

AMERICA'S GREAT TRIALS
SYLLABUS AND RECOMMENDED READINGS
OLLI – Fall 2020

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(NOTE : Starred items appear to me especially useful as an introduction for the general reader.)

Week 1: The Assassinations of Presidents James Garfield and William McKinley

Lerch, Margaret, In the Days of McKinley. An excellent background on the period. Unfortunately, very little on the assassination.

*Millard, Candice, Destiny of the Republic (2011). Very good on the Garfield assassination.

*Miller Scott, The President and the Assassin (2011).

Parker, Owen, The Assassination and Gunshot Wound of President James Garfield (National Museum of Health and Medicine (1950).

Paulson, George, “Death of a President and His Assassination, Errors in their Diagnosis and Autopsies,” Journal of the History of the Neurosciences 25 (2006), pgs. 77-91.

Scientific America, “A Review of the McKinley Operation” (1963).

Week 2: The Lindbergh Kidnapping

*Berg, A. Scott, Lindbergh (1998). The classic biography.

*Fisher, Jim, The Lindbergh Case (1987).

*Gardner, Lloyd, The Case That Never Dies: The Lindbergh Kidnapping (2004).

Kennedy, Ludovic, The Airman and the Carpenter: The Lindbergh Kidnapping and the Framing of

Richard Kaupman (1985).

Lindbergh, Charles, The Spirit of St. Louis. Lindbergh’s memoir written some years after his flight

from New York to Paris. The movie was made from this book.

Scaduto, Anthony, Scapegoat: The Lonesome Death of Bruno Richard Hauptman (1976).

Scaduto and, to a lesser extent, Gardner, believe Hauptman should not have been convicted. Not very convincing tome.

Winters, Kathleen C., Anne Morrow Lindbergh: First Lady of the Air (2006).

Over time, Anne Morrow Lindbergh has proved perhaps, to be the more interesting figure in the couple as both a poet and writer. Her book, Gift From the Sea, became a best seller. For her feel for flying, her books Listen to the Wind and North to the Orient are worth reading. She has written a series of diaries covering various periods of her life, most notably her passionate, brief love affair with Saint-Exuprey. They are not very helpful on the kidnapping, but are useful to see her life and her adjustments through time.

Lindbergh himself became an isolationist in 1940, a great strain on FDR as he plotted his third term. For additional intrigue, Lindbergh fathered two children in Europe during WWII.

Week 3: The Amerasia Spy Case: The Case of John Service

Esherick, Joseph (ed.), Lost chance in China: The World War II Dispatches of John S. Service (1975).

Fairbank, John K., The United States and China (1961).

*Haynes, John Earl and Harvey Klehr, Early Cold War Spies (2006).

*Joiner, Lynne, Honorable Survivor (2009).

Kahn, E.J. Jr., The China Hands: America's Foreign Service Officers and What Befell them (1975).

*Klehr, Harvey and Ronald Radosh, The Amerasia Spy Case: Prelude to McCarthyism (1996).

Pakula, Hannah, The Last Empress: Madam Chiang Kai-shek and the Birth of Modern China (2009).

Seagrave, Sterling, The Soong Dynasty (1985).

Service, John, The Amerasia Papers: Some Problems in History of U.S.-China Relations (1971).

Tuchman, Barbara, Stilwell and the American Experience in China: 1911-1945 (1970).

Taylor, Jay, The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China (2009).

Together with the Pakula volume on Madam Chiang Kai-shek, the beginning of a more positive view of the Chiangs.

WEEK 4: THE TREASON TRIAL OF AARON BURR

Chernow, Ron, Alexander Hamilton (2005).

*Ellis, Joseph J., Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation (2000), Ch. 2. Details the Hamilton-Burr duel.

Isenberg, Nancy, Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr (2007).

Larson, Edward J., A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign (2007).

Steward, David O., American Emperor: Aaron Burr's Challenge to Jefferson's America.

Focuses

on the actions of Aaron Burr in the West and his treason trial.

Week 5. The Ulysses Book Custody Trial

Hassett, Joseph M., The Ulysses Trials: Beauty and Truth Meet the Law (2016).

London Sunday Express. The newspaper called the book the most infamously obscene book in ancient or modern literature.

Mansfield, Katharine. "I can't get over the feeling of wet linoleum and unemptied pails and the few

worse hours in the house of his mind.

The literary dispute concerning Joyce's work, as noted above, bewildered the judges who were to wrestle endlessly with the legal aspects involved with obscenity while assessing the critical character of the book. Judge Woolsey and Justice Brennan all took a crack at it.

Week 6. William Herschel and Caroline Herschel (Sister): The Discovery of Uranus, The Division of the Universe and the Comets

Holmes, Richard, The Age of Wonder (2010). One of the beautiful love stories: the doting sister for her brother.

Week 7. Humphrey Davy

Holmes, Richard, The Age of Wonder (2010). One of the geniuses of the mid-19th Century.

Week 8: Mary Shelley and Mary Sumerville

Holmes, Richard, The Age of Wonder (2010). For two troubled, uncertain years Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley lived with Percy Shelley in Geneva. She wrote Frankenstein when she was 19. If possible, read the Introduction to Frankenstein (the book) and do see the film, "Frankenstein", with Boris Karloff, who is wonderful. One of the mysteries remaining is the death of Percy by drowning. The mystery rests with Shelley's death. He was a wonderful swimmer and knew the river quite well. So what happened?