HERTOG 2017 SUMMER COURSES

VARIETIES OF AMERICAN CONSERVATISM

Matthew Continetti, editor in chief, *Washington Free Beacon*

Location: This track will take place at the
George Washington University, District House (2121 H Street NW, Room B117).

The story of American politics in the twentieth century cannot be told without reference to the conservative movement. This collection of journalists, policy experts, activists, and politicians, and the journals and institutions around which they congregated, had a decisive impact on the Republican Party and on the country that is still being felt today. Indeed, so successful was modern American conservatism in reorienting the intellectual and political direction of the country that its opponents, including President Obama, have sought to emulate its tactics if not its goals.

Whence did this movement arise? How did the ideas and arguments put forth in obscure magazines come to shape the worldview and policy of American presidents and congressional leaders? Who were the principal intellectual figures of the conservative movement, and how did they seek to influence American elites?

Through a close reading of essays, opinion pieces, and political speeches, we will trace how the principles of conservative leaders have been translated into concrete reality. We will recall the biographies and histories of important conservative figures and publications such as William F. Buckley Jr.'s *National Review*, Irving Kristol's *Public Interest*, Norman Podhoretz's *Commentary*, and Robert Bartley's *Wall Street Journal*. We will hear from speakers who participated in the rush of events that made American conservatism one of the most important political movements in US history. And we will reflect on what the story of that movement might teach us about the status and prospects of conservative thought and practice today.

Resources

To learn more about the figures covered in this course, we encourage you to visit ContemporaryThinkers.org, a website devoted to the ideas and influence of pioneering intellectuals of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Sponsored by the Hertog Foundation, ContemporaryThinkers.org includes sites devoted to Irving Kristol, Edward C. Banfield, Nathan Glazer, James Q. Wilson, and many others.

Sunday, July 23, 2017

3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Summer Course Fellow Arrival and Check-in — **George Washington University, Thurston Hall (1900 F St NW)**

Monday, July 24, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Libertarians**

Readings:

- George Nash, Excerpt from *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (1996), pp. 1–10
- Milton Friedman, "The Relationship Between Economic Freedom and Political Freedom," from *Capitalism and Freedom* (2002)
- Milton Friedman, "The Role of Government in a Free Society," from *Capitalism and Freedom* (2002)

Questions:

"The Relation of Economic Freedom and Political Freedom"

1. Why, in Friedman's view, is capitalism a necessary condition for political freedom?
2. Why is "freedom of exchange" so crucial in protecting individual liberty?
3. What are the lessons Friedman intends by his "hypothetical example" on p. 16?
4. How does the market ensure freedom of thought?

"The Role of Government in a Free Society"

1. When is coercion of individuals by the government justified, according to Friedman?
2. Why is absolute freedom impossible?
3. What is Friedman's example of railroads in the US meant to show about monopoly power?
4. How do Friedman's examples illustrate the limits of privatization? When should a domain of the economy be nationalized in Friedman's view?
5. What is the "paternalistic ground for governmental activity"? Why is some measure of paternalism necessary?

Noon to 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Libertarians cont'd**

Video:

- "Power of the Market," *Free to Choose*, PBS, 1980 (http://www.freetochoose.tv/program.php?id=ftc1980_1&series=ftc80)

Magazine:

- *Reason* (1968–), https://reason.com/

Tuesday, July 25, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Traditionalists**

Readings:

- George Nash, Excerpt from *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (1996), pp. 67–74
- Russell Kirk, "The Errors of Ideology" and "10 Conservative Principles," from *The Politics of Prudence* (1993)

Questions:

"The Errors of Ideology"

1. What is ideology?
2. What are the three vices of ideology, according to Kirk? Why is ideology attractive?
3. How does Kirk distinguish the conservative from the ideologue? Why can't conservatism be reduced to an ideology?

"10 Conservative Principles"

1. What is "the principle of prescription"? How is it related to the permanent moral order, according to Kirk?
2. What makes a tradition good, according to Kirk? How does one know when a tradition is just?
3. Why does the notion that man is imperfectible make one conservative?
4. Why must conservatives be in favor of restraints on liberty?

Noon to 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Traditionalists cont'd**

Video:

- Russell Kirk Address, Heritage Foundation, June 4, 1980 (https://www.c-span.org/video/?124078-1/russell-kirk-address)

Magazine:

- *Modern Age* (1957–), https://home.isi.org/modern-age

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Anti-Communists**

Readings:

- George Nash, Excerpt from *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (1996), pp. 88–95, 114–16
- James Burnham, "Communism: The Struggle for the World," from *Keeping the Tablets* (1988)

Questions:

1. According to Burnham, what is the "key" to the current political situation? Why is it so difficult to identify, particularly in America?
2. What are the special features of the Cold War? What makes the Cold War different from other wars of the past?
3. Why are the two "dramatic episodes" of 1956 (the "East European affair" and the "Suez episode") significant?
4. What is "peaceful coexistence"?
5. What is at stake in the Vietnam War? How is it a "turning point"?

