**JMM340 American Thoughts and Thinkers / Spring Term 2017/2018**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course should cover main currents of American social and political thought from the colonial times to the late 20th century. The main emphasis of the course will be placed on careful study of texts.

**Requirements:** active participation, regular attendance, a 10-page seminar paper handed in by the last class in May. Every (even unfinished) week of delay will result in your grade lowered by 1 degree. Written examination, may be waivered if you produce a really excellent paper. Evaluation: 50 percent seminar paper, 20 percent active participation in class, 30 percent final written test.

**1. Colonial:**

John Winthrop (1587/8–1649), *A Modell for Christian Charity* (1630)

Roger Williams (1603-1683), *Plea for Religious Liberty*

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758): *Sinners in the Hands of Angry God*

**2. Enlightenment and Revolution**

Benjamin Franklin: *Autobiography* (excerpts)

Samuel Adams, *The Rights of the Colonists* (1772)

Thomas Jefferson: *Notes on the State of Virginia* (excerpt)

Alexander Hamilton: *Report on Manufactures* (excerpt)

**3. Republic´s First Decades**

George Washington: *The Farewell Address*

Alexis de Tocqueville: *Democracy in America* (selections)

**4. Transcendentalists and Reformers**

### Catherine Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, Chapter 1

Seneca Falls Declaration 1848

Henry David Thoreau, *On Civil Disobedience*

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

**5. Abolitionists and Moderates:**

William Garrison

Frederick Douglass

Abraham Lincoln

**6. Social Darwinism**

Herbert Spencer: *Social Darwinism* (excerpts)

William Graham *Sumner, What the Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883)

**7. Progressivism and Pragmatism**

John Dewey

**8. Social Critique and Radical Thought**

Lewis Mumford

David Riesman

C. Wright Mills

Noam Chomsky

**9. Leo Strauss and the Chicago School of Political Philosophy**:

Leo Strauss, …

Allan Bloom: The Closing of the American Mind (excerpts)

Harry V. Jaffa: *Leo Strauss, the Bible, and Political Philosophy*

Neil G. Robertson: ***The Closing of the Early Modern Mind: Leo Strauss and Early Modern Political Thought***

Thomas West, *Review of the Closing of American Mind, by Allan Bloom*

**10. Conservatives and Neoconservatives**

Russell Kirk: *Lord Acton on Revolution*

Harry F. Jaffa: *The False Prophets of American Conservatism*

**11. Recent Academic Philosophers**

Robert Nozick: *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (excerpts)

Robert Nozick: *Why Do Intellectuals Oppose Capitalism?*

John Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*

(excerpts)

**Recommended literature**

The above texts; they will be provided by the instructor, please see the course website or the course file box in the TGM Library at Jinonice.

<http://www.pragmatism.org/american/>