

History 6687

Liberalism and Conservatism in Postwar America

Spring 2011

Instructor: Dr. Dan Williams
 Office Hours: TLC 3225
 T, Th, 10:00am-12:30pm
 T, Th, 3:30-4:30pm
 W, 3-5pm
 (and by appointment)

Class Location:
 TLC 3205
 Wed., 5:30-8:00pm

Email: dkw@westga.edu
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 Course website: www.westga.edu/~dkwillia

Description:

This graduate seminar will give you the opportunity to read recent works of scholarship on the formation of liberal and conservative political ideologies in the United States from the New Deal to the present, and explore the relationship between those ideologies and partisan politics, political realignment, and national policy. The course will examine contemporary historiographical debates in modern American political history.

Classes will consist of discussion sessions, which will give you the opportunity to interact with your colleagues, explore new points of view, ask questions, and present your interpretations of the readings.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the major historiographical debates relating to the formation of liberalism and conservatism in modern America, and will also demonstrate, through the writing of a research paper, the ability to assess and interpret primary and secondary source documents related to these ideologies.

Assessment:

Students' final grades will be determined as follows:

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| Class participation (including emails) | 25% |
| Book reviews (10% each) | 20% |
| Research paper | 25% |
| Midterm exam | 15% |
| Final exam | 15% |

There will be no opportunity for extra-credit assignments in this course. Late penalties will apply to all assignments submitted after the deadline, and there will be no opportunity to make up assignments or submit late work after the day of the final exam.

Grading Methodology: This university does not use a plus / minus grading system, but during the course of the semester, I will use plus / minus grades, as well as split-letter grades (e.g., an A- / B+), in order to evaluate students' written work with precision. In computing final course grades, I convert all grades into numeric scores according to the following system:

A = 95

A/A- = 94

A- = 92

A-/B+ = 90

B+ = 88

B+/B = 87

B = 85

B/B- = 84

B- = 82

B-/C+ = 80

(A similar pattern is used for grades in the C-range).

In computing final course grades, a grade average of 89.5 or higher converts to a course grade of A, a grade average between 79.5 and 89.49 converts to a course grade of B, and a grade average between 69.5 and 79.49 converts to a course grade of C.

A-range grades, including the grade of A-/B+, are reserved for work that is of exceptional quality. In order to receive an A-range grade on an essay assignment, a student's essay must show evidence of original thinking and a thorough understanding of the relevant sources on the topic, as well as good writing technique. Papers that receive a grade of 90 or above must be cogent and persuasive in their argumentation, and they must be well written and tightly organized around a strong thesis. In short, a paper that receives an A-range grade not only meets the basic requirements for the assignment, but also demonstrates that a student has mastered the interpretative, analytical, and writing skills expected for a course at this level.

B-range grades are given to essays that demonstrate a student's accurate understanding of the material, adequate use of the relevant sources, and competence in writing. They rarely contain the sophisticated analysis required for an A-range essay, but they meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

C-range grades are given to essays that contain factual inaccuracies, errors in interpretation, inadequate use of the relevant sources, or poor writing technique, even though they usually meet most of the basic requirements for the assignment.

Failing grades are assigned to work that does not meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

Book reviews: You are required to write two 4-6 page reviews of books that you read for this course. Reviews are due on the date scheduled for the discussion of the book that you choose to review. Book reviews that are not submitted on time will not be accepted.

A book review for this course should be structured according to the style used for book reviews in historical journals (e.g., *J. of American History*, *American Historical Review*, *J. of Southern History*, *Reviews in American History*, etc.). A review should give a brief summary of a book while highlighting its author's thesis or point of view, and it should also assess the merits of the author's argument, as well as the book's contribution to the historical field. The book review should also discuss the relationship of the book to larger themes examined in this course.

Exams: You will take two take-home exams in this course. You will receive the midterm exam essay question on March 2, and you will have until March 16 to submit an 8-10 page essay in response to that question.

The take-home final exam will also require you to respond to an essay question. I will give you the exam question on April 20, and you will have until 8pm on May 4 to email me an 8-10 page essay in response. The midterm and final exams will test your ability to analyze the concepts covered in graduate readings, discussions, and lectures.

Research paper: You will be expected to write a 15-20 page research paper on an aspect of the development of liberalism or conservatism (or both) in postwar American political history. You should choose the topic for your research paper by January 26, and submit a bibliography by February 9. The first draft of the paper is due on March 30, and the final version on April 20. For more information on this assignment, please see the guidelines posted on the course website.

Papers that are turned in after the assigned date will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are overdue.

It should go without saying that all papers that you write must be your own work, and that any students who are caught plagiarizing another student's work, a paper from a web site, a textbook, or any other source will automatically fail this course and may be subject to further disciplinary action. Plagiarism is a serious offense that will not be tolerated.

