

From Rebellion to Restoration: The Rise and Fall of 1960s U.S. Radicalism

UHON 402-003 | M | 1:00-3:30 | SHC 28 | 37532
Fulfills A&S Group IV: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Dr. Andrew Ascherl

In this seminar, we will trace the emergence and decline of radical social movements in the United States from the 1960s through the beginning of the 1980s, examining a range of popular and underground organizations. Focusing on the way these movements arose as a response to exclusionary and authoritarian political structures, we will explore both the failures and triumphs of these movements. We will pay particular attention to groups and movements that emphasized working-class, feminist, indigenous, and anti-colonial discourses and practices.

Combining socio-historical, philosophical, and cultural modes of inquiry, this seminar will explore these militant groups and movements from a transnational perspective, placing particular emphasis on the convergence of workers, artists, students, farmers, and intellectuals involved in collective struggle. In so doing, we will examine a wide variety of texts, including autobiography, political theory, chronicles, testimonials, film, poetry, and narrative works. We will consider how such social, political, and cultural movements can lead to a reconfiguration of alliances across racial, economic, sexual, intellectual, and political lines. We will follow the trajectories of these attempts at broad social transformation, tracing the contours of their legacy and asking what significance these movements hold for us today.

Readings

Bill Ayers, *Sing a Battle Song*

Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*

Ward Churchill, *Agents of Repression*

Angela Y. Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*

Dan Georgakas, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*

George L. Jackson, *Blood in my Eye*

Paul Chaat Smith/Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*

Films: *Incident at Oglala, The Weather Underground, Night Catches Us, Born in Flames*

Shorter texts on eReserve

Requirements

Thoughtful, lively, and engaged classroom participation will be crucial to the seminar's success. Students will be required to present one 25-30 minute (minimum) provocation based on the assigned readings and submit weekly response papers via e-mail about the weekly readings. Students will also be expected to regularly contribute to the seminar blog with questions, musings, and submission of supplemental materials. There will be one short (5-7 page) mid-term paper and a final research paper (15-20 pages).

About the Instructor

Andrew Ascherl holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from SUNY-Buffalo. His areas of scholarly interest include the history of radical social movements of the 20th century, contemporary continental philosophy, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and contemporary literature and film of the Americas.