

THE GLOBAL REVOLT AGAINST LIBERALISM

RLST/GLST 28612

Spring 2023

Tu + Th, 11:00 am - 12:20 pm

Swift 400A

Instructor: Dr. Yiftach Ofek, email: yiftach@uchicago.edu

Office Hours: by appointment, via Zoom*

(*may change to in-person during the quarter)

(*I usually also have time immediately after class)

[...]

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by vanities. Think now
She gives when our attention is distracted
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
That the giving famishes the craving.

-- From T.S. Eliot, "Gerontion" (1920)

Course Description

Is liberalism in crisis? Over the past decade, the liberal consensus has been challenged by populists, socialists, religious traditionalists, and other radicals. Were these revolts mere setbacks on the long 'arc of history'? Or were they, rather, a reflection of a deep philosophic unease with the very premises of modernity? Is this the end of the liberal world order? What will replace it? And what is the role of religion in the contemporary political imagination? This class will combine readings in political theory, international relations, the philosophy of history, and current events, to gain perspective on our present discontents.

Some Themes

- Meaning in history
 - Liberalism as Ideology
 - Liberalization as Westernization
 - Liberalism and cultural hegemony
 - Liberalism and Capitalism (politics and economics)
 - Left vs. Right
 - Post-liberalism, post-capitalism
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Required Text

The following text is available for purchase at the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore:

Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, paperback edition, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018)

[All other readings will be provided via Canvas or can be found online]

Requirements and Assessment

Participation (10%)

Students should come to each class prepared to participate in a discussion of the reading assignment. Class participation requires you to read and take notes on the text that we are studying, and to be willing to contribute questions and comments to our conversations. This requires listening attentively. The most successful participants will advance the discussion by directly engaging the contributions of others.

Designated Discussant (10%)/ Short literature review (20%)

Each class, 1-2 students shall be designated discussant on the topic of the day. They will read all assigned texts for that day, and come up with a few questions to help guide discussion. For all intents and purposes, they will be treated as the “expert of the day,” and may be called upon to help reflect on how the topics sits within the broader trends discussed in class, etc.

Within one week of class, the student(s) shall write up a 500-1000 word literature review summarizing the topic and the readings. (Ideally, you should write up most of this before class, and use class time to refine and revise some of your initial thoughts).

Essay (60%)

Students are expected to write one paper, 8-14 pages long (12-size font, double-spaced, not including bibliography) about one or more of the themes or topics we discussed in class. The essay may take one of the following forms:

- a) Write a literature review of 2-3 authors/pieces (or more, depending on the subject) that address a single issue.
- b) Write an analysis on an aspect of one of the longer, more theoretical texts we read (e.g., Deneen, Dugin, Fisher, or others).
- c) Answer one of the preassigned questions (to be distributed later in the quarter).
- d) Come up with your own assignment.

Topics and readings should be approved in advance by the instructor by the end of Week VIII.

The preassigned questions, as well as more details regarding the assignments, shall be distributed later in the quarter, probably by the end of Week VII.

Essay due date: Thursday, May 25th, end of day (midnight)

Reading beyond the scope (extra credit)

This class is designed to help students become more acquainted with the media landscape and some of the themes presently discussed across the internet, in dissident circles, and generally in some of today's leading publications. Students are strongly encouraged to read widely on topics that interest them and bring these to class discussions and even their papers.

All assignments should be submitted via Canvas.

General Policies

Special Needs

If you have documented special needs, please let me know as soon as possible. Keep in mind that accommodations cannot normally be applied retroactively. In order to receive an accommodation, you must register your requirements with Student Disability Services.

Policy on Absences

Please try to email instructor in advance, or as soon as you can, about any absences. You need not to specify the nature of your absence if you prefer not to. If a medical or family emergency arises during the quarter that will cause you to miss several classes, please have your advisor contact me. Again, no details are required, only the duration of your absence. If you wish, you may also email me directly in addition. In accordance with University policy, you will not be penalized for an absence due to a religious observance, as long as the instructor is notified in advance.

