The Age of Reagan and the Rise of the New Conservatism

This course uses one figure, Ronald Reagan, as a way to understand the rise of a newly influential conservative movement in late twentieth-century United States political culture. While some weeks of the semester will highlight Reagan’s two terms in office (1980-1988), most of the course will address what made a Reagan presidency possible and how he became a figurehead for the conservative movement.

This is an intermediate level course that will combine brief lectures with extensive discussion and in-class exercises. Students are not expected to bring specialized knowledge to our work.
The following required books are available online or at Shakespeare & Company, 716 Broadway. Inexpensive used copies are available from online booksellers.

* = available on Kindle.


There will be readings on the syllabus listed as “recommended:” these are not required readings. They will, however, enhance your understanding of the subject if you have the time and the inclination to read them.

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Our semester will focus on developing the following capacities associated with the study of history and politics:

- **Critical reading of scholarly articles and primary documents.** Whether we agree or disagree with a secondary or primary source, our first question should be: what is the writer trying to convey and how will it help us do our work? Is our view of the text fair? Might another reasonable reader have a different view? Even, or especially, if we disagree we then want to ask: how does what I have just read, watched or listened to contribute to my work?

- **Generating useful questions.** Historical scholarship depends on asking a good question as much as it depends on being able to answer a question.

- **Researching answers to our questions.** Each writing assignment will have a research component. Portions of some classes will be devoted to exploring the possibilities that different primary sources have for writing history.

- **Developing our ideas in discussion with others.** No historian is expected to know everything. Making oral arguments for your own point of view, and listening/responding creatively to the point of view of others is how we develop a deeper critical understanding of a topic.
Expectations and grading:

- **Class attendance is mandatory.** You must be on time and you must remain for the entire class period. Attendance will be factored into your grade. Should you miss a class, you are responsible for contacting a classmate to find out what you have missed.

- **All assignments are required.** You must come to class having prepared the assigned materials to the best of your ability.

- **Participating in class discussions.** This means coming to class with something to contribute, but it also means being an active and respectful listener. Students are reminded that it is rude and non-participatory to check devices, text, surf the web or email during class.

- **All writing for the class, graded and ungraded, is required.** All assignments are posted to Black Board now so that you can plan your work in advance. Unexcused late papers will be penalized and any writing not turned in will result in a zero for that assignment.

*Your grade will be determined by the following formula:*

- Class participation & attendance 20%
- First paper 10%
- Second paper 15%
- Midterm self evaluation (CR/F) 5%
- Third paper 20%
- Take-home final exam 30%

All writing will be submitted and returned electronically. Students will be awarded .25 extra credit for every time they participate in a discussion forums.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES & RESOURCES: Please read and/or review**

**Disabilities:**

In keeping with the University’s policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who may need academic accommodations should contact the office of Student Disability Services. Students requesting any accommodations will need to meet with Jason Luchs, who will conduct an intake, and if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter. All conversations will be kept confidential.

Mr. Luchs’s office is located at 80 Fifth Ave, 3rd Floor (luchsj@newschool.edu, 212.229.5626 x3135). You may also access more information at http://www.newschool.edu/studentservices/disability/.

**Incompletes**

A grade of Incomplete (“I”) indicates that your instructor has granted you an extension to complete outstanding work for a course. The grade of Incomplete will
not be assigned automatically. It will only be assigned at the request of the student by the last day of class. Incomplete grades cannot be granted for students who are graduating seniors.

If circumstances require you to request a grade of Incomplete—and the instructor approves your request—the terms of the Incomplete should be agreed upon in writing, using the “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form (http://www.newschool.edu/forms/registrar_incomplete_grade.pdf). This ensures that both the student and the instructor understand the exact nature of the required work, the manner in which it is to be submitted, and the date by which it must be submitted.

Your instructor will determine the deadline for submission of outstanding work. Students with a grade of Incomplete who do not complete their work by the agreed-upon deadline will receive a grade of Withdrawal/Failure (“WF”). Students who complete outstanding work according to the terms of the Incomplete will receive a letter grade. (The “I” will be converted to a letter grade after your instructor submits a Change of Grade form on your behalf.)

Libraries

The New School Library offers frequent research workshops for students, the day, time, and location of which are posted to the Library webpage (http://library.newschool.edu/events/) each semester. The library also provides one-on-one support for students who in conducting research for a paper or project require additional assistance. Students can contact the library about scheduling a one-on-one appointment with a reference librarian at the following link: http://library.newschool.edu/reference/request.php.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words or ideas in any academic work. (This could be using books, journals, Internet postings, or other students’ papers.) For further information on avoiding plagiarism through proper acknowledgements, including expectations for paraphrasing source material and forms of citation in research and writing, students should consult the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (2nd edition), Chapter 6, on documentation. The Bachelor’s Program provides useful online resources to inform students of correct forms of research and writing. To access these resources, go to http://www.newschool.edu/ba/ and click on the link “Resources for Current Students.”

The New School Writing Center also provides online resources about avoiding plagiarism. (See http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/index.html.) Please note that students must receive prior permission from instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments. Submission of the same work for two assignments without prior permission is plagiarism.

Writing Center
Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the university writing center, located at 71 Fifth Avenue, 9th floor (Between 14th and 15th Streets). To make an appointment, you can e-mail the writing center at writingcenter@newschool.edu or call 212.229.5121. For further information, please visit the Writing Center website: www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/.

August 28: Introduction

- Video in class: “President Reagan’s Farewell Speech to the Nation,” January 11 1989.

September 4: The Changing Presidency


- Video: Inauguration speeches
  Jimmy Carter: January 20, 1977 (4:53)
  Ronald Reagan: January 20 1981 (20:49) and January 21 1985 (24:06)
  William Jefferson Clinton: January 20 1993 (14:38)

Recommended:


First Paper due on Sunday, September 9: no more than 500 words


- Helfer, Buccellato and Staton, Ronald Reagan: A Graphic Biography

Recommended:


September 18: Surveying American Conservatism

- Critchlow, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism, 1-108.
- Steven Fraser, “The Limousine Liberal’s Family Tree,” Raritan: A Quarterly
Recommended:


No Class on September 25

October 2: The Goldwater Campaign of 1964

- Barry Goldwater, The Conscience of a Conservative
- Critchlow, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism, 109-136.

Recommended:


October 9: Transforming the GOP

- Dan T. Carter, From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich

Recommended:


October 16: National Malaise?

- Critchlow, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism, 137-211.

Recommended:


**Second Paper due Sunday, October 21: no more than 750 words**

**October 23: The Reagan Revolution of 1980**

• Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 212-304.

**Midterm Self-Evaluation Will Be Conducted At The End of Class**

Recommended:

• Craig Shirley, *Rendezvous With Destiny: Ronald Reagan and the Campaign That Changed America* (New York: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2009)

**October 30: Family Values and Culture Wars**


Recommended:

November 6: Feminism and The Gender Gap


Recommended:


November 13: Individualism, Self-Help and Deindustrialization


Recommended:

- Film: “American Dream” (Cabin Creek: Barbara Kopple, 1990).

Third Paper Due Sunday, November 18: No more than 1000 words
No Class November 20: Wednesday schedule instead

November 27: Just Say No: Policing Sex and Drugs

- Video: Nancy Reagan announces the “Just Say No” campaign CNN (September, 1986), 5:03.

Recommended:


December 4: The Neoliberal Compromise


Recommended:


December 11: Film In Class


December 18: Take Home Final Exam:

- Essay topics will be posted on December 12
- Identification questions will be posted at 4:00 on December 18.
- Upload essay and identifications by 6:00 on December 18.