

SOC 348

The Sociology of Conservatism

Fall 2007

Office Hours: M: 11-12:00
Th: 11-12:00
and by appointment

Mr. Imber

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Conservatives are not necessarily stupid, but most stupid people are conservatives. John Stuart Mill

Any man who is under 30, and is not a liberal, has not heart; and any man who is over 30, and is not a conservative, has no brains. Winston Churchill

COURSE READINGS:

The following books are available at the Wellesley College Bookstore:

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| Berkowitz, Peter, ed. | <i>Varieties of Conservatism in America</i> |
| Dillard, Angela D. | <i>Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Now?: Multicultural Conservatism in America</i> |
| D'Souza, Dinesh | <i>Letters to a Young Conservative</i> |
| Eberstadt, Mary, ed. | <i>Why I Turned Right: Leading Baby Boom Conservatives Chronicle Their Political Journeys</i> |
| Muller, Jerry Z., ed. | <i>Conservatism: An Anthology of Social and Political Thought from David Hume to the Present</i> |
| Scruton, Roger | <i>Culture Counts: Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged</i> |

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Two, typewritten, 8-10 page papers.

One, typewritten, term paper, 15-20 pages.

Two, class presentations, based on course readings

The **three papers assigned, in addition to class attendance, presentations, and participation**, form the basis for a grade during the term.

- 1) Conservatism in Perspective (Legacies): DUE: October 4.
- 2) Defining Contemporary Conservatism (Strategies): DUE: November 8.
- 3) Term Paper: Multicultural and Generational Conservatism: DUE: End of Finals

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

September 6: Introduction to the Course. Explanation of Assignments.

Background Reading: "Conservatism." Entry in *American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia*.

Part One: Conservatism in Historical Perspective

September 13: America and France, circa 1800, Two Types of Revolution

Readings: Edmund Burke, *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, pp. 3-6 (distributed in class).

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 7-40
(distributed in class).

Edmund Burke, "Preface" to *A Vindication of Natural Society*, in Muller, pp. 63-69.

James Madison, "Federalist No. 49," in Muller, pp. 146-151.

September 20: Conservatism and Inequality

Readings: Alexis de Tocqueville, letter to Gobineau, “The New Social Morality,” pp. 202-207 (distributed in class).

James Fitzjames Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, in Muller, pp. 189-209.

W.H. Mallock, *Aristocracy and Evolution: A Study of the Rights, the Origin, and Social Functions of the Wealthier Classes*, in Muller, pp. 210-221.

Joseph A. Schumpeter, “Aptitude and Social Mobility,” in Muller, pp. 222-232,

Edward Banfield, “The Future of the Lower Class” (*The Unheavenly City Revisited*), in Muller, pp. 338-357.

September 27: Conservatism and Progress (or Modernity)

Readings: Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Earth’s Holocaust,” pp. 245-267 (distributed in class).

William Graham Sumner, “Sociological Fallacies, etc.,” in Muller, pp. 233-248.

Part Two: Defining Contemporary Conservatism

October 4: What is Conservatism Now?

First Paper Due

Readings: Michael Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative,” pp. 567-600 (distributed in class).

Mark C. Henrie, “Understanding Traditionalist Conservatism,” in Berkowitz, pp. 3-30.

October 11: Conservatism and Libertarianism

Readings: Robert Nisbet, “Uneasy Cousins,” in *Freedom and Virtue: Conservative/Libertarian Debate*, ed. George W. Carey (ISI, 1984), pp. 13-24 (distributed in class).

Richard A. Epstein, “Libertarianism and Character,” in Berkowitz, pp. 75-102.

October 18: Conservatism and the Idea of Culture

Readings: Roger Scruton, *Culture Counts: Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged*

Philip Rieff, “Toward a Theory of Culture,” in Muller, pp. 411-420.

Arnold Gehlen, “On Culture, Nature, and Naturalness” and “Man and Institutions,” in Muller, pp. 401-410.

October 25: Culture Wars, part 1

Readings: Irving Kristol, “Capitalism, Socialism, and Nihilism,” pp. 627-644 (distributed in class).

Tod Lindberg, “Neo-conservatism’s Liberal Legacy,” in Berkowitz, pp. 129-157.

November 1: Culture Wars, part 2

Readings: Dinesh D’Souza, *Letters to a Young Conservative*

November 8: Diversities of Conservatism: Generations

Second Paper Due

Readings: Mary Eberstadt, *Why I Turned Right: Leading Baby Boom Conservatives Chronicle Their Political Journeys*

November 15: Diversities of Conservatism: Minorities

Readings: Angela D. Dillard, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Now? Multicultural Conservatism in America*, chapters 1-3.

November 29: Multicultural Conservatism

Readings: Dillard, chapter 4 and Conclusion

December 6: Brief Reports on Term Projects