

Why Trump? The Social, Political, and Cultural Origins of Donald J. Trump

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Course Description

As the United States hurtles toward the November 2020 presidential election, we'll examine how Trump emerged as a plausible Republican candidate in 2016, and then as president. The course will consider a range of topics to explain Trump's rise. These include fading truth in the media and in political cultures, the reconfiguration of the political and cultural right, the corruption of the justice system, the problem of race in America and in Trump's own origins as the scion of a wealthy Queens (New York) real estate empire, the changing nature of business cultures in the past 40 years, and the long trajectory of white flight to the suburbs.

Course Format

Three-hour Seminar

Attendance is mandatory.

Course Goals

Students will leave the course with

- a) Tangibly superior reading, writing, and analytical skills.*
- b) An effective mastery of course themes.*
- c) The ability to apply skills and knowledge learned to a range of courses.*

Marks Breakdown

Mid-Term Take-Home (Due 21 May 2020) – 30%

Final Assignment – 70%

Mid-Term Take-Home Exam Due – 11:59 PM at

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Take-Home Parameters:

1500 words (not including reference material) on any Cold War-related topic.

The Take-Home will take the form of an essay with a title, an introduction that identifies an analytical framework, and a directed, supported series of paragraphs advancing your argument and drawing on specific examples from the readings.

Final Assignment Due – 11:59 PM

Terms of the final assignment are set by the university – deadline and two format options.

Schedule**Week I – Parameters/Truth**

21 April – Parameters – Essay Writing

23 April – Truth

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/conrad-black-the-inconvenient-truth-about-trump-hes-doing-what-he-said-he-would>

Nathan Bomey, *After the Fact*

Week II – Justice I

28 April – No class – Memorial Day

30 April – Glenn Greenwald, *With Liberty and Justice for Some* (1)

Week III – Justice II

5 May – Glenn Greenwald, *With Liberty and Justice for Some* (2)

7 May - Glenn Greenwald, *With Liberty and Justice for Some* (3)

Week IV – Fred Trump and Race

12 May – <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/06/trump-racism-comments/588067/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/18/nyregion/nyc-trump-racism.html>

14 May – Robyn Muncy, “The Strange Career of ‘the Working Class’ in US Political Culture Since the 1950s,” *Labor*, 15 (2018): 37-58.

Week V – Christian Free Enterprise

19 May – Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (1)

21 May – Bethany Moreton, To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise (2)

Week VI – Suburban Warriors

26 May – Lisa McGirr, Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right

28 May – No class -- Shavuot