

PREVIEW OF LIR COURSE (FALL, 2022):

## JANE ADDAMS AND HULL-HOUSE:

### Empowering the American Progressive Movement

*“Many of the social problems we face today — the fraying social fabric, widening inequality, anxieties over immigration, concentrated poverty, . . . are the same problems she faced. . . . And in many ways her responses were more sophisticated than ours.”*

David Brooks, Column: “The Jane Addams Model,” *New York Times*, April 25, 2017

In 1913, *Independent Magazine* asked its national readership: “Who Is the Most Useful American?” Among 10,000 responses, Jane Addams placed second—behind Thomas Edison but ahead of Andrew Carnegie and Theodore Roosevelt! At that time, Addams was the most famous and admired woman in America, but today (2022) her name is seldom recognized (or is confused with Abigail Adams!).

Jane’s lifetime (1860-1935) lasted from the Civil War (Lincoln was her father’s friend and fellow Illinois legislator) until the New Deal. With a college degree and some inherited wealth, she co-founded Hull-House in Chicago with Ellen Gates Starr in 1889 and thereafter oversaw its growth into a complex of thirteen buildings—a world-renowned hub of social service, intellectual ferment, and progressive reform. She and her Hull-House allies fought for political and economic justice for women, children, factory workers, immigrants, African-Americans, and the poor. With the onset of World War I, her leadership in the international peace movement attracted years of vilification from militarists and anti-feminists. But in 1931, she became the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (jointly with Columbia University President Nicholas Murray Butler).

The New Deal adopted elements of the Hull-House social agenda into national legislation addressing child labor, social security, minimum wage, public health, labor unions, and public housing. Two New Deal cabinet members had Hull-House ties: Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes.

Shortly before Addams died in 1935, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt hailed her “as one of the world’s greatest living women.” Roosevelt then assumed the Addams mantle of leadership on civil rights, immigration, and internationalism. According to Addams biographer Allen F. Davis, she “replaced Addams as the most loved and most hated woman in America.”

This new LIR course will invite participants to examine either a **particular figure** in the Hull-House penumbra, (e.g. Florence Kelley, Julia Lathrop, Dr. Alice Hamilton, Frances Perkins, Henry Demarest Lloyd, John Dewey, et al.) or a **prominent issue** addressed by the Hull-House community (e.g. immigration, civil rights, housing, factory reform, public health, child labor, the social work profession, arts and politics, or international peace).

Co –Moderators:

Dr. Rutherford H. Platt, Emeritus Professor of Geography, UMass Amherst. “Rud” Platt is a geographer and lawyer who became fascinated with Jane Addams in his retirement. He has lectured and written about her and he organized a public forum in Northampton on “Rediscovering Jane Addams in a Time of Crisis” (Nov. 11, 2017).

Dr. Gene Fisher, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, UMass Amherst with interests in community organization and housing issues. Gene has led several LIR seminars

Recommended Reading - Louise Knight, Jane Addams: *Spirit in Action* (Norton, 2010)