Policy on Electronic Devices and Non-Purchased Books

Cellular devices are forbidden in class. It is my preference that students do not use a computer during class, but I will not forbid you from doing so. Naturally, if you choose to use a computer during class, you should refrain from using it for other purposes, and maintain your engagement with class discussion at a maximum.

Communications with the Instructor

Please note that I do not check emails between Friday and Saturday evenings. Otherwise, I will attempt to get back to you within 24 hours on weekdays and by Monday on weekends. Please address your emails properly and remember that they are formal and official correspondence between us, in our capacities as professor and student (e.g., never begin with “Hi”).

Formatting

Please follow standard formatting: 12-point font, double-spaced.

Academic Integrity

To the point: do not plagiarize. Any instance of plagiarism may result in the failure of the relevant

paper, withdrawal or failure of the course, and referral to university administration. Whenever you draw on or allude to ideas other than your own, you must reference the original source, whatever it may be (a book, a website, a lecture, an introductory essay, a conversation with a classmate, etc.). This rule applies not only to formally assessed work, but to all of your contributions in this class. Nor is it exclusively applicable in the case of quotations; all distinctive ideas you borrow from others, even where you paraphrase them in your own words, should be referenced.

Students are allowed to consult with each other about class readings throughout the quarter. The work you submit, however, should be your own. I emphasize: please credit your classmates whenever credit is due.

If you have any questions about this while writing your papers, please ask me either via email or in person. If you are unsure about what counts as plagiarism or academic dishonesty, you can consult Charles Lipson's book *Doing Honest Work in College*.

Policy on Late Papers and Extensions

Extensions will be granted on an individual basis. If you need an extension, please contact me as soon as you can. Late papers will be deducted 2/3 of a letter grade every 24 hours after the designated due date.

Readings

Week I: Introduction

March 21: Course Overview

- No Readings

March 23: The End of the Cold War and the New World Order

- Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?", *The National Interest*, No. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3-18
- G. H. W. Bush, "Toward a New World Order" (Sept. 11, 1990): <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/september-11-1990-address-joint-session-congress>

(Suggested Readings):

- Bill Clinton, First Inaugural Address (January 20, 1992), <https://politicalrhetoricarchive.wcu.edu/speech/first-inaugural-address-by-william-j-clinton/>
- G. W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address (January 20, 2005), <https://politicalrhetoricarchive.wcu.edu/speech/second-inaugural-address-by-george-w-bush/>
- Barack Obama, Speech at 2004 Democratic National Convention, thoughtco.com/obama-speech-2004-democratic-convention-3325333

Week II: Early Critics and Alternatives

March 28: Paradigms

- Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), pp. 19-39
- Christopher Lasch, "The Age of Limits," in Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (eds.), *History and the Idea of Progress*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 227-240
- William Strauss and Neil Howe, *The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997), pp. 1-22

March 30: Empire

- Samuel Francis, "Anarcho-Tyranny, USA," *Chronicles*, July, 1994, pp. 14-19
- Noam Chomsky, *World orders, Old and New*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 1-25
- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 3-21
- (Suggested readings): Paul Gottfried, *After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), and *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt*:

Toward a Secular Theocracy, (University of Missouri Press, 2004), esp. Introduction and first few chapters on the therapeutic state

Week III: Citizens of Nowhere

April 4

- Wendell Berry, “The Total Economy” (2000), in idem., *The World-Ending Fire: The Essential Wendell Berry*, ed. Paul Kingsnorth, (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2018), pp. 66-81
- Paul Kingsnorth, *Real England: The Battle Against the Bland*, (Granta Publications, 2011), pp. 1-17
- Paul Kingsnorth, “The liberal order is already dead,” *UnHerd*, February 17, 2022, <https://unherd.com/2022/02/the-liberal-order-is-already-dead/>

April 6

NO CLASS (PASSOVER)

Week IV: Diagnosing the Present: Patrick Deneen’s *Why Liberalism Failed*

April 11

- Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, pp. 1-20, 21-43, 43-63, 64-90

April 13

- Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, pp. 131-153, 179-198
- (Suggested Reading): Henry George, “Understanding Post-Liberalism” [in the UK], (November 18, 2020), <https://im1776.com/2020/11/18/post-liberalism-in-the-uk/>

