(U16 HIST 3620 01)

Conservatives and Liberals in Recent American History

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Washington University in St. Louis (University College)
Fall 2015, M 7-9:30 p.m., Busch 202

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Course Description and Themes
This course explores the interplay of modern American liberalism and conservatism, the two ideologies/political worldviews that have defined U.S. politics since the 1930s. It is impossible fully to understand one without also studying the other. Modern liberalism became a political force during the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, while modern conservatism emerged as a viable movement during the early Cold War years. Looking at political thought, grassroots activism, and electoral politics, the course will trace the evolution of both political perspectives, along with their frequent intersections, from the New Deal years through the postwar and Reagan eras and up to the present. Students will engage recent scholarship along with numerous primary sources.

Required Books/Readings (Please purchase the correct edition!)

- Excerpts and articles posted on Blackboard course homepage in dated folders

Class Structure and Expectations

- Classes will integrate discussion and lecture, with a strong emphasis on discussion. Brief lectures outline critical themes, provide important factual information, and frame key questions for subsequent discussions. Fruitful discussion requires close engagement of the readings, listed just below each class date. Reflection assignments (see below) will complement the in-class material and facilitate in-class discussion.
- Since this is a once a week course, you are expected to attend every session. Please clear foreseeable excused absences in advance. In the event of emergencies—e.g., illness—please check in with me as soon as possible.
- All assignments are due as listed. Under normal conditions, late submissions are granted only with advance clearance from the professor (and, in most cases, with a reduced grade). In the case of emergencies or other special circumstance, students should err on the side of communicating as early as possible.
• If you require accommodations for exams or for lectures, please contact Cornerstone: the Center for Advanced Learning (www.cornerstone.wustl.edu, 935-5970, cornerstone@wustl.edu). Cornerstone serves as the official University resource for approving and arranging students’ accommodations. All information is treated as confidential. I will provide accommodations for which you qualify as long as I receive the appropriate documentation from Cornerstone.

• I encourage you to take advantage of the many resources offered by the Writing Center: www.artsci.wustl.edu/~writing, 935-4981, writing@artsci.wustl.edu.

Assignments (Written assignments can be uploaded via Blackboard.)

Participation (20% of final grade)
• Quality participation reflects engagement with the assigned readings. Raising important questions represents one valuable way of contributing to discussions. The participation component may include extemporaneous in-class assignments.

Reading Responses, 5 of 8 (15%)
• This assignment will involve written responses to most weekly readings. I will supply response prompts. This assignment serves as a starting point for discussion—that is, a first draft interpretation of readings that we will “unpack” together in class. Responses should be 600-800 words. Each student will be required to complete 5 of the 8 possible responses.

Midterm Take-Home Essay on Lyndon Johnson and American Liberalism, 10/12 (20%)
• Students will engage the book in light of course themes.

Reflection Essay on The Reagan Revolution, 11/9 (15%)
• Was there a “Reagan Revolution”? This essay takes up that question.

Research Paper Proposal, 11/16 (5%)

Research Paper, 12/16 (25%)
• You will research and defend an argument about a topic of your choosing related to conservatism after 1970, liberalism after 1970, or both.

Grading Scale: A, 93-100; A-, 90-92; B+, 87-89; B, 83-86; B-, 80-82; C+, 77-79; C, 73-76; C-, 70-72; D, 60-69; F, 0-59

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
Students at Washington University are expected to adhere to the highest standards of behavior. Plagiarism, copying from other students, and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. It is dishonest and a violation of student academic integrity if you plagiarize, cheat on an examination, copy or collaborate on assignments without permission, fabricate or falsify data or records, or engage in other forms of deceit or dishonesty. Complete information about the University’s Academic Integrity Policy may be found at http://artsci.wustl.edu/~college/Policies/; click on “Academic Integrity Policy.” All violations of standard rules of academic integrity will be reported to and investigated by the Dean of University College. If it is determined that you have acted dishonestly, or even if you have admitted the charges prior to a formal investigation or hearing, an appropriate sanction will be imposed, including automatic failure of the assignment or course, or in the case of serious or repeat violations, suspension or expulsion from the University. Withdrawing from a course will not prevent the Dean from imposing or
recommending sanctions. If you observe another student violating this policy, you have a responsibility to confront the student, report the misconduct to the instructor, and/or seek advice from the appropriate dean or academic integrity officer. For additional information, definitions of plagiarism, guidelines for writing and research, examples of proper citation, and practical tips on avoiding conventional and Internet plagiarism, please visit the following Web sites: www.plagiarism.org and http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~writing/plagiarism.htm. Note that citation standards apply as equally to Internet-based materials as to printed materials. Let me know if you have any questions about proper citation, attribution of sources, collaboration with other students, or any other related aspect of academic integrity and plagiarism.

Course Schedule

8/24 Putting Labels in Historical Perspective
   Short in-class readings

No 8/31 meeting (Labor Day)

9/7 The New Deal and the Old Liberals
   Eric Alterman and Kevin Mattson, excerpt from The Cause (2012)
   Kim Phillips-Fein, from Invisible Hands (2009)
   Reflection 1 (of 8; you are required to do 5)

9/14 Keynes, Hayek, and Postwar Prospects
   John Maynard Keynes, from The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936)
   F. A. Hayek, from The Road to Serfdom (1944)
   Reflection 2

9/21 Liberal vs. Conservative Anticommunism
   Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., from The Vital Center (1948)
   Whittaker Chambers, from Witness (1952)
   Robert Welch, from The Blue Book of the John Birch Society (1959)
   Reflection 3

9/28 Liberal “Consensus” and Conservative “Fusion”
   Godfrey Hodgson, from America in Our Time (1976)
   William F. Buckley, Jr., National Review Mission Statement (1955)
   The Sharon Statement (1960)
   Reflection 3

10/5 Rights, Civil and Otherwise
   Excerpts from Democratic and Republican Party Platforms (1960)
   Martin Luther King, Jr., articles in The Nation (1961, 1964)
   National Review, “Why the South Must Prevail” (1957)
   Barry Goldwater, from The Conscience of a Conservative (1960)
   Reflection 4
10/12 The Saga of Sixties Liberalism
   Lyndon Johnson and Modern Liberalism
   MIDTERM ESSAY

10/19 Law, Order, and the Silent Majority
   George McGovern, Democratic National Convention acceptance speech (1972)
   Rick Perlstein, from Nixonland (2008)
   Reflection 5

10/26 The Pivotal Seventies . . . Gender and Family Values
   Schulman, from The Seventies (2002)
   Reflection 6

11/2 The Pivotal Seventies . . . Economics
   Bruce J. Schulman, from The Seventies (2002)
   Alice O’Conner, “Financing the Counterrevolution” (2009)
   Reflection 7

11/9 A Reagan Revolution?
   The Reagan Revolution
   REFLECTION ESSAY

11/16 Paper Consultations/Research Week
   You will each meet with me during the evening of the course (details TBA)
   PAPER PROPOSAL

11/23 Neoconservatives, New Democrats, and W.
   Andrew Hartman, from A War for the Soul of America (2015)
   You will each read 1 of 2:
   David T. Courtwright, from No Right Turn (2010) OR
   Michael Kazin, “From Hubris to Despair: George W. Bush and the Conservative Movement” (2011)
   Reflection 8

11/30 Looking Back, Looking Forward
   Reading about Obama years (TBA) to facilitate discussion of the recent past
   Paper Consultations, Part II (details TBA)

12/10 Your Research
   Informal presentations on, and discussion of, research papers

FINAL PAPER ESSAY DUE by 12/16