

History 1014 (12)  
Fall 2018  
TTh 8:30-9:55 am  
Sills 209

McMahon  
Hubbard Hall 11  
smcmahon@bowdoin.edu

### Utopia: Intentional Communities in America, 1630-1997

This first-year seminar examines the evolution of utopian visions and utopian experiments in American history. It begins with John Winthrop's 1630 vision of a "City upon a Hill," explores the proliferation of both religious and secular communal ventures between 1780 and 1920, and concludes with an examination of 20th-century counter-culture communes, intentional communities, and dystopian separatists. Primary source readings include official statements of vision and purpose by a variety of charismatic leaders; personal accounts by members, both loyal and apostate; descriptions and evaluations by "informed" contemporaries; and utopian fiction. We will read scholarly analyses by historians to help us locate those documentary readings in their historical contexts. In combination, the readings, class discussions, and essay assignments introduce students to the sources and methods of historical inquiry and critical analysis, and provide opportunities for students to strengthen their writing skills.

*Course Requirements.* The seminar consists of two class meetings each week. The reading assignments for each class should be completed by that class meeting. The History 1014 (12) Reading Guide on Blackboard provides questions to help focus your reading for the class discussions. The further readings (listed in the reading guide) are *not* required. Most of the reading assignments come from the essay collection and monographs assigned for the course. The rest of the assignments (journal articles and primary documents) are available either through e-reserve (use the Library Reserves link on *Blackboard* or the e-reserves link on the *Reading Guide*) or by link to an online source or Library database through the Reading Guide. Students are strongly encouraged to print the e-reserve and online articles and to purchase the assigned books from the bookstore; a copy of each of the assigned books is on reserve in the library.

*Class participation:* You are expected to attend class and to come to all class meetings ready to participate in a discussion and analysis of the readings [35% of final grade].

*Essays:* Students will write three essays during the first half of the course (the first assignment is required; students will choose two out of three additional assignments). These assignments give students experience in drafting, revising, and editing a short (2-3 pages) focused essay and teach students how to subject primary source materials to critical analysis [together, 35% of final grade]. During the second half of the course, students will design a research project, submit a research paper prospectus, present a five minute work-in-progress report to the class [prospectus and presentation, 5 % of final grade], and draft, revise and edit a 5-7 page research paper [25% of final grade]. The *Extension, Deadline, and Grading Policy* for the course can be found on the course home page.

All students are expected to read, understand, and abide by the Bowdoin College Academic Honor Code and by the rules of citation (When to Cite and How to Cite) described on the Bowdoin College Academic Honesty and Plagiarism website at <http://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/academic-honesty/index.shtml>.

Texts: Donald E. Pitzer, ed., *America's Communal Utopias* (1997)  
Charles Nordhoff, *American Utopias*, Foreword and Afterword by Robert Fogarty (1993)  
[originally published as *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (1875)]  
Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888)  
Frances Fitzgerald, *Cities on a Hill: A Journey Through Contemporary American Cultures* (1981, 1983, 1986)

The History 1014 Reading Guide and other online resources can be found on Blackboard or at <http://www.bowdoin.edu/faculty/s/mcmahon/courses/hist012/index.shtml>

WEEK 1

8/30 INTRODUCTION

WEEK 2

9/4 UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES—INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

readings: Robert Fogarty, “Foreword,” and Charles Nordhoff, “Introduction,” in Nordhoff, *American Utopias*, xiii-23.

Paul S. Boyer, “Foreword,” and Donald E. Pitzer, “Preface” and “Introduction,” in Pitzer, *America’s Communal Utopias*, ix-13.

9/6 UTOPIAN VISIONS: REVISING COMMUNITY, FAMILY, GENDER ROLES

readings: Yaacov Oved, “Communes and the Outside World: Seclusion and Involvement,” *Communal Societies* 3 (1983), 83-92. (e-reserve)

Jeanette C. Lauer and Robert H. Lauer, “Sex Roles in Nineteenth-century American Communal Societies,” *Communal Societies* 3 (1983), 16-28. (e-reserve)

**Instructions for writing the short essays** (LINK)

WEEK 3

*Early Ventures*

9/11 EARLY UTOPIAN VISIONS AND EXPERIMENTS

document: John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity” (1630) in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*. (LINK)

reading: Donald F. Durnbaugh, “Communitarian Societies in Colonial America,” in Pitzer, *America’s Communal Utopias*, 14-36.

**Bring draft of first essay to class**

*Utopian Ventures in the Early Republic*

9/13 MILLENNIALISTS AND RADICAL GERMAN PIETISTS: The Rappites Of Harmony and the Separatists of Zoar

readings: Karl J.R. Arndt, “George Rapp’s Harmony Society,” in Pitzer, *America’s Communal Utopias*, 57-87.

Charles Nordhoff, “The Harmonists of Economy” and “The Separatists of Zoar,” *American Utopias*, 63-113.

**First 2-3 page essay due**

WEEK 4

9/18 THE COMMUNITY OF TRUE INSPIRATION AT AMANA

readings: Jonathan G. Andelson, “The Community of True Inspiration from Germany to the Amana Colonies,” in Pitzer, *America’s Communal Utopias*, 181-203.

Charles Nordhoff, “The Amana Society,” *American Utopias*, 25-59

9/20 MOTHER ANN LEE AND THE EVOLUTION OF SHAKER BELIEFS AND THEOLOGY

readings: Priscilla Brewer, “The Shakers of Mother Ann Lee,” in Pitzer, *America’s Communal Utopias*, 37-56.

Charles Nordhoff, “The Shakers,” *American Utopias*, 117-151, (skim 214-231), read 232-256.

9/21 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

WEEK 5

9/25 SHAKERS: REVISING COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND GENDER ROLES

reading: Charles Nordhoff, “The Shakers,” *American Utopias*, 151-179, skim: 179-214.

document: W. D. Howells, “A Shaker Village,” *The Atlantic Monthly* XXXVII (June 1876), 699-710, HathiTrust, *The Atlantic Monthly*. (LINK)

**Bring draft of second essay to class**

*Seeking a Perfect Society: Nineteenth Century America*

9/27 SECULAR COMMUNITIES: ROBERT OWEN AND NEW HARMONY

reading: Donald E. Pitzer, "The New Moral World of Robert Owen and New Harmony," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 88-134.

documents: Robert Owen, "Address delivered April 27, 1825," *New Harmony Gazette*, in David Brion Davis, *Antebellum American Culture* (1979), 445-447. (e-reserve)

Robert Owen, "Address delivered May 6, 1827 to the Citizens of New-Harmony," reprinted in Paul Brown, *Twelve Months in New Harmony* (Cincinnati, 1827; reprinted 1972), 98-106. (e-reserve)

**Second 2-3 page essay due**

WEEK 6

10/2 SECULAR COMMUNITIES: FOURIERISM AND "COMMUNITARIAN SOCIALISM"

reading: Carl Guarneri, "Brook Farm and the Fourierist Phalanxes: Immediatism, Gradualism, and American Utopian Socialism," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 159-180.

documents: Albert Brisbane, "Social Waste and the Benefits of Association," from *Social Destiny of Man: or, Association and Reorganization of Industry* (1840), in *The Annals of America*, vol. 6, 544-548. (e-reserve)

Albert Brisbane, "Exposition of Views and Principles," *The Phalanx* I (Oct. 7, 1843), in David Brion Davis, *Antebellum American Culture* (1979), 450-452. (e-reserve)

10/4 NEW ENGLAND: TRANSCENDENTALISM AT BROOK FARM

reading: J.B. Wilson, "The Antecedents of Brook Farm," *New England Quarterly* 15.2 (1942), 320-331. (JSTOR)

documents: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Historic Notes of Life and Letters in Massachusetts," *Atlantic Monthly*, 52.312 (October 1883), 529-543; originally written in 1867, reprinted as "Historical Notes ... New England," in *Emerson, Lectures and Biographical Sketches* (1904), 325-370. [Focus on the section titled "Brook Farm" at the end of the lecture (*Atlantic Monthly*, 529, 540-543).] (LINK)

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Passages from the American Note-books of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, [April-October 27, 1841], Vol. II (1868), 1-49; *Online Books Page*, University of Pennsylvania Library, at Eldritch Press. [Focus on the entries from his first stay at Brook Farm, April 13-September 3, 1841]. (LINKS)

Ora Gannett Sedgwick, "A Girl of Sixteen at Brook Farm," *Atlantic Monthly*, 85.509 (March, 1900), 395-404. HathiTrust, *The Atlantic Monthly*. (LINK)

**Bring draft of third essay to class**

WEEK 7

10/9 FALL BREAK

10/11 TBD

WEEK 8

10/16 JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES AND ONEIDA

readings: Lawrence Foster, "Free Love and Community: John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Perfectionists," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 253-278.

Charles Nordhoff, "The Oneida and Wallingford Perfectionists," *American Utopias*, 259-301. (readings continued on next page)

document: John Humphrey Noyes, "The Oneida Community" (1848), from John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (1870), in *The Annals of America*, vol. 7, 403-409. (e-reserve)

**Third 2-3 page essay due**

10/18 ONEIDA: PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE

readings: Marlyn Klee-Hartzell, "The Oneida Community Family," *Communal Societies* 16 (1996), 15-22. (e-reserve)

Ellen Wayland-Smith, "The Status and Self-Perception of Women in the Oneida Community," *Communal Societies* 8 (1988), 18-53. (e-reserve)

**Instructions for writing a short research paper and research paper prospectus in history**  
(LINK)

WEEK 9

10/23 JOSEPH SMITH AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

reading: Brian Berry, "Mormonism," in Berry, *America's Utopian Experiments* (1992), Ch. 6, pp.64-82. (e-reserve)

Dean L. May, "One Heart and Mind: Communal Life and Values among the Mormons," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 135-158.

10/25 MORMONS: DOCTRINE AND EXPERIENCE

documents: Joseph Smith, "Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith" (1838), "Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, including Plurality of Wives" (1843), in *The Pearl of Great Price* (reprinted Salt Lake City, 1888), 83-110, 123-136, or The Official Internet Site of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. (LINKS)

Ann Eliza Young, *Wife No. 19, or the Story of a Life in Bondage* (1875), Ch. V, XVII, 98-109, 290-305. (e-reserve); or at [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com).

**Bring draft of fourth essay to class**

WEEK 10

10/30 LIBRARY TOUR: meet at Bookhenge, first floor of Hawthorne-Longfellow Library  
**Fourth 2-3 page essay due**

11/1 THE END OF CHARLES NORDHOFF'S 1874 TOUR and his comparative view and review of communistic efforts in the United states

reading: Charles Nordhoff, "The Icarians," "The Bishop Hill Colony," "The Cedar Vale Commune," "The Social Freedom Community," "Three Colonies—Not Communistic," "Comparative View and Review," *American Utopias*, 333-418.

WEEK 11

11/6 UTOPIAN VISIONS IN FICTION

document: Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888)

11/8 JEWISH AGRICULTURAL COMMUNES AND COOPERATIVE FARMING

readings: Pearl W. Bartelt, "American Jewish Agricultural Colonies," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 352-374.

11/9 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES: Discuss research paper projects

WEEK 12

11/13 THEOSOPHICAL COMMUNITIES AND SOCIALIST UTOPIAS IN CALIFORNIA

readings: J. Gordon Melton, "The Theosophical Communities and Their Ideal of Universal Brotherhood," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 396-418.

Robert V. Hine, "California's Socialist Utopias," in Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 419-431.

*Contemporary Utopias*

11/15 COUNTERCULTURE (1960s) AND INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES (1970s)

readings: Jefferson P. Selth, "Document: The Ashram of Graton Road: Morning Star Ranch, A California Commune in the 1960s," *Communal Societies* 4 (1984), 204-211. (e-reserve)

Ellen Broslovsky, "Just to Breathe: Personal Recollections of Synanon founder, Charles E. Dederich," *Communal Societies* 20 (2000), 97-108. (e-reserve)

Melanie Arcudi and Pauline Meyer, "The Brotherhood of the Sun, 1969-1985: A Memoir," *Communal Societies* 5 (1985), 82-88. (e-reserve)

**Guidelines for the work-in-progress presentations** (LINK)

11/16 **Research paper prospectus due**

WEEK 13

11/20 VISIONARY COMMUNITIES: 1980s

reading: Frances Fitzgerald, *Cities on a Hill* (1986), "Rajneeshpuram," 247-381.  
(If you have time, skim "Introduction," 11-24, "Starting Over," 383-414.)

11/22 THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 14

11/27 WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS

**Five-page research paper: penultimate draft due**

11/29 WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS

11/30 WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 15

12/4 FROM UTOPIA TO DYSTOPIA: People's Temple [Jonestown, Guyana, November 1978]; Branch Davidians [Waco, Texas, April 1993]; Heaven's Gate [San Diego, California, March 1997]

readings: Gairdner B. Moment, "From Utopia to Dystopia: The Jonestown Tragedy," in Moment and Kraushaar, *Utopias: The American Experience* (1980), 215-228. (e-reserve)

John R. Hall, "Jonestown and Bishop Hill: Continuities and Disjunctures in Religious Conflict," *Communal Societies* 8 (1988), 77-89. (e-reserve)

*Note:* for the Branch Davidians and/or Heaven's Gate, search online newspaper and magazine databases (use Fitzgerald's journalistic model of investigative inquiry).

12/6 CONCLUSION, OR HOW TO DESIGN A UTOPIAN COMMUNITY

readings: Graham Meltzer, "Cohousing: Linking Community and Sustainability," *Communal Societies* 19 (1999), 85-100. (e-reserve)

Jack Crittenden, "Veneration of Community," *Communal Societies* 9 (1989), 105-122. (e-reserve)

**Five-page research paper due:** Sunday, Dec. 16, noon