.
- C. A final exam, worth about 40%. I will offer a take-home final exam alternative.
- D. Responses to discussion questions I'll post on Canvas for each of the four major topics. Worth about 10% of your course grade.
- E. Useful class participation (quality, not quantity) will weigh in your favor in borderline cases.

**Class Sessions and Reading Assignments:**

I'll post a full syllabus with class session topics and related assignments and readings before the term starts and will notify enrolled students when it's available.

**Some Notes on the Course:**

- A. Warning: There may be digressions and alterations along the way this term.
- B. Unfortunately, the length of the assigned readings varies from topic to topic. Try to plan ahead, so that you don't find yourself too burdened when you have other commitments. You will find the class sessions more fruitful if you keep up with reading assignments.
- C. I hate to mention this, but I take academic dishonesty very seriously. If I discover a case of plagiarism or other cheating, I'll pursue the most severe penalties permitted.
- D. No matter what your own political and social viewpoint may be (and all viewpoints are welcome), the political and ethical implications of the topics which we study should be of personal as well as academic concern to you. Therefore, class discussion and your own thoughtful evaluation of the material covered are essential parts of the course.

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