All of your written work for this class must be original; you are not allowed to submit essays that you have written for other courses or that you have completed prior to this semester.

Class participation and weekly emails: Since class sessions in this seminar course will consist almost entirely of class discussion, your participation in those discussions is crucial to the success of this course. It is imperative that you come to class prepared to talk about the assigned reading each week. I will determine your class participation grade at the end of the semester based on my perception of your level of preparedness for each class session, your willingness to participate in the discussion, and the perceptiveness of the comments that you make throughout the duration of this course. I understand that some students may be more inclined than others to speak up in class, but I hope to create an environment that will allow everyone, regardless of

their personality or background, to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts on the readings. If you find yourself reluctant to join in the conversation for any reason, or if you feel that your class participation level does not adequately reflect your knowledge of the material and preparation for class, I would encourage you to meet with me early in the semester to discuss strategies that will enable you to succeed in earning a class participation grade that accurately reflects your work.

In addition, as part of your class participation, you should send me a short email each week assessing that week's assigned book or articles. The email, which is due at noon on each class day throughout the semester, should consist of approximately two paragraphs that identify the main argument of that week's assigned book (or, for the classes on March 23 and April 13, assigned articles) and its relationship to larger themes in the course. The short email essay should give a brief synopsis of your assessment of the book's argument or other aspects of the book that you found intriguing, and it should conclude with at least one suggested question for class discussion. I will compile these responses and email them to the class approximately four or five hours before each class discussion, so you will be able to come to class with some idea of the questions that we might be discussing and the viewpoints of some of your colleagues in the class.

Class communication: I may send out periodic email communiqués to students in this course, so please check your UWG email account regularly. The university administration has stipulated that all email communication between faculty and students should take place on UWG email accounts, so please use your UWG email account for all electronic communications that you send me.

University policy also prevents me from disclosing grades over email, so if you would like to discuss your grade on any assignment in the class, please set up an appointment to meet with me in my office. Please do not email me with a request for your grades, since I am not allowed to email that information to you.

To protect students' privacy rights, I will not return graded papers to any third party (e.g., a student's friend or relative who asks to pick up a student's work on that person's behalf) unless a student gives me permission in writing (e.g., an email) to do so. There are occasions when I must disclose a student's grade to university administrators or other history department faculty (e.g., the department chair, students' advisors, or the graduate studies coordinator), but in all other cases, I will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of students' grades.

I would like to do whatever I can to help you succeed in this course. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a question about any subject pertaining to this class. I make it a priority to respond promptly to emails from students, and I am happy to talk with students during my office hours, so please feel free to stop by my office anytime that you want to discuss your concerns about this course. I believe that this will be an excellent semester, and I'm pleased to welcome you to this class.

Assigned readings: I did not place an order at the university bookstore for the assigned monographs for this course, but you can easily order these books online. I have listed the ISBN

and publication information for every assigned text so that you can order the correct editions. The prices given are for new editions on Amazon.com. You may be able to purchase used editions at a lower cost.

The assigned journal articles are available through the JSTOR or EBSCOhost databases, which you can access through the university library's website. The photocopied sections of book chapters and other assigned readings are available through the university library's online course reserves.

The following books, which are listed in the order in which we will discuss them in this course, are required:

- Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). ISBN: 978-0679753148. \$11.53.
- Allida M. Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). ISBN: 978-0231104050. \$27.00.
- Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (either 1st ed.: New York: Harper, 1984, or 2nd ed.: Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009). ISBN for 2009 edition: 978-0820334059. \$28.95.
- Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996). ISBN: 978-0700609949. \$17.95.
- George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America: Since 1945*, 2nd ed. (Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006). ISBN: 978-1933859125. \$16.50.
- Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary B. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991). ISBN: 978-0393309034. \$13.43.
- Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). ISBN: 978-0691096117. \$29.95.
- Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (alternately titled *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade against the New Deal*) (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009). ISBN: 978-0393337662. \$11.53.
- Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). ISBN: 978-0195340846. \$23.45.
- Catherine Rymph, *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage through the Rise of the New Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). ISBN: 978-0807856529. \$23.35.
- Timothy Stanley, *Kennedy vs. Carter: The 1980 Battle for the Democratic Party's Soul* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010). ISBN: 978-0700617029. \$28.59.
- John Kenneth White, *Barack Obama's America: How New Conceptions of Race, Family, and Religion Ended the Reagan Era* (University of Michigan Press, 2009). ISBN: 978-0472033911. \$21.24.

Class schedule:

Jan. 5: An introduction to the questions

Jan. 12: The formation of postwar liberalism

Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

Frank B. Freidel, "The New Deal: Laying the Foundation for Modern America," in *The Roosevelt New Deal: A Program Assessment Fifty Years After*, ed. Wilbur J. Cohen, pp. 3-18 (online course reserves).

