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Stanford Civics Initiative/PolSci237
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Varieties of Conservatism in America

This seminar explores the principal strands of the conservative movement in America. Because understanding conservatism in the United States — as elsewhere — requires an acquaintance with that which the conservatives in question seek to conserve, the seminar begins with an introduction to the modern tradition of freedom central to the American constitutional order. The seminar then turns to Marx's classic critique of liberal democracy since the understanding of conservativism also requires an appreciation of the leading alternative. We then examine America's founding principles and their significance to reformers throughout American history. All this lays a foundation for the exploration of several key moments in the emergence in the United States after World War II of a self-consciously conservative movement. The seminar concludes by considering contemporary debates among American conservatives about populism, nationalism, patriotism, and the common good.

Each week and in every reading, students will examine questions concerning the virtues on which freedom rests; the moral principles that undergird, and the weak points and wayward tendencies of, liberal democracy; and the political institutions and forms of society that sustain free and democratic self-government. In addition, students will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of rival conservative perspectives, and they will consider the extent to which sound policy making involves consideration of the conservation of inherited beliefs, practices, and institutions as reform and progress.

The seminar will concentrate on careful reading of the assigned texts and robust discussion of the materials from a variety of perspectives. Students will be provided weekly discussion questions to guide their reading and, in advance of each class, they will be required to submit a 250-word ungraded reflection on the week's main topics. They will also be required to prepare a substantial final paper, designed in consultation with the instructor, that explores some aspect of the conservative challenge in the United States.

Week 1: Natural Rights, Fundamental Freedoms, Human Equality, and Limited Government
John Locke, *The Second Treatise,* ed. Peter Laslett, Chaps 1-9, 19
https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/hollis-the-two-treatises-of-civil-government-hollis-ed

Week 2: Marx's Critique of Liberal Democracy
Marx, Preface, "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (1859)
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm
-----"Estranged Labor in "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844"
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm

----"On the Jewish Question" (1843), Part I
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/
-----"Theses on Feuerbach" (1845)
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm
----*The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), Preface, Preamble, Parts I-II
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/

Week 3: America's Founding Principles and Constitutional Framework
Declaration of Independence (1776)
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/declare.asp
James Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance" (1785)
https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0163
The Constitution (1787)
https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/full-text
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments" (1848)
https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/senecafalls.asp
Fredrick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1852)
https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/coretexts/_files/resources/texts/c/1852%20Douglass%20July%204.pdf
Abraham Lincoln, "The Gettysburg Address" (1863)
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/gettyb.asp
Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "The Four Freedoms" (1941)
https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrthefourfreedoms.htm
Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream" (1963)
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/mlk01.asp

Week 4: America's Founding Principles and Constitutional Framework
The Federalist, Nos. 1, 10, 37, 47-48, 51, 78, 84-85
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp

Week 5: Conserving Classical Liberalism
Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, ed. Bruce Caldwell (1944/2003), Introduction, Chaps. 1-3, 11, 13, 15-16
Hayek, "Why I am not a Conservative," in *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960)
https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/articles/hayek-why-i-am-not-conservative.pdf

Week 6: Conserving Traditional Morality
Russel Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (1953/2001), Chaps. I-III

Week 7: Fusionism or Big-Tent Conservatism
William F. Buckley, *God and Man at Yale* (1951/2004), Author's Preface, Chaps. 1-2

--"Our Mission Statement," *National Review* (1955)
https://www.nationalreview.com/1955/11/our-mission-statement-william-f-buckley-jr/
Frank Meyer, "The Twisted Tree of Liberty," *National Review* (1960)
https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/01/communism-conservatism-twisted-tree-liberty/
L. Brent Bozell, "Freedom or Virtue?" *National Review* (1962)
https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/01/freedom-virtue-conservatism-goal-society-freedom-or-virtue/

Week 8: Neoconservatism
Irving Kristol, "What is a Neo-Conservative?" *Newsweek* (1976)
https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/25452/What%20is%20a%20Neo-Conservative.pdf?sequence=104&isAllowed=y
-----"The New Populism: Not to Worry," *The Wall Street Journal* (1985)
https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-new-populism-not-to-worry-1541527937
-----"The Neoconservative Persuasion," *The Weekly Standard* (2003)
https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/the-neoconservative-persuasion
Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary* (1979)
https://www.aei.org/articles/dictatorships-and-double-standards-2/
George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows," *Atlantic* (1982)
https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/

Week 9: Conservatism and U.S. Foreign Policy
President George Washington, Farewell Address (1796)
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp
President James Monroe, The Monroe Doctrine (1823)
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/monroe.asp
George Kennan, "The Long Telegram" (1946)
https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm
President Harry S. Truman, Address to a Joint Session of Congress (1947)
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp
President Ronald Reagan, "Westminster Speech" (1982)
https://www.ned.org/promoting-democracy-and-peace/
President George W. Bush, "Address to the National Endowment for Democracy" (2003)
https://www.ned.org/remarks-by-president-george-w-bush-at-the-20th-anniversary/
President Donald Trump, Speech in Poland (2017)
https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/here-s-full-text-donald-trump-s-speech-poland-n780046
President Joe Biden, "Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World" (2021)
"The Elements of the China Challenge," Policy Planning Staff, U.S. Department of State, November/December 2020

Week 10: Populism, Nationalism, Patriotism, and the Common Good

Walter Russell Mead, "The Jacksonian Revolt," *Foreign Affairs* (2017)
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-01-20/jacksonian-revolt
Daniel McCarthy, "A New Conservative Agenda," *First Things* (2019)
https://www.firstthings.com/article/2019/03/a-new-conservative-agenda
Glenn Loury, "The Case for Black Patriotism," *City Journal* (2021)
https://www.city-journal.org/the-case-for-black-patriotism
Salena Zito, "Where'd You Go, Ohio? How a Swing State Went Red," *Washington Examiner* (2021)
https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/whered-you-go-ohio-how-a-swing-state-went-red
Kim R. Holmes, "The Fallacies of the Common Good," *The New Criterion*, January 2022
https://newcriterion.com/article/the-fallacies-of-the-common-good/
Josh Hammer, "Yesterday's Man, Yesterday's Conservatism," *The New Criterion,* January 2022
https://newcriterion.com/issues/2022/1/yesterdays-man-yesterdays-conservatism
"The new conservative dilemma: a symposium," in The New Criterion, October 2023
Charles Kesler, "National Conservatism vs. American Conservatism," Claremont Review of Books, Winter 2023/24