

GOVT 30.01: AMERICAN CONSERVATISM¹

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

SPRING 2017

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 1950, Lionel Trilling characterized conservatism as a collection of “irritable mental gestures that seek to resemble ideas.” He was wrong; this course shows why. If American liberalism is primarily concerned with equality, conservatism places greater emphasis on religion, tradition, community, virtue, authority, and (in certain respects) liberty. In addition to these, the course considers the influence of mid-century anti-communism on the contemporary conservative movement. Finally, we examine some recent literature: Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind* (2011); Jane Mayer, *Dark Money* (2016); Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land* (2016).

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title American Conservatism
Course ID # GOVT 30.01
Term/Year Spring 2017
Time/Location Tuesday/Thursday 2:25-4:15 (2A)

COURSE TEXTS²

Required

1. Gregory L. Schneider, *Conservatism in America since 1930: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2003). [ISBN: 9780814797990](https://www.amazon.com/Conservatism-America-since-1930-Reader/dp/0819569990).

¹DRAFT: March 8, 2017

²Follow links for online bookseller page listings. purchase any edition: hardcover, kindle, audiobook, new, or used. if you have trouble getting your hands on any of the texts, for any reason (including financial), please get in touch with me.

2. Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York: New Press, 2016). ISBN: 9781620972250, [Kindle Edition](#), or [Google E-Book](#).
3. Jane Mayer, *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*. ISBN: 9780385535595, ISBN: 9780307947901, [Kindle Edition](#), or [Google E-Book](#).

Highly Recommended

4. George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*. ISBN: 9780465014026, ISBN: 9781882926206, ISBN: 9781933859125, [Kindle Edition](#), or [Google E-Book](#).

Optional

5. Steven M. Teles, *The Rise of the Conservative Legal Movement: The Battle for Control of the Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
6. Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading Quizzes Five reading quizzes given on randomly selected Thursdays. 10% of final grade. Quizzes graded on {0, 1, 2} basis. Answers to quiz questions should be easy if you have kept up with reading. Material from all reading assignments up to quiz date is ‘fair game.’ *Students who attend office hours at least once during the semester (either regularly scheduled or by appointment) will have their lowest quiz score dropped from their final grade.*

Critical Essays Two critical essays. ~1500 words each. Essays due at the beginning of class in *hard copy*. See separate “Critical Essay Assignment” handout for instructions.

Paper #1 25% of final grade. Due TBD.

Paper #2 30% of final grade. Due TBD.

Final Essay ~3,000 words. Topic TBA. 35% of final grade. Due TBD.

MISSED ASSIGNMENTS/MAKE-UPS/EXTRA CREDIT

Late papers will penalized at 10 points per day unless other arrangements have been made.

READINGS & SCHEDULE

Reading assignments can be found in the required texts, in clickable links on this syllabus, or posted to Canvas. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have trouble accessing the reading assignments.

Week 1. March 28 & 30: Introduction

1. Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (1950; New York: New York Review Books, 2008), preface (pp. xv-xxi).
2. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution*, 2nd ed. (1955; San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991), ch. 1.
3. Jan-Werner Müller, "Comprehending Conservatism: A New Framework for Analysis," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11, no. 3 (2006): 359-365. ([link](#))
4. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in *The Portable Conservative Reader*, ed. Russell Kirk (1790; New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 7-40.

Recommended

5. Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 109-133.
6. George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (hereafter *Conservative Intellectual Movement*), introduction, ch. 1.

Week 2. April 4 & 6: The Old Right and Classical Liberalism

7. Gregory L. Schneider, *Conservatism in America since 1930: A Reader* (hereafter, *Conservatism in America*), pt. I & II (pp. 1-90).

Recommended:

8. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 2.

Week 3. April 11: Traditionalism. No class April 13.

9. *Conservatism in America*, pt. III (pp. 91-130).

Recommended:

10. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 3.

Week 4. April 18 & 20: Anti-Communism, Fusion, & the Plunge Into Politics

11. *Conservatism in America*, pt. IV-VI (pp. 131-246).

Recommended:

12. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 4.

Week 5. April 25 & 27: Libertarianism & New Rights

13. *Conservatism in America*, pt. VII-VII (pp. 247-335).

Recommended:

14. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 5.

Week 6. May 2 & 4: Conservatism & the Law

15. Keith E. Whittington, "Originalism: A Critical Introduction," *Fordham Law Review* 82, no. 2 (2013): 375-409. ([link](#))
16. Marc Galanter, "Why the 'Haves' Come out Ahead: Speculations on the Limits of Legal Change," *Law & Society Review* 9, no. 1 (1974): 95-160. ([link](#))
17. Steven M. Teles, *The Rise of the Conservative Legal Movement: The Battle for Control of the Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), introduction, ch. 1, 5, conclusion (pp. 1-21, 135-180, 265-281).

Recommended:

18. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 6.

Week 7. May 9 & 11: Is Conservatism Reactionary?

19. Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Introduction, pp. 3-38.
20. Corey Robin, "Conservatism and Counterrevolution," *Raritan*, Summer 2010, 1-17. ([link](#))
21. Mark Lilla, "Republicans for Revolution," *New York Review of Books*, January 12, 2012. ([link](#))
22. Corey Robin and Mark Lilla, "'The Reactionary Mind': An Exchange," *New York Review of Books*, February 23, 2012. ([link](#))

Recommended:

23. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 7.

Week 8. May 16 & 18: Conservatism, Philanthropy, & Money

24. Jane Mayer, *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* (New York: Doubleday, 2016), pp. 73-191.
25. James Piereson, "'The Paranoid Style,' Redux," *The New Criterion* 35, no. 7 (2016). ([link](#))

Recommended:

26. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 8.

Week 9. May 23 & 25

May 23: SPECIAL GUEST, George M. Nash on Conservatism in 2017

May 25: Deep Stories & The Empathy Wall

- 27. Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York: New Press, 2016). Entire.
- 28. Ralph Benko, review of *Strangers In Their Own Land: Anger And Mourning On The American Right*, by Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Forbes Magazine*, Sep. 30, 2016. ([link](#))

Recommended:

- 29. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 9.

Week 10. May 30

Recommended:

- 30. *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, ch. 10-12, conclusion.

EVALUATION & GRADING

Reading Quizzes	10%
Critical Essay #1	25%
Critical Essay #2	30%
Final Essay	35%

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Required.

ACADEMIC HONOR PRINCIPLE

Short version: don't cheat.

Long version: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/judicialaffairs/honor/index.html>.

FURTHER READING

Books & Articles

- 1. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* ed. J. C. D. Clark (1790; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).
- 2. Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot*, 7th rev. ed. (1953; Washington, DC: Regnery, 1985).

3. J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elogy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* (New York: Harper, 2016).
4. Mark Lilla, *The Shipwrecked Mind: On Political Reaction* (New York: New York Review Books, 2016).
5. Sanford V. Levinson, Joel Parker and Melissa S. Williams, eds., *American Conservatism*, NOMOS 56 (New York: New York University Press, 2016).
6. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The New Conservatism in America: A Liberal Comment," *Confluence*, December 1953, 61-71.
7. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The New Conservatism: Politics of Nostalgia," *Reporter*, June 16, 1955, 9-12.
8. George H. Nash, "American Conservatism & the Problem of Populism," *New Criterion*, September 2016, 4-14.

Conservative Periodicals

Weekly/Bi-Weekly

National Review, <http://www.nationalreview.com/>
The Weekly Standard, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/>

Monthly

Commentary, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/>
The New Criterion, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/>
First Things, <https://www.firstthings.com/>

Bi-Monthly

The American Conservative, <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/>
The National Interest, <http://nationalinterest.org/>
The American Interest, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/>

Quarterly

National Affairs, <http://www.nationalaffairs.com/>
The Hedgehog Review, <http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/>
The New Atlantis, <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/>
Modern Age, <https://home.isi.org/modern-age>

Book Reviews

Claremont Review of Books, <http://www.claremont.org/crb/>.