

HIST 420.001, Topics in European History
Utopian Communalism: The European Origins

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Office hours: TR, 1:30-2:30 pm / Wed., 1-2:30 pm / Thurs., 5-5:45 pm / and by appointment

Faculty website: <http://www.usi.edu/libarts/history/CHarison/harison.htm>

Classroom: LA 1016

Meeting times: Tues. & Thurs., Noon – 1:15 pm

Today, for the first time since the existence of societies it is a question of organizing a totally new system; of replacing the celestial with the terrestrial, the vague by the positive, and the poetic by the real.

-- Henri de Saint-Simon, *Friend of Religion and King* (1822)

(The followers of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen) hold fast by the original views of their masters, in opposition to the progressive historical development of the proletariat. They, therefore, endeavor... to deaden the class struggle and to reconcile the class antagonisms. They still dream of experimental realization of their social Utopias, of founding isolated '*phalanstères*,' of establishing 'Home Colonies,' of setting up a 'Little Icaria'... and to realize all these castles in the air, they are compelled to appeal to the feelings and purses of the bourgeois. By degrees they sink into the category of the reactionary conservative Socialists... differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in miraculous effects of their social science.

-- Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)

The Topics Course

HISTORY 420, Topics in European History introduces students to issues and readings in selected areas of European history. The class will become familiar with the topic through a selection of readings, writings and presentations. My responsibilities as instructor are to introduce the historical field through occasional lectures and to provide guidance and assessment for the reading, research and writing. The class will be run as a seminar. Class time will be made up of roughly equal portions of lecture, discussion and student presentations. Your performance will be assessed via book tests, presentations and by completing a substantial research paper.

Along with the course requirements, a goal of the course is to develop your analytical, interpretive, verbal and writing skills in the context of an historically-based inquiry. In other words, the effort will be concentrated not only on learning how history is written but also on sharpening those skills that will aid you in the formation and clear expression of ideas. Because the class will be conducted as a seminar it will be the responsibility of each student to come to class prepared – by which I mean that assigned material shall have been read – and ready to participate.

Why Utopian Communalism?

Our course on "Utopian Communalism" examines the ideas and plans of a handful of forward-thinking Europeans in the last two centuries. There are many well-known utopian communities that have been created across the world, including – very close to our own campus – Robert Owens' New Harmony experiment of 1825. Like many other American utopian experiments, Owen's New Harmony began with Europeans and European ideas. The main goal of this course is to explore and understand the European origins of utopian communalism.

Why is the topic worth exploring? Locally and across the United States, communalism has been an important element in this nation's past and present: the homepage of USI's Center for Communal Studies (<http://www.usi.edu/libarts/communal/>) provides an explanation for the study of communalism in the United States. For Europe, the history of communalism is important, too. Communalism in theory

and practice emerged in the first quarter of the nineteenth century partly as a product of the Enlightenment and “social scientific” ideas of the eighteenth century; as an alternative to the “new regime” of laissez-faire capitalism taking hold across Western Europe; and as a reaction against the forceful change associated with the French Revolution of 1789-94. The Utopians we will consider include well-known figures like Owen, Henri Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier and Etienne Cabet, as well as less familiar figures such as Flora Tristan, Victor Considérant and Alexander Bogdanov. Our period of coverage will extend from the era of the French Revolution of 1789 through the early years of the Soviet Union (ca. 1921). The Utopians mostly welcomed democratic politics, science and industry, as they also believed that socialism, rather than capitalism, was the best way to organize society. The Utopians had many followers and their ideas took root in famous social experiments, including New Harmony. But because they challenged the dominant actors of their own societies, the Utopians were sometimes harassed or shunned. Their ideas were often disparaged from all sides of the political spectrum. The European Utopians are also worth studying because they served as a foil for the communist thinker Karl Marx, who was the first to label them “utopians” – a criticism by which he meant that their plans could never be achieved in the real world. Finally, the history of the Utopians is worth understanding because so many of them were fascinating figures, with life stories that come across as emblematic of the momentous issues of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century era of revolution, industry and social experimentation.

HIST 420 satisfies a requirement of the History and History Teaching majors.

REQUIREMENTS

Book Tests: There will be three (3) short (thirty-minute) in-class writings on the required readings.

Short Presentation: Of approximately fifteen minutes on the readings for Weeks 6-7. I will assign dates for the Short Presentation.

Prospectus: During Weeks 8-9, a presentation (in writing and with an in-class report) of your topic and the sources you will use for your Research Paper.

Research Paper: 15-20 pages, due at the end of the semester; a detailed description of the requirements for the Paper will be distributed near the start of the semester.

Participation: This is necessary, as your comments for the in-class presentations will be helpful for fellow students.

GRADING

Short Presentation: 10 percent

Book Tests: 10 percent each; 30 percent total

Prospectus: 10 percent

Research Paper: 50 percent

GRADING SCALE

90-100 = A

80-89 = B/B+

70-79 = C/C+

60-69 = D/D+

59 and below = F

MAKE-UP and LATE PAPER POLICIES

- There are **no make-ups** for Book Tests.
- The Prospectus and Research Paper should be completed on time. A **half-grade** will be deducted for each day late.

BLACKBOARD

There is a Blackboard website for this class where I will place copies of the syllabus, handouts, assignments and links to readings. You should become familiar with *Blackboard* and check the website at least once a week for Announcements and new postings.

COURSE TEXTS

These are at the USI Bookstore. Most may also be purchased from on-line booksellers. Titles with **emboldened author names** will be placed on two-hour reserve at the Library:

- **Lyman Tower-Sargent**, *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010)
- **Doris Beik and Paul Beik, eds.**, *Flora Tristan, Utopian Feminist, Her Travel Diaries and Personal Crusade* (Indiana University Press, 1993)
- **Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels**, *The Communist Manifesto* (any edition)
- **Richard Stites**, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Visions and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1991)

RESERVE READINGS

Books and articles will be placed on reserve at Rice Library or through the Library website. Be sure to check the Blackboard website at least once a week for announcements about reading assignments.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct has long been a matter of great concern at universities. *In doing your work for this course, do not resort to illicit and unethical methods.* The History Department takes plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct very seriously. Here is the university statement on “academic dishonesty”:

USI considers academic dishonesty (defined by the Dean of Students as cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, interference with another student’s work, or facilitating academic dishonesty) to be a serious misconduct and subject to disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion from the university. These infractions and the penalties are explained further at the Dean of Students’ website: http://www.usi.edu/stl/section_changes.asp. It is your responsibility to read this site and comply with its requirements.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASS

If you complete the procedure for a Withdrawal beginning the first day of the term through 21 March, you will receive a ‘W’ for the course. If you complete the procedure for a Withdrawal between 13 January and 30 April, you will receive the grade ‘W’ if you are passing with a D or above when you drop the course. If you are failing at the time you drop the course, you will receive a grade of ‘F.’ **It is in keeping with University policy that students who withdraw from a class after the Friday of the ninth week of the term and have a failing grade at time of withdrawal will receive an F, not a W.**

DISABILITITES

If you have a disability, you are encouraged to register for disability support services in the Counseling Center [Room 1051, Orr Center, (812) 464-1867]. If you require an accommodation, please advise the instructor by the end of the first week of class. You may be required to provide written documentation to support these accommodations. The instructor will work with you to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform and participate in class.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Course evaluations will be administered online near the end of the semester. The evaluations are an integral part of the teaching and learning process. At USI, course evaluations are used for many purposes. These purposes include curriculum and assignment review, course structure changes, changes in instructional delivery as well as the university's evaluation of, and continuous improvement efforts for, faculty and faculty development initiatives. Please complete the course evaluations for this course with care, thought and attention toward the improvement of the class, the faculty and the university community overall.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- ✓ *Do not use your cell phone or text message during class*
- ✓ *Do not use a laptop computer or electronic tablet during class (exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis – please see me during office hours)*
- ✓ *If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so as quietly as possible*

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

- Introduction
- Lecture: Enlightenment and French Revolution

WEEK 2

- Lecture: Industry and Capitalism
- **Thursday, 23 January, Book Test #1**, Beik and Beik, eds., *Flora Tristan*

WEEK 3

- Lecture: Society and Economy
- Tour and Activity at Center for Communal Studies and Communal Studies reading room at Rice Library Archives

WEEK 4

- Lecture: Nineteenth-Century Utopians
- **Thursday, 6 February, Book Test #2**, Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

WEEK 5

- Lecture: Utopia and the Russian Revolution

WEEK 6

- Lecture: Utopia and the Russian Revolution
- **Thursday, 20 February, Book Test #3**, Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*

WEEK 7

- Short Presentations on Readings
- **Thursday, 27 February: no class scheduled**

WEEK 8

- Short Presentations on Readings

WEEK 9: **SPRING BREAK** (10-15 March): **no classes scheduled**

WEEK 10

- Prospectus Presentations

WEEK 11

- Prospectus Presentations
- Individual Meetings on Research Project

WEEK 12

- Individual Meetings on Research Project
- **Thursday, 3 April: Assessment Day – no classes scheduled**

WEEK 13

- Writing the Research Paper
- Paper Presentations

WEEK 14

- Paper Presentations
- **Thursday, 17 April – no classes scheduled**

WEEK 15

- Paper Presentations

WEEK 16

- Utopia in Film
- **Tuesday, 29 April: Research Paper Due**

FINAL EXAM WEEK: Research Papers returned noon, Tuesday, 6 May

APPENDIX:
**BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON EUROPEAN ORIGINS OF UTOPIAN COMMUNALISM AVAILABLE THROUGH
RICE LIBRARY**

Frank E. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (1979)

Design for Utopia; Selected Writings of Charles Fourier (1971)

French Utopians (1966)

New World of Henri Saint-Simon (1956)

Ian Donnachie, *Historic New Lanark* (1993)

Robert Owen of New Lanark (1980)

Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier* (1986)

Utopian Visions of Charles Fourier (1983)

Victor Considérant (1983)

Christopher Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France* (1974)

Etienne Cabet, *Travels in Icaria* (2003)

Robert Owen, *New View of Society* (1972)

And numerous other primary and secondary sources

Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Robert Owen and the World of Co-operation* (1992)

Naomi Andrews, "'The Universal Alliance of All Peoples': Romantic Socialists, the Human Family and the Defense of Empire during the July Monarchy, 1830-1848," *French Historical Studies* 34 (June 2011), 473-502.

Evelyn Forget, "Saint-Simonian Feminism," *Feminist Economics* 7 (2001), 79-96.

Rondel Davidson, "Reform versus Revolution" Victor Considérant and the Communist Manifesto," *Social Science Quarterly* 58 (1977), 74-85.

Lorna Davidson, "The Role of Music in Robert Owen's New Lanark Community," *Utopian Studies* 21 (2010), 232-51.

Piers Hale, "Of Mice and Men: Evolution and the Socialist Utopia," *Journal of the History of Biology* 43 (2010), 17-66.

Roger Paden, "Marxism, Utopianism, and Modern Urban Planning," *Utopian Studies* 14 (2003), 82-112.

Kenneth Calkins, "The Uses of Utopianism: The Millenarian Dream in Central European Social Democracies before 1914," *Central European History* 15 (1982), 124-49.