

Who New? A History of The New School

ULEC2800 Fall 2016

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Lecture: Wed., 2:00-3:15pm

University Center, L104

In 1919, the New School for Social Research opened with courses in the social sciences, social work, and public affairs. The school was not quite a university: it did not offer formal degrees. The founders thought that people would come to the school for “no other purpose than to learn.” It sought to make education relevant to the issues of the day, to remain ever new. In this course we look at what ideas defined learning here, from psychology and the arts to politics and design. Often the school has been a leader in intellectual, cultural, and educational shifts, though perhaps not with the clarity or consistency some have claimed. We also chart the school’s place in New York City and how it became a hub in the political, intellectual, and cultural life of the city. But in a school dedicated to the new, what is the use of the past? Students construct an answer to that question by assembling a history of one aspect of the school from scrapbooks of newspaper articles, memoirs, artwork, and interviews that will be part of a website. The academic and artistic works of New School faculty and students since its inception form the basis of the course.

Discussion Sections:

A – Wed., 4-5:15pm: Agnes Szanyi, szana218@newschool.edu

B – Thurs., 12-1:15pm: Joseph Lemelin, lemej459@newschool.edu

Learning Objectives

- Learn about archives, how to navigate them and build historical interpretations from sources in them.
- Learn various research methods, including archival investigation and interviews.
- Understand the central issues of higher education over the last century and into the future.
- Write papers that convey analytical thinking, a command of the readings, original ideas, and accurate acknowledgement of sources.
- Synthesize your understanding of the past of the university with its present and future by conceiving and producing an individual final project.

Readings and Materials

Course materials are available in Canvas under the Resources tab.

The scrapbooks (and a great deal of other fascinating material--catalogs, audio recordings of lectures, etc.) can be accessed through the University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections:

library.newschool.edu/archives/

Assignments

Class Participation (20%): Your fundamental requirement in the course is to engage in it, which means to read the assigned material carefully before each class and to participate actively in class discussion. Your grade for class participation is calculated not by how much you speak, but by the ways in which you enable a lively and useful discussion.

Interpreting the Scrapbooks (20%): Each student will be assigned a portion of a scrapbook to browse through. Think about what happened at the school at that time; identify important people, events, or audiences and write 2-3, double-spaced pages on these questions: what does this tell us about The New School? What does the scrapbook reveal that we might not know otherwise about the school?

Interviews (20%): Working in pairs, conduct two interviews, one of a student and another of someone who has worked at The New School for at least five years. Write up a 6-8 page, double-spaced summary and analysis of your interviews. Compare the experiences and perspectives on the school.

Final Project (40%): Pick an item, artwork, idea, person, place, program, course--anything that most interests you about the New School--and research it. Use the readings, archival materials, lectures, and discussion to narrate the history of the school through that item. The final result could be either an 8-10pg, double-spaced paper or a creative project that is discussed with and approved by your discussion section instructor.

Class Schedule

- Week 1 Introduction: What Happens When a University Rethinks Everything?
Aug 31 Visit: Glenn Ligon, *Comrades and Lovers* (2015)
- Week 2 Democracy and Education
Sept 7 Readings: Gary Gutting, "What is College For?," *New York Times* (2011)
 John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916): chs. 4, 11
 Herbert Croly, "A School of Social Research," *The New Republic* (1918)
 "Proposal for an Independent School of Social Science" (1918)
Assignment: Find a New School item new to you and formulate a question about the history of the school from that item.
- Week 3 The New History and a New School
Sept 14 Readings: Elsie Clews Parsons, *Social Rule: A Study of the Will to Power* (1916): chs. 1, 3
 Charles Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (1917): ch. 1
 James Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making* (1921): chs. 1, 4
Assignment: assign scrapbook sections
- Week 4 Beauty and Use
Sept 21 Readings: Margaret McKay Tee, "Education on a Shoestring" (no date)
 Frank Alvah Parsons, "Art in Advertising," *Art and Progress* (1911)
 Frank Alvah Parsons, *Art: Its Principles and Practice as Applied to Modern Life*
 (1917): Intro
 Horace Kallen, "Beauty and Use: A Pragmatic Interpretation," *Philosophical Review* (1939)
- Week 5 Arts as Social Research
Sept 28 Readings: Parsons Student Notes and Drawings on Dynamic Symmetry (ca. 1926-27)
 Alvin Johnson, "Notes on The New School Murals" (1945?)
 Doris Humphrey, excerpt from *New Dance* (2008)
 Aaron Copland, "From Composer to Interpreter to Listener," from *What to Listen for in Music* (1939)
 Offense + Dissent (2014): "[Red Scare, Yellow Curtain](#)"