Week V: Capitalist Realism

April 18: Mark Fisher: Lost Futures, Possible Futures

- Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2009), pp. 1-39, 71-81
- Mark Fisher, “What Is Hauntology?”, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (Fall 2012), pp. 16-24
- Mark Fisher, “Post-Capitalist Desire,” in Federico Campagna and Emanuele Campiglio (eds.), *What We Are Fighting For: A Radical Collective Manifesto*, (Pluto Press, 2012), pp. 131–38

April 20: “Occupy!” and After

- Occupy Wall Street New York City General Assembly, Declaration of Principles (October 1, 2011)
- Ezra Klein, Interview with Bernie Sanders (July 28, 2015), <https://www.vox.com/2015/7/28/9014491/bernie-sanders-vox-conversation>
- Jon Baskin, “Tired of Winning” (Spring 2018), in *The Opening of the American Mind: Ten Years of The Point*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), pp. 193-209
- Freddie deBoer, “The Failure of Occupy is Almost Complete” (Nov 22, 2021), https://open.substack.com/pub/freddieboer/p/the-failure-of-occupy-is-almost-complete?r=o7y6g&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web
- Watch/listen: TimcastIRL - GameStop Stock Apes WIN, Hedge Fund COLLAPSES w/Steve Bannon (June 22, 2021), https://www.youtube.com/live/B_nUUzvrjIQ?feature=share

Week VI: From Russia with Love: Alexander Dugin’s *Fourth Political Theory*

April 25

- Alexander Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory* (Arktos, 2012), Intro, Chs. I, II, V, VII (pp. 9-11, 12-24, 25-42, 55-63, 79-93)

April 27

- Alexander Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory*, Chs. IX, X, XIV (pp. 112-125, 126-136, 157-161)

Week VII: The New American Right

May 2: The New Realignment and the Intellectual Case for Trump

- Darren J. Beattie, “Intelligentsia and The Right” (2016), <https://amgreatness.com/2018/08/21/read-the-paper-cnn-says-is-white-supremacist/>
- Donald Trump’s 2016 Republican National Convention Speech (July 21, 2016), <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-text-donald-trumps-2016-republican-national-convention/story?id=40786529>
- Publius Decius Mus (Michael Anton), “The Flight 93 Election” (September 5, 2016), *Claremont Review of Books* (Web Exclusive), <https://claremontreviewofbooks.com/digital/the-flight-93-election/>
- Michael Anton, “America and the Liberal International Order,” *American Affairs*, Volume I, Number 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 113–25 (<https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2017/02/america-liberal-international-order/>)
- Daniel Addison, “Fusionism Relitigated” (February 9, 2023), GWU Illiberalism Studies Program, <https://www.illiberalism.org/fusionism-relitigated/>
- (Suggested Reading / Useful Resource): Julian G. Waller, “The Illiberal Right Moves Beyond Critique” (November 3, 2022), GWU Illiberalism Studies Program, <https://www.illiberalism.org/the-illiberal-right-moves-beyond-critique/>

May 4: Christian Nation

- Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*, (New York: Sentinel, 2017), pp. 1-6, 78-99
- Patrick Deneen, “A Catholic Showdown Worth Watching”, *The American Conservative*, (February 6, 2014), <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/a-catholic-showdown-worth-watching/>
- Adrian Vermeule, “Integration from Within”, *American Affairs*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Spring 2018), pp. 202–13, <https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2018/02/integration-from-within/>
- Sohrab Ahmari, “Against David French-ism”, *First Things*, (May 29, 2019), <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2019/05/against-david-french-ism>

- TBD: Watch: “Heroes of the Fourth Turning” (Will Arbery)

Week VIII: Ghost in the Machine

May 9: The Online Right / Neo-Reaction

- Bronze Age Pervert, *Bronze Age Mindset*, (Independent Publisher, 2018), Prologue + Part I, pp. 4-9, 10-61
- Michael Anton, “Are the Kids Al(t)right?”, *Claremont Review of Books*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (Summer 2019), pp. 50-56
- BAP, “America’s Delusional Elite Is Done: A response to Michael Anton,” *The American Mind*, (October 22, 2019), <https://americanmind.org/salvo/americas-delusional-elite-is-done/>
- Selections from Curtis Yarvin (Mencius Moldbug), “A Gentle Introduction to *Unqualified Reservations*” (2009) and Nick Land, “The Dark Enlightenment” (2012), <https://www.thedarkenlightenment.com/>
- (Suggested Reading): James Duesterberg, “Final Fantasy: Neoreactionary Politics and the Liberal Imagination” (Summer 2017), in *The Opening of the American Mind*, pp. 173-190

May 11: After Communism: Central Europe Resurgent

- Ryszard Legutko, *The Demon in Democracy: Totalitarian Temptations in Free Societies*, (New York: Encounter Books, 2016 [2012]), Introduction + Ch. 1, pp. 1-10, 11-42
- Christopher Caldwell, “Hungary and the Future of Europe,” *Claremont Review of Books*, Vol. XIX, No. 2 (Spring 2019), pp. 57-63
- Watch: Tucker Carlson interviews Viktor Orbán (August 5, 2021), <https://www.foxnews.com/media/hungary-viktor-orban-tucker-carlson-western-liberals>

Week IX: A New “New World Order”?

May 16: The Rise of Civilizational Politics

- Ernesto Henrique Fraga Araújo, “Trump and the West,” <https://centerforsecuritypolicy.org/brazils-new-foreign-minister-gives-profound-philosophical-base-to-trumpian-populism/>
- Adrian Pabst, “The Global Revolt Against the Liberal World Order,” in Peter W. Schulze (ed.), *Multipolarity: The Promise of Disharmony*, (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2018), pp. 103-122
- Adrian Pabst, “The Resurgence of Great Power Politics and the Rise of the Civilizational State,” *Telos*, no. 188 (Fall, 2019), pp. 205–10
- Christopher Caldwell, “The French Fracture: A Social Thinker Illuminates His Country’s Populist Divides,” *New Statesman*, Vol. 146, Issue 5366 (May 12, 2017), pp. 31-35 (originally published in *City Journal*, <https://www.city-journal.org/html/french-coming-apart-15125.html>)
- Watch: Éric Zemmour announces his candidacy for French Presidency (Nov. 30, 2021), <https://youtu.be/UwIDVNLobLM>
- (Suggested Readings):
 - Bruno Chaouat, “The Gay French Poet Behind the Alt-Right’s Favorite Catch Phrase” (August 26, 2019), *Tablet Magazine*, <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/renaud-camus-great-replacement>
 - Nathan Pinkoski, “The Man Behind ‘the Great Replacement’” (May 21, 2022), *Compact Magazine*, <https://www.compactmag.com/article/the-man-behind-the-great-replacement>

May 18: The End of the End of History

- Pankaj Mishra, “Grand Illusions,” *The New York Review of Books*, (November 19, 2020), p. 31
- Alex Hochuli, “The Brazilianization of the World,” *American Affairs*, Vol. V, No. 2 (Summer 2021), pp. 93–115
- Joel Kotkin, “Our Neo-Feudal Future,” *First Things*, Vol. 319 (Jan 2022), pp. 9-11

- (Suggested Readings):

- Alex Hochuli, George Hoare, and Philip Cunliffe, *The End of the End of History: Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, (Winchester, UK and Washington, USA: Zero Books, 2021), pp. 1-18, 36-58

(Some more readings on techno-feudalism and Peter Thiel):

- Peter Thiel, “The Straussian Moment,” in Robert Hamerton-Kelly (ed.), *Politics and Apocalypse*, (Michigan State University Press, 2007), pp. 189–218
- Geoff Shullenberger, “The Scapegoat”, *First Things*, (January 2022), pp. 60–63
- Evgeny Morozov, “Critique of Techno-Feudal Reason,” *New Left Review*, Vol. 133/134 (January-April 2022), pp. 89-126, <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii133/articles/evgeny-morozov-critique-of-techno-feudal-reason>

*There may be some revisions to this syllabus during the quarter. The instructor shall notify the students at the event.