Jan. 19: Human rights, the Cold War, and postwar liberalism

Allida M. Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

Harvard Sitkoff, "Harry Truman and the Election of 1948: The Coming of Age of Civil Rights in American Politics," *J. of Southern History*, 37 (1971): 597-616 (JSTOR).

Robert A. Divine, "The Cold War and the Election of 1948," *J. of American History*, 59 (1972): 90-110 (JSTOR).

Jan. 26: The Great Society and the New Left

Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (either 1st ed.: New York: Harper, 1984, or 2nd ed.: Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

Research paper topic due.

Feb. 2: Liberalism's turn to the left, 1965-1972

Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996).

Feb. 9: Explaining the conservative turn: ideas

George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America: Since 1945*, 2nd ed. (Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006).

Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *American Historical Review*, 99 (1994): 409-429.

Leo P. Ribuffo, "Why is There So Much Conservatism in the United States and Why Do So Few Historians Know Anything About It?" *American Historical Review*, 99 (1994): 438-449 (JSTOR).

Research paper bibliography due.

Feb. 16: Explaining the conservative turn: race

Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary B. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

Merle Black, "The Transformation in the Southern Democratic Party," *J. of Politics*, 66 (2004): 1001-1017 (JSTOR).

Feb. 23: Explaining the conservative turn: anticommunism at the grassroots

Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton

University Press, 2001).

Robert J. Norrell, "Modern Conservatism and the Consequences of its Ideas," *Reviews in American History*, 36 (2008): 456-467 (ProQuest Research Library).

March 2: Explaining the conservative turn: economics

Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (alternately titled *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade against the New Deal*) (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009).

Midterm exam essay question distributed.

March 9: No class (spring break)

March 16: Explaining the conservative turn: religion

Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Bethany Moreton, "Why is There So Much Sex in Christian Conservatism and Why Do So Few Historians Care Anything about It?" *J. of Southern History*, 75 (2009): 717-738 (Proquest Research Library or EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).

Midterm exam essay due.

March 23: Nixon

Bruce Schulman, "'Down to the Nut-Cutting': The Nixon Presidency and American Public Life," in Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001), pp. 23-52 (online course reserves).

Jonathan Rieder, "The Rise of the Silent Majority," in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, pp. 243-268 (online course reserves).

Matthew D. Lassiter and Kevin M. Kruse, "The Bulldozer Revolution: Suburbs and Southern History since World War II," *J. of Southern History*, 75 (2009): 691-706 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).

Thomas J. Sugrue, "Orthogonian Visions," *Nation*, 1 September 2008, 39-44 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).

Kevin Yuill, "Another Take on the Nixon Presidency: The First Therapeutic President?" *Journal of Policy History*, 21 (2009): 138-162 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).

March 30: Gender and the changes in the GOP

Catherine Rymph, *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage through the Rise of the New Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

First draft of research paper due.

April 6: A counterview: liberalism in 1980?

Timothy Stanley, *Kennedy vs. Carter: The 1980 Battle for the Democratic Party's Soul* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010).

Iwan Morgan, "Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and the New Democratic Economics," *The Historical Journal*, 47 (2004): 1015-1039 (JSTOR).

April 13: Reagan

- Matthew Dallek, "Not Ready for Mt. Rushmore: Reconciling the Myth of Ronald Reagan with the Reality," *American Scholar*, Summer 2009, 13-23 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).
- Hugh Heclo, "The Mixed Legacies of Ronald Reagan," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 38 (2008): 555-574 (Proquest Research Library).
- Paul Kengor, "Reagan among the Professors," *Policy Review*, Dec. 1999 / Jan. 2000, pp. 15-27. (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).
- Peter J. Wallison, "Reagan Co-opted," *American Spectator*, July / August 2007, pp. 68-75 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete).
- Ted V. McAllister, "Reagan and the Transformation of American Conservatism," in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and its Legacies*, ed. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 40-60 (online course reserves).
- James T. Patterson, "Afterword: Legacies of the Reagan Years," in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and its Legacies*, ed. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 355-375 (online course reserves).
- Iwan Morgan, "Reaganomics and its Legacy," in *Ronald Reagan and the 1980s: Perceptions, Policies, Legacies*, ed. Cheryl Hudson and Gareth Davies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 101-118 (online course reserves).

April 20: Realignment?

- John Kenneth White, *Barack Obama's America: How New Conceptions of Race, Family, and Religion Ended the Reagan Era* (University of Michigan Press, 2009).
- Demetrios James Caraley, "Three Trends over Eight Presidential Elections, 1980-2008: Toward the Emergence of a Democratic Majority Realignment?" *Political Science Quarterly*, 124 (2009): 423-442 (EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier).
- David A. Hopkins, "The 2008 Election and the Political Geography of the New Democratic Majority," *Polity*, 41 (2009): 368-387 (ProQuest Research Library).

Final version of research paper due.

Final exam essay distributed.

May 4: **Final exam essay due (8pm).**