

Proposal - Part I

This is a proposal for a long-term study project, encompassing both an academic and an experiential aspect.

ACADEMIC

I would like to design an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program analysing the American Consciousness, its historical development, present condition, and future direction. The program would synthesize such fields as history, psychology, sociology, and psychological anthropology. I intend to use literature as the means of integration, a sort of amalgamating funnel through which the other disciplines could be channeled. I see the boundaries between these subjects as fluid and intertwining. To treat any one as a separate entity creates an artificial distinction which ignores the holistic approach.

This project would deal with such themes as collective self-consciousness and the destruction of innocence. It would analyse and evaluate the value assumptions of Americans. The following are major questions which this program raises and partial ways in which they might be answered.

- a. What is the impact of equality on American culture?
History 363 Modern America 1890-1950
de Tocqueville
- b. What influence did the Victorian era have on contemporary American psychology? What influence exists today?
English 354 Victorian Prose: a study of Victorian prophets in their dual role: interpreting their society, foreshadowing ours
- c. How did assumptions of purity and innocence mold the American character?
Modern Thought & Literature 366 Psychoanalysis and History: The relation of basic psychic mechanisms to social structures; the internalization of cultural contradictions as a factor in social change; conceptions of human nature in modern ideologies
English 264 Varieties of American Romanticism
- d. In what ways did the tarnishing of our self-image occur?
English 381C American Literature of the 1840s: Study of the major works of this decade in relation to each other and to the major issues of the time
- e. What is the modern heritage of the transcendentalist movement?
English 267 Emerson and Thoreau
Watts The Joyous Cosmology

- f. Is there such a thing as an American character?
History 352 Application to American History of Concepts
from the Social Sciences
- g. What and why are the forces of socialization in contemporary
America? What is the future of the American family?
Psychology 245: Socialization of Pre-Adults in Contemporary
U.S. Society
Sociology 135: Social Psychology of Family Relationships:
Analysis of the family as a social-psychological unit;
~~emphasis on family roles and relations, pathology~~
- h. What is the past and future role of the American woman?
- i. What motivates the behavior of Americans?
Education 236 Behavior Modification: Counseling techniques
for altering client behaviors in a variety of settings
Vernon Human Motivation
- j. What is the American's relationship to his society?
History 363 (see above)
English 381G Politics and Society in American literature,
1880-1930
Erikson Insights and Responsibility
Fromm The Sane Society
- k. What is the role of culture in personality development?
Psychology 269 Personality
Psychology 212 Advanced Social Psychology
- l. What generates American values? What controls the formation
of beliefs and attitudes?
Psychology 259 Attitudes and Behavior
English 262 Melville and Marx
Maslow New Knowledge in Human Values
- m. What governs the formation of interpersonal relations
among Americans?
Education 345 Sociodrama: the rationale and skills for
role-playing, dramatic play, and related techniques as
teaching tools for interpersonal relations
- n. How is culture transmitted?
Psychology 245 (see above)
Anthropology 256 Cultural Transmission: The transmission
of values, implicit cultural assumptions, and the patterning
of education in cross-cultural perspective, with special
attention to the American culture
- o. How do Americans adapt to rapid change, industrialization,
and post-industrialization?
Anthropology 255 Psychological Anthropology: Analysis of
selected psychocultural processes, including attention to
group and individual adaptations to rapid cultural change
and urbanization

Toffler Future Shock
 Seyle The Stress of Life

- p. American literature as an act of creation: Why?
 Graduate Special 340 Human Potentiality: an inquiry directed to the question what is the nature of man's highest potentiality and how does he move in the direction of its realization.
 Koestler The Act of Creation
 Mace "Psychology and Aesthetics"
 Sartre The Psychology of Imagination
 Modern Thought and Literature 362 Dynamic Psychology: Literary criticism and its biography
- q. What is the psychology of American literature? How do Americans cope with such psychological problems as death, the search for identity, alienation, human potentiality, confession, love etc.?
 Modern Thought and Literature 133 Psychology of Biography:
 Mark Twain
 Modern Thought 363 The Search for Identity in Psychology and Literature
 Modern Thought 365 Alienation and Detachment: two traditions of social philosophy depicting man's relation to the social and natural world as a problem of estrangement and reification
 Modern Thought 367 Literature and Psychology
 Undergraduate Special 105: The Meaning of Death: attitudes toward death as reflected in certain social phenomena aiming toward clarification of the meaning of death for human values
 Branden The Psychology of Self-Esteem
 Bugental Challenges of Humanistic Psychology
 Jourard The Transparent Self
 Maslow Toward a Psychology of Being
 May Man's Search for Himself
 Frankl Man's Search for Meaning
 Fromm The Art of Loving
 English 278 Popular Ballad and Folksong

EXPERIENTIAL

My proposal thus far has been of a purely academic nature. I am interested in exploring such theoretical themes as those stated above because of the rigorous scholarship and intellectual stimulation they provide. However, I am also interested in adding to my program a practical and personal dimension. I am concerned not only with specific research, but with its application through the educational process. Thus, concurrently with my work on a Ph.D., I would like to give creative expression to the concepts I would be assimilating through the instruction and guidance of students. As teacher and counselor, I could make available to young Americans my thoughts about the American consciousness which is their heritage. For this reason I intend to teach a course on "Zen: Its Relation to the America Dilemma" at Lothlorien, a free school sponsored by the Palo Alto Unitarian Church. I would also like to work as a teaching assistant at the university.