

## THE REVIEW

# Trump 101

June 19, 2016

This course will explore the phenomenon that is Donald Trump's presidential campaign. We will take an interdisciplinary approach, gathering insights from history, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology, and beyond. The course will be taught by Jeremy Adelman, Elizabeth Anderson, Jennifer Burns, Robert Greene II, Hans Hansell, Steven F. Hayward, Marc Hetherington, Philip Jenkins, Michael Kazin, Jill Lepore, Harvey Mansfield, Kevin Mattson, Dan McAdams, Wilfred M. McClay, Kim Phillips-Fein, Nancy Rosenblum, Michael Tesler, and Alan Wolfe.

## UNIT ONE: THE ROOTS OF TRUMPISM

### WEEK 1 — DEMAGOGUERY AND DEMOCRACY

Plato, *Republic*, Book 8; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*; Aristotle, *Politics*, Books 4, 5, 6. These authors consider demagogues to be not accidental evils in democracy but endemic to it. They raise the interesting question of who is to be blamed: the demagogue or the people who elect him. They tend to say the latter. (HM)

*The Federalist Papers*, 9, 10, 14, 15, 51 (1787-88); Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 1, Book 1, chap. 5 (1835). One chief aim of America's founders was to frustrate the democratic impulse to favor demagogues. With separation of powers and federalism, one demagogue cannot govern alone. (HM)

Edmund Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and*

*America* (1988). The always searingly brilliant Morgan explains the extraordinary process by which the fiction of the divine right of kings was replaced by the fiction that the people are sovereign, which, as he so nicely puts it, is our fiction, “and it accordingly seems less fictional to us.” (JL)

## **WEEK 2 — AUTHORITARIANISM IN THE 20th CENTURY**

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (1927). Schmitt, a law professor in Weimar Germany who joined the Nazi party, argues that the key to politics is to distinguish friends of the people from their enemies. He contends that authoritarian rulers are necessary to defend the people from their enemies, and are justified in disregarding the rule of law in their defense. (EA)

Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). The classic study reveals less about Trump himself than about his supporters, many of whom see him as a savior who will keep them secure in the face of threats from various out-groups — ISIS, immigrants, the forces of modernity. (DM)

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). While it quickly became a Cold War must-read, it runs deeper as an excavation of how empire, racial thinking, and nativism cleared the way for scientific brutality and the annihilation of politics — and draws attention to the close links between inequality and antidemocratic movements. (JA)

## **WEEK 3 — AMERICAN FASCISM**

Philip Roth, *The Plot Against America* (2004). Roth is often quoted as saying that one cannot write good satire in America because reality will always outdo it. With Trump it has. (AW)

Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here* (1935). Lewis portrays the rise of an American fascism. It's certainly not what Trump exemplifies — he is the reverse of ideological — but the book does give a wonderful sense of how discontents find a focus in one individual. (PJ)

## **WEEK 4 — THE STRONGMAN**

Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (1982). Tells the story of two Depression-era figures who stoked the fires of populist outrage and economic crisis to mount a formidable challenge to Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal coalition, and how Roosevelt managed the political threat. One is Louisiana Governor Huey Long, who used a political machine in his home state to mount a bid for national power; the second is Father Coughlin, the famous "radio priest" who showed how a new media technology — syndicated radio — could be used to build a mass political following. (JB)

Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men* (1946). The story of the populist governor Willie Stark, modeled after Louisiana's Huey Long. Though the setting is Southern machine politics, not New York celebrity, the charismatic personality, the meat and potatoes of populism — excitement, threats, promises — are vivid. (NR)

Augusto Roa Bastos, *I, the Supreme* (1974). An allegorical novel about a 19th-century Paraguayan strongman, and a beautifully written meditation on the psychology of absolute power and its limits. (JA)

## UNIT TWO: THE DISUNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### WEEK 5 — THE PEOPLE VS. THE ELITES

Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (1988). Trump is hardly a populist in the mode of William Jennings Bryan or, for that matter, Bernie Sanders. But his put-downs of political and business elites (in which he does not include himself) are in the grand populist tradition. (MK)

Jeffrey A. Bell, *Populism and Elitism: Politics in the Age of Equality* (1992). A two-time Republican candidate for Senate and longtime conservative activist, Bell predicted that the conflict between left and right would be displaced by a conflict between populists of both wings and elites of both parties. (SH)

Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites* (1995). Wrong about a lot of things, but right about an uncanny number of them, Lasch predicted a democratic crisis resulting from the fact that "elites speak only to themselves," partly because of "the