Visit: Orozco Room in class
Assignment: Scrapbook interpretation due

Week 6
Oct 5

The University-in-Exile
Guest: Gina Luria Walker, Professor of Women's Studies, SPE
Readings: Alvin Johnson, Foreword to first issue of *Social Research* (1934)
Max Wertheimer, "On Truth," *Social Research* (1934)
Frieda Wunderlich, "Deutsch-mann über Alles," *The American Scholar* (1938)
Frieda Wunderlich, "Labor in Wartime," from *War in our Time* (1939)
Assignment: Prepare for interviews

Oct 12

NO CLASS – Yom Kippur (no lecture or discussion sections)

Week 7
Oct 19

Education in the Cold War
Readings: Alvin Johnson, "Education in Review," *New York Times* (1944)
Hans Simons and Alvin Johnson on Adult Education (Feb-Mar 1953)
C. Scott Fletcher, "The Great Awakening" (1958)
Ilka Lewin, "On Our First Year (in the Alice Rice Cook Human Relations Workshop)" (1952)
Geoffrey Hilsabeck, "John Cage in the Classroom," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2016)

Week 8
Oct 26

Studying in the City
Readings: Alfred Schütz, "The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology," *American Journal of Sociology* (1944)
Anatole Broyard, *Kafka was the Rage: A Greenwich Village Memoir* (1997): chs.1-4
Erich Fromm, "Our Way of Life Makes Us Miserable," *Saturday Evening Post* (1964)
Assignment: Interview papers due

Week 9
Nov 2

Undergraduate Experiments (Parsons, Liberal Arts)
Lecture: Agnes Szanyi
Readings: J. Allan Tate, *Notes toward a Philosophy of Design Education* (1969)
Joanna Merwood-Salisbury, "What was Environmental Design?," *Radical Shifts* (2011)
Danielle Epstein, "Interdisciplinary Shifts," *Radical Shifts* (2011)
Jenny Florence, "An unParsonly Subject Matter," *Radical Shifts* (2011)
Joseph S. Lobenthal, "The Catabolism of a Student Revolt," *Journal of Higher Education* (1969)

Week 10
Nov 9

Generational Conflicts in Theory and Practice
Lecture: Joe Lemelin
Readings: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958), ch. 1
Hans Jonas, "The Burden and Blessing of Mortality," *The Hastings Center Report* (1992)
"Nineteen Students Seized in Occupation of the New School," *New York Times* (1970)

Stanley Diamond and Edward J. Nell, "The Old School at The New School" and letters, *The New York Review of Books* (1970)

Offense + Dissent (2014): "[My God! We're Losing a Great Country](#)"

Assignment: Description of final project (approx. 100 words)

Week 11
Nov 15
Becoming a University
Readings: Report of the Commission on Undergraduate Education (1982)
Jonathan Fanton, "A Work in Progress" (Convocation, 1994), "Establishing a Network for Collective Influence" (Parsons Commencement, 1992), "The Matsunaga Exhibit and Freedom of Expression: Letter to the University Community" (1989)
Offense + Dissent (2014): "[The Matsunaga Affair: Is Racist Art Freedom of Expression](#)"

Week 12
Nov 22
Workshop: Final Projects
CLASS MEETS ON TUESDAY RATHER THAN WEDNESDAY
(no discussion sections)
Assignment: Outline of final project due

Week 13
Nov 30
Student Activism
Readings: Eyal Press, "Nightmare on Twelfth Street," *Lingua Franca* (1997)
Disorientation: Unauthorized Student Guide (2009)
Aidan Gardiner, "The Education of President Kerrey," *New School Free Press* (2011)
New Black School

Week 14
Dec 7
A Design-Led University
Readings: Ira Katznelson, "Liberty and Fear: Reflections on the New School's Founding Moments (1919 and 1933)," *Social Research* (2009)
David Van Zandt, "Universities are Engines for the Creative Economy," *Huffington Post* (2012)
The New School, *Comprehensive Institutional Self Study Review* (2014) (excerpt)

Mon, Dec 12 Final Projects Due at noon

Week 15
Dec 14
The Object of Education
(no discussion sections)