Noon to 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Anti-Communists cont'd**

Videos:

- Reagan's Remarks at the Presentation Ceremony for the Presidential Medal of Freedom, February 23, 1983 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_FDRpwN-G4&feature=youtu.be)
- "The Life and Political Thought of James Burnham," panel, William F. Buckley, Jr. Program, Yale University, November 14, 2014 (https://www.c-span.org/video/?322871-3/life-political-thought-james-burnham)

Thursday, July 27, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Majoritarians**

Readings:

- George Nash, Excerpt from *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (1996), pp. 240–46
- Willmoore Kendall, "McCarthyism: The Pons Asinorum of Contemporary Conservatism," from *The Conservative Affirmation* (1963)

Questions:

1. What does Kendall mean when he claims that our politics tend to be "low-key" politics?
2. What were the "high-key" quarrels that Americans engaged in during the past? What do they have in common?
3. Why were McCarthyites and anti-McCarthyites so "mad" about McCarthyism? What are the three "easy" answers that Kendall offers? Why is Kendall not convinced by each answer?
4. What is the "correct" answer? What, according to Kendall, was the "original" and deepest issue that divided McCarthyites from anti-McCarthyites in the debate over Communism? How and why was that issue superseded by the second issue of whether Communism posed a "clear and present danger"?

Noon to 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Majoritarians cont'd**

Videos:

- "The Iron Curtain," *The Cold War*, CNN (1998) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzcZBFlmLoA&feature=youtu.be&list=PL8hNHC9nbLlzb4miGp5pZPYCk9Zw0dGke)
- "McCarthyism: Past, Present, Future," *Firing Line with William F. Buckley Jr.*, May 16, 1966 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiuvVk5LjYc&feature=youtu.be)

Friday, July 28, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **William F. Buckley Jr. and *National Review***

Readings:

- Lee Edwards, "Standing Athwart History: The Political Thought of William F. Buckley Jr.," First Principles Series Report #29, The Heritage Foundation, May 2010
- William F. Buckley, "Introduction," from *Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?* (1970)
- William F. Buckley, "Statement of Principles," *National Review*, November 19, 1955

Questions:

"Founding Documents"

1. What is the "liberal orthodoxy," according to Buckley?
2. What are the conservative convictions, according to Buckley? Do they differ from Kirk? Do they differ from Friedman?

"Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?"

1. Why is conservatism so hard to define?
2. Why is Ayn Rand's philosophy incompatible with conservatism, according to Buckley and Chambers?
3. What is problematic about the extreme distrust of the state?
4. What was the John Birch Society? What are Buckley's objections to it?
5. What are the three distinctive "American patterns of thought" (pp. xxxvii–xl)?

1:30 to 3:00 pm **WFB Jr. and *NR* cont'd**

Videos:

- "In Depth with William F. Buckley Jr.," *Booknotes*, CSPAN, April 2, 2000 (https://www.c-span.org/video/?156252-1/depth-william-f-buckley-jr)
- "The End of Firing Line: Part I," *Firing Line with William F. Buckley Jr.*, December 14, 1999 (http://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/7442/the-end-of-firing-line-part-i?ctx=a065c1de-b25f-4e77-9e84-07e75713cb88&idx=9)

Magazine:

- *National Review* (1955–), http://www.nationalreview.com/

Monday, July 31, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Neoconservatives**

Readings:

- George Nash, Excerpt from *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (1996), pp. 343–46
- Irving Kristol, "Autobiographical Memoir," from *The Neoconservative Persuasion* (2011)
- Irving Kristol, "Forty Good Years," from *The Neoconservative Persuasion* (2011)

Questions:

"Autobiographical Memoir"

1. What effect did Leo Strauss and Lionel Trilling have on Irving Kristol?
2. What was the "most controversial" essay of Kristol's career? Why was it so controversial?
3. Upon what grounds did Kristol object to "social democracy *cum* liberalism" of the 1950s?
4. What is "supply-side" economics? How did it challenge the dominant economic thinking of the 1970s and 1980s?

"Forty Good Years"

1. What is "neoconservatism"? How does it break with the old conservatism?

Noon to 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Neocons cont'd**

Videos:

- Irving Kristol on Neoconservatism, *Booknotes*, CSPAN, September 5, 1995 (https://www.c-span.org/video/?67045-1/neoconservatism)

Magazines:

- *The Public Interest* (1965–2005), full archive available at https://nationalaffairs.com/public_interest/issues/
- *Commentary* (1945–), https://www.commentarymagazine.com/

5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. **Pizza & Film Screening:** Matthew Continetti on *Arguing the World*
Hertog HQ — 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Ste. 500

Tuesday, August 1, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Populists**

Readings:

- Alan Crawford, "Antielitism and the New Class Warfare," ch. 6 from *Thunder on the Right* (1980)
- Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Why the New Right Lost," in *Commentary*, February 1977

- Samuel Francis, "Message from MARs: The Social Politics of the New Right," from *Conservatism in America since 1930* (2003)
- Kevin L. Phillips, "The Future of American Politics," *Modern Age*, Summer 1970

Questions:

"Message from MARs"

1. Who are the MARs? What "attitudinal quality" defines them?
2. Who are members of the "elite"? What opinions define them? How did the elite come to dominate American life?
3. What do the MARs and the "New Right" seek? Why are large corporations enemies of the MARs?
4. What is the attitude of the "New Right" toward government intervention in the economy? When is government intervention justified?
5. What is the foreign policy of the "New Right"? How does it conceive of America's role in the world?

