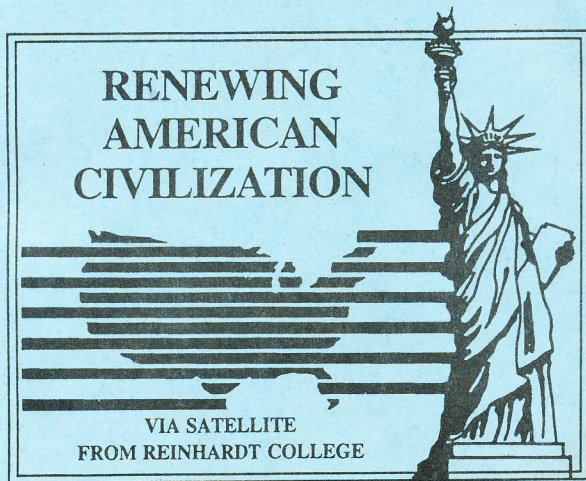


Renewing American Civilization
Class Lecture Notes
Class #6
"Lessons of American History"
February 12, 1994



The Central Proposition:

There is an American Civilization. It is diverse and multiethnic but is in fact one civilization.

Three Additional Propositions

1. American Civilization cannot survive with 12 year-olds having babies, 15 year-olds shooting one another, 17 year-olds dying of AIDS and 18 year-olds graduating with diplomas they cannot read.
2. The Welfare State has failed.
3. Our generation must replace, not repair, the Welfare State.

The Five Principles of American Civilization are:

Personal Strength
Entrepreneurial Free Enterprise
The Spirit Of Invention And Discovery
Quality As Described By Deming
The Lessons Of American History

The Four Areas to which we will apply these Principles are:

Economic Growth and Job Creation
Health
Saving the Inner Cities
Citizenship for the 21st Century

Five Reasons for studying The Lessons Of American History

1. History is a collective memory.
2. American History is the history of our civilization.
3. There is an American Exceptionalism that our history illustrates.
4. History is a resource to be learned from and used.
5. There are techniques that can help you learn problem solving from historic experience.

"To be An American is of itself almost a moral condition, an education and a career."

- George Santayana

Learning from history: Actively Listening And Reading

1. What are the hidden lessons?
2. How does it apply to me?
3. What additional questions does it lead to?

American Exceptionalism:

A uniquely insistent and far-reaching individualism.

A view of the individual person which gives unprecedented weight to his or her choices, interests and claims.

Private Property in the economic sphere.

Democracy and freedom from government control in the polity.

Advancement on one's merits.

The absence of rank.

Moral equality in the larger society.

The essential distinguishing American Values all reflect a pervasive underlying individualism.

The religious and social tenets of puritanism . . . are diffused throughout American Values today.

The United States: highly developed and religious.

Americans believe that opportunity is generally available to all citizens and, as a result, support of a private-property-based economy remains strong. Americans declare themselves prepared to countenance very substantial economic inequalities, while insisting on the importance of the ideal of equal opportunity.

While government has grown enormously over the past 60 years as the public has turned to it for guarantees and services, support for limits on government are still stronger in the U.S. than in most industrial democracies.

American Policy on social welfare reflects national insistence on a large measure of individual, rather than governmental, responsibility.

Southern Blacks when asked, "Do you believe work should be required of welfare recipients, including mothers with small children?":

82% Yes

11% No

America is about freedom:

We are endowed by our creator with certain unalienable rights -- among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The challenge of American Exceptionalism is not yet completed.

Vision:

America is exceptional and its history teaches us how exceptional

Strategies:

Teaching American History

Finding solutions in American History

Refocusing on the symbols and reminders of
American History

Projects:

How did people learn American Civilization in the
past?

How was public safety maintained?

What American Policies created rapid
economic growth?

What incentives and controls have worked and
what has failed in the past?

Tactics:

When faced with a problem or opportunity or when
beginning to plan ask: how have others
done similar things?

SUGGESTED READINGS

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States (Washington: United States Government
Printing Office, 1989).

Michael Shaara, The Killer Angels (New York:
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