

New York University  
Department of History

Preliminary Syllabus

**Seminar: Great Depression and The New Deal (V57.0686)  
Spring 2012**

**Prof. Esther Katz  
Wednesday, 9:30-12:15**

This course will examine the turbulent years of the Great Depression and the New Deal. It will cover political, social, economic, and cultural aspects of the events and circumstances that led to the Depression, the election of FDR in 1933, and the formulation of the New Deal as national policy. It will then look at various aspects of New Deal policies and will assess the achievements and limitations of those policies. Course will include readings, discussions, and film screenings.



## **Required Books**

Richard Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933-1945; Brief History with Documents* (2000) - \$13.29 pbk

Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America 1929-1941* (1993) – \$17.00 pbk

Leuchtenburg, William. *The FDR Years: On Roosevelt and His Legacy* (1995) – \$27.50 pbk

All other readings will be online.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Class Discussion**

The course will meet once a week as a seminar. Discussions will focus on required readings, as well as on student research papers. Class participation is a requirement (30%).

### **Discussion Boards**

Students will be asked to post a minimum of three comments on issues related to one of the readings and a minimum of four responses to a one of these posted comments or a class discussion. One comment and one response must be posted by February ??, 2012, one or two of each by March ?? 2012 and one or two of each by April ??, 2012 (30%)

PLEASE NOTE: \*\* Any fewer than four of each of such posts in the course of semester will be penalized.

### **Term Project**

For your term project, students will be asked to prepare a prospectus on some topic regarding the Great Depression and/or the New Deal. For more see, go to Propsectus page (40%).

**The class will also screen several films and film clips during the course of the semester.**

## **Readings**

### **Week 1 (Jan. 25, 2012)**

#### **1. Introduction — History and the New Deal**

#### **2. Perils of Prosperity**

#### **Required Reading:**

- Alan Brinkley, "The Concept of New Deal Liberalism," *The End of Reform*
- Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years*, chap. 7

- Peter J. Coleman, "The World of Interventionism, 1880-1940," in Robert Eden, *italic texted.*, *The New Deal and Its Legacy: Critique and Reappraisal* (1989)
- Amity Shlaes, *The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression* (2007), chap. 1

Week 2 (Feb. 1, 2012)

## Crash and Depression

### Required Reading:

- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chaps. 1-2, 4 and 8
- Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, pp. 108-113
- Amity Shlaes, *The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression*, (2007), chap. 4
- Robert S. McElvaine, *Down and Out in the Great Depression* (1983), letters #12, 13, 15, 21, 35, and 36
- Michael A. Bernstein, "Why the Great Depression Was Great: Toward a New Understanding of the Interwar Economic Crisis United States," in Steven Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order* (1989), chap. 2
- The Long Demise of Glass-Steagall
- Frank Vanderlip, "What About the Banks," *Saturday Evening Post*, CCV (Nov. 5, 1932), pp. 3-4 in David Shannon, ed. *The Great Depression* (1990)

Week 3 (Feb. 8, 2012)

## Fear and Hope

### Required Reading:

- Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years*, chap. 1
- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chaps. 3, 5-6
- McElvaine, *Down and Out in the Great Depression*, letters # 151, 152, 154, 155, 159, 162, 163, 171, and 173.
- Gary Dean Best, *The Nickel and Dime Decade: American Popular Culture in the 1930s* (1993), chaps. 1 and 7

Week 4 (Feb. 15, 2012)

## The Politics of the New Deal

### Required Reading:

- Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*,“ pp. 39-67
- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chap. 4
- Thomas Ferguson, "Industrial Conflict and the Coming of the New Deal: The Triumph of Multinational Liberalism in America," in Fraser and Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order* pp. 3-31
- Alan Lawson, *A Commonwealth of Hope: the New Deal Responses to Crisis* (2006), chap.3
- John Nichols, "75 Years Ago FDR Read the Results right, and Took a Left Turn," *The Nation*, Nov. