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American Utopianism  
Duus

Spring 2007  
W2:15-5:15 pm  
Spring 2007

God made me the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth ...and he showed me the spot where to find it.

--Christopher Columbus (1501)

For we must consider that we shall be as a city on a hill, the eyes of the people upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with God's work ..we shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants and cause their prayers to be turned into curses.

--John Winthrop, aboard the Arabella (1630)

I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in providence for the illumination of the ignorant and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth.

--John Adams (1765)

It has been constantly repeated to the inhabitants of the United States that they form the only religious, enlightened, and free people. They see that up to now, democratic institutions have prospered among them; they therefore have an immense opinion of themselves, and they are not far from believing that they form a species apart from the human race.

--Alexis de Toqueville (1833)

If we can with the knowledge of true social principles, organize one township rightly, we can by organizing others like it, and by spreading and making them universal, establish a true Social and Political order.

--Albert Brisbane, Fourierist (1843)

I've spoken of the Shining City all my political life ....In my mind it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city of free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get there. That's how I saw it, and see it still.

--Ronald Reagan, Farewell Address (1992)

We shall be as one. We must delight in each other, make other's conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always living before our eyes our Commission and Community in our work....It is the ideal, the ideal of the American community, that we seek to restore.

--Howard Dean, announcing his candidacy, 2003

## READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Wed., Jan 17 Introduction

Wed., Jan 24 The Shakers

1. Google "Shaker Historic Trail" Go to homepage, see three linked essays, "The Shakers," "Utopias in America," and "Shaker Style."
2. Short Summary of Shaker Doctrines  
Major historical detailed document of Shakers

<http://www.bible.ca/cr-shakers.htm>

Wed., Jan 31

1. Two documents on electronic reserve:
  - Edward Kent, "A Vision of Bangor in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" (1848)
  - Sophia Appleton, "Sequel to the Vision of Bangor" (1848)
2. Extract from "Three Hundred Years Hence" (1836)  
<http://phobos.ramapo.edu/~kfowler/griffith.html>

Wed. Feb, 7 Brook Farm and Oneida Community

1. Google "Brook Farm." Click on first entry, "Ideas—Brook Farm History." "Brook Farm History." Read essay and linked essays, "Brook Farm History" and "Brook Farm" (article from The Dial) and "Brook Farm" (a first-hand account.)
2. George Ripley, "I Believe in the Dignity of Labor"  
<http://history.matters.gmu.edu/d/6592/>
3. "Second Annual Report of Oneida Association" (26 pages)  
Available at "libwww.syr.edu."  
Click on "Digital Collection," then "Oneida Community"

Wed., Feb. 14 Oneida Community (cont'd)

"Essay on Scientific Propagation" (36 pages)  
"Old Mansion House Memories" (64 pages)

Wed., Feb. 21 Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward (1888)

- Wed., Feb. 28
1. Sutton Griggs, Imperium et Imperio (1899)
  2. Two documents on electronic reserve:
    - "Organized Negro Communities: A North American Experiment"
    - "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma"

- Wed., Mar. 7 Jack London, The Iron Heel (1908)
- Wed., Mar. 14 SPRING BREAK
- Wed., Mar 21 1. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland (1915)  
2. On electronic reserve:  
Mary Lane, Mizora (1880), Chap. 1-5
- Wed., Mar. 28 B. F. Skinner, Walden II (1948)
- Wed. Apr. 4—Wed., April 11 Ayn Rand, Atlas Shrugged (1957)
- Wed., Apr. 18 '60's Communes
1. On electronic reserve:  
Timothy Miller, "The Evolution of Hippie Communal Spirituality"  
"The Farm"  
Louis Kern, "Pronatalism, Midwifery, and Synergistic Marriage"  
"Why We Left the Farm"  
Ron Roberts, "Walden II and Beyond"  
Kathleen Kincade, Walden II Experiment, Foreword, Chs. IV, XII  
C. McLaughlin, "Twin Oaks: Sexual Role Equality"
  2. Rachel Meunier, "Communal Living"  
<http://www.thefarm.org/lifestyle/cmnl/.html>  
  
Albert Bates, "From Intentional Community to Ecovillage"  
<http://www.thefarm.org/lifestyle/albertbates/akbp4.html>  
  
Mara Rockliff, "Working on the Good Life at Twin Oaks"  
<http://www.geonewsletter.org/twinoaks.htm>
- Wed., Apr. 25 The Amish
- Go to "Amish Country News Home" at  
<http://www.amishnews.com/amishseries.htm>, and read articles "The Amish Speak,"  
"Amish Religious Traditions," "The Amish—From Old World to New," "Back to  
School, Amish Style," "Amish Children," "People of Peace, Victims of Violence," "The  
Traditional Family and the Amish," and "Amish Telephones."

## TEXTS:

Bellamy, Edward, Looking Backward (1888)

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. Herland (1915)  
Griggs, Sutton, Imperium et Imperio, (1899)  
London, Jack, The Iron Heel , (1908)  
Rand, Ayn, Atlas Shrugged (1957)  
Skinner, B. F., Walden II, (1948)

#### COURSE WORK:

1. There is one major written project for the course: a chapter toward a Utopia of your own, providing the plan for your “ideal community.”
2. In addition, for seven sessions, you are expected to submit a 1-2 page response to the reading for the week. This response need not be a formal essay, but it should be grammatically flawless as well as free of spelling errors (every teacher’s version of utopia). In your response, you should raise questions suitable for discussion in class. The response paper should be e-mailed to me at [duus@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:duus@rci.rutgers.edu) by 10:00 a.m. the morning of class day.
3. The good news is that there will be no exams in the course. Your final grade will be based on all of the above, plus class participation. The greatest weight will be given to your major written project, but don’t ask me for percentages. We live in a contingent world (messy), not Utopia (neat).

Office Hours: Wednesday, 11:30 a.m to 1:30 p.m.

Office location: RAB017A