"The Future of American Politics"

1. What did the "emerging Republican majority" look like in 1968? How and why was George Wallace attractive?

Noon to 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Populists cont'd**

Videos:

- "A Firing Line Debate: Resolved: That the Senate Should Ratify the Proposed Panama Canal Treaties," *Firing Line*, January 13, 1978 (http://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/6488/a-firing-line-debate-resolved-that-the-senate-should-ratif?ctx=bd80c38a-9b43-4f5b-a064-95eae00eaa7c&idx=0)

Magazine:

- *Conservative Digest* (1975–89), out of publication

Wednesday, August 2, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Religious Conservatives**

Readings:

- Ross Douthat, "Resistance," from *Bad Religion* (2012)
- "Evangelicals and Christians Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium," from *Evangelicals and Catholics Together at Twenty* (2015), pp. 6–23
- "Chapter 6: Pro-life," from *Evangelicals and Catholics Together at Twenty* (2015)

Questions:

"Evangelicals and Catholics Together"

1. Why should evangelicals and Catholics unite toward common political ends? What are those ends (see especially the section "We Contend Together")?

"Pro-life"

1. What is the "culture of life"?
2. Why do the claims of Catholics and evangelicals in the public sphere not violate the "separation of church and state"?
3. What is the "culture of death"? What are the causes of our society's drift towards "the culture of death"?

Noon to 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Religious Conservatives cont'd**

Videos:

- Robert P. George, *Conversations with Bill Kristol*, April 2016 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WB8xAmO3Ggw&t)

Magazine:

- *First Things* (1990–), https://www.firstthings.com/

Thursday, August 3, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Neos vs. Paleos**

Readings:

- John Judis, "The Conservative Crackup," *The American Prospect*, Fall 1990
- Charles Krauthammer, "Universal Dominion," from *America's Purpose: New Visions of U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Owen Harries (1991)
- Patrick J. Buchanan, "America First—And Second—And Third," from *America's Purpose: New Visions of U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Owen Harries (1991)

Questions:

"Universal Dominion"

1. What was the developing split between conservatives after the fall of the Soviet Union? What was the split on the left?
2. How will those cleavages be overcome, according to Krauthammer?
3. Why is the isolationist position inadequate?
4. Why should one prefer a "unipolar world"?

"America First—and Second—and Third"

1. What are the grounds for preferring isolationism over universalism?
2. Why should America not engage in democracy promotion?

Noon to 1:15 pm **Lunch Break**

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Neos vs. Paleos cont'd**

Videos:

- Charles Krauthammer, "Democratic Realism," 2004 Irving Kristol Address, AEI, February 10, 2004 (https://www.c-span.org/video/?180501-1/american-foreign-policy-unipolar-world)

Magazines:

- *The Weekly Standard* (1995–), http://www.weeklystandard.com/
- *The American Conservative* (2002–), http://www.theamericanconservative.com/
- *The Claremont Review of Books* (2000–), http://www.claremont.org/crb/

Friday, August 4, 2017

9:00 am to Noon **Reformicons & the Alt-Right**

Readings:

- Scott McConnell, "Rise of the alt-Right," *The American Conservative*, October 31, 2016
- Yuval Levin, "One Nation, After All," from *The Fractured Republic* (2016)

Questions:

"Rise of the alt-Right"

1. What is the doctrine of the alt-Right? Does it have any unifying idea or shared principles?
2. How and why did the alt-Right emerge, according to McConnell?
3. What does Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* reveal about the rise of Trump (and the alt-Right)?

"One Nation, After All"

1. What are the causes of the dysfunction of our national politics, according to Levin?
2. Is polarization an adequate explanation for our contemporary dysfunction?
3. Why should public policy in the twenty-first century be more "diverse, dispersed, and diffuse"? What is "subsidiarity"?
4. What are the three kinds of limits that the "hyper-individualist, twenty-first-century notion of liberty" seeks to overcome?
5. Why have the conservative objections to the understanding of liberal society espoused by Anthony Kennedy in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* "not reached the root of the problem"? What is the "highly individualist conservative idea of liberty"?
6. What "formative social and cultural institutions" ought conservatives commit themselves to and why?

1:30 to 3:00 pm **Closing Conversation**

Magazines:

- *National Affairs* (2009–), https://www.nationalaffairs.com/
- *American Affairs* (2017–), https://americanaffairsjournal.org/

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Closing Reception and Dinner — **Darlington House** (1610 20th St NW)

Saturday, August 5, 2017

11 a.m.	Summer Course Fellow Check-Out and Departure — **George Washington University**