This course will provide an introduction to developments in conservative thought and politics in the 20th Century. Students will learn about the roots of American conservatism in the first part of the century and learn how conservatives critiqued the creation of the New Deal, the rise of Stalinist Russia and the threat of communism, and the outbreak of World War II. In studying the postwar era, the class will discuss conflicts between traditionalists and libertarians, Eisenhower’s “modern Republicanism,” conservatives and the Cold War, the campaign of Barry Goldwater, and the conservative response to the civil rights movement, Vietnam and “free love.” Finally, the class will consider the Reagan revolution and its impact on the current state of conservative politics in the United States and suggest directions for conservatism in the 21st Century.

Required Texts:
- Dinesh D’Souza, *Letters to a Young Conservative*
- Michel Schaller, *Reckoning with Reagan: America and its President in the 1980s*
- Gregory L. Schneider, *Conservatism in America since 1930*
- Ronald Story and Bruce Laurie, *The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945-2000*

Course Requirements:

**Exams**
- 1st Exam, February 18 – 15% of final grade.
- 2nd Exam, April 23 – 15% of final grade.
- Take home final exam, April 28 – 10% of final grade.

**Essays**
- All essays should contain the following at the top of the first page: name, word count, date, and a meaningful title. In addition, any use of sources must be cited using Chicago-style footnotes (see [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) for help or you may ask the instructor). A title page and works cited page are not necessary. At the end of each essay, the Rhodes pledge should be printed and signed.

1st Essay due in class, January 28 – 5% of final grade
Please construct a 500-750 word essay of the following topic: how did the issue of communism bring conservatives together. Did this fusion of interests make sense?

2nd Essay due in class, February 11 (e-mail copy to saxer@rhodes.edu) – 15% of final grade
Please do one of the following:
1. In 1500-2000 words, construct a conservative utopia in the United States in 1964. Please include a description of the economic, political, social and cultural features of this Heaven-on-Earth America for conservatives. Be sure to include the ideas of conservative thinkers from the semester to this point. Also, be sure to explain why you made your particular choices, and not other conservative alternatives.

2. In 1500-2000 words, construct a conservative dystopia in the United States in 1964. Please include a description of the economic, political, social and cultural features of this nightmare America for conservatives. Be sure to include the ideas of conservative thinkers from the semester so far and how you are defying them. Also, be sure to explain if you cannot repel all conservative thought from this liberal gulag you have constructed.

3rd Essay due in class, March 17 – 5% of final grade
Look at the selections from God and Man at Yale. Try to understand what William F. Buckley is criticizing at Yale and what problems he sees in higher education in 1951. Then, I would like you to construct and 500-1000 word essay entitled, God and Man at Rhodes. In this essay, I would like you to hypothesize about what Buckley might say about Rhodes and its effectiveness in teaching current students. Be sure to touch on some of the same things that Buckley did at Yale over 50 years ago.

4th Essay due in class, March 28 – 5% of final grade
Using this week’s readings as your guide, please construct a memorial to Ronald Reagan that will appear in Washington D.C. Be sure to incorporate historical themes from his presidency into your design. Why was he such an influential president? How can you convey that in a memorial? Describe your choices in a 250-500 word abstract. Visual aids for this assignment are required.

Final Essay due in class, April 18 – 20% of final grade
For the final essay of the course, you are to choose a topic on American conservatism and write a research paper related to the themes of the course. You may select a particular issue, individual, or theme for your topic. The essay will be a minimum of 2500 words. Deadlines for final essay:
February 6 – a topic paragraph on your proposed essay, due in class
March 12 – a final bibliography of sources, due in class
April 18 – a final copy of the essay, due in class (e-mail copy to saxer@rhodes.edu)

Class Participation
Active participation in class discussion – 10% of final grade. Students may also improve their participation grade by meeting with the professor during office hours or by appointment.

Course Policies:
Class attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed three absences without penalty. Students are required to find out what they missed in class on the day of their absence. If students miss more than three classes, they are required to meet with the professor to discuss their absences. Failure to do so will result in the lowering of a student’s final
grade by one-third grade point for every absence over one. Please consider this policy when planning for extracurricular activities (sports, mock trial, etc.)

Due dates and times for writing assignments are fixed. All assignments are due in class, not in the professor’s mailbox. Late assignments will receive a failing grade. All assignments must be turned in to the professor. Failure to complete an assignment will result in a failing grade for the class. If you have questions about plagiarism, please talk to me directly.

The professor supports the Rhodes College Honor Code.

January 9, 11
What is Conservatism?
The Klan as Social Commentary: New Perspectives on the KKK

(D’Souza, Ch, 1)

January 14, 16, 18
Conservatism in the “Roaring” 20s: The Agrarians; The Lessons of Silent Cal
The “Old Right” and Conservative Armageddon: Rise of the New Deal and the American Liberty League
WWII and the America First Committee
(“The Old Right,” Southern Agrarians,” “Monarch as Alternative,” “Radical Individualism: The State as Enemy” and “Conservatism Takes Shape: Human Events” 5-48 in Conservatism in America)

January 21
MLK Day – No class

January 23, 25
Roots of the New Right:
F.A. Hayek and the Libertarians
Russell Kirk and the Traditionalists

(Classical Liberalism,” “Resurrecting the Abandoned Road,”” Getting Together,” and “Defining Principles,” “Traditionalism,” “The Quest for Order,” “The Conservative Mind,” and “A Rebel in Search of Tradition,” 49-130 in Conservatism in America;
“Introduction: The Making of a Movement,” “First Steps,” 1-12 in The Rise of Conservatism in America; D’Souza, Ch. 2, 9, 10)

January 28, 30, February 1
The Issue: Communism and Conservatives

Rise of Conservatism in America

1st Essay due in class, January 28

February 4, 6, 8
Fusion: William F. Buckley and the National Review
Lunatic Fringe?: The John Birch Society, The Far Right and the Challenge of Mainstreaming Conservatism


Topic paragraph for final essay due in class, February 6

February 11, 13, 15
Champions of the New Right: The Goldwater Campaign
Reagan Revolution, Pt. 1: Reagan before the White House


2nd Essay due in class, February 11

February 18 - 1st Exam

February 20, 22
Is Conservatism White?: George Wallace
Republicans and Race

(“Platform of States’ Rights Democratic Party,” “Why the South Must Prevail,” “George Wallace for President,” “Capital Punishment,” “You in a Heap o’ Trouble, Son,” Labor Day Radio Address,” “Affirmative Discrimination,” 38-40, 52-54, 75-76, 82-84, 89-93, 97-100 in The Rise of Conservatism in America; Carter, all; D’Souza, Ch. 11)

February 25, 27, 29
Carter, cont.
The Breakdown of Liberalism: Conservative Response to the Sixties
Women and the Conservative Movement
A New Home: The New Libertarians

Majority,” and “Message From MARs,” 247-317 in *Conservatism in America*; “Expanding the Base,” “Two Speeches,” “Defense of the Republic,” “Confidential Memorandum,” “Interview with the Washington Star,” 12-20, 77-80, 84-88, 103-107 in *The Rise of Conservatism in America*; D’Souza, Ch. 12)

March 3, 5, 7
Spring break – no class

March 10, 12, 14
The Door Opens: Nixon and the Fall of Modern Republicanism
City on a Hill: Conservative Christianity in Culture and Politics

(“Who is Accommodating to What?,” “The Taxfighters are Coming” “Common Sense and the Common Danger,” “The NEA,” “American Weakness,” “Building the Moral Majority,” “Resolution on Abortion,” 72-74, 100-103, 107-117, 132-4 in *The Rise of Conservatism in America*; selections from *God and Man at Yale*, provided by the instructor)

**Bibliography for final essay due in class, March 12**

March 17, 19
Christian conservatives continued
Reagan Revolution, Pt. 2:
Conservatism Triumphant?


**3rd Essay due in class, March 17**

March 21
Easter Break

March 24, 26, 28
Reagan Continued

**4th Essay due in class, March 28**

March 31, April 2, April 4
Cracks in the Foundation: Neocons vs. Paleoconservatives

(“Why Big Business is Good for America” and “Why I Am Not a Neoconservative, and “Of What Use is Tradition,” and “Conservative Splits,” 318-336, 373-394 in
Conservatism in America; “George Bush’s Hidden Tax” 143-146 in The Rise of Conservatism in America)

April 7, 9, 11
After Reagan: New Directions in Conservatism
Pat Buchanan vs. the Republicans

(“Conservatism after Reagan,” “A Republic, Not an Empire,” and “Contract with America,” 395-413, 424-427 in Conservatism in America; “Dead Right,” “Middle-Class Families Need a Flat Tax,” 149-153, 158-160 in The Rise of Conservatism in America; D’Souza, Ch. 26)

April 14, 16, 18
A Divided Nation?: Culture Wars
Tensions in Modern Conservatism


Receive take home final, April 16
Final Essay due in class, April 18

April 21 - Review

2nd Exam – April 23

Take home final exam due in class, 10:30 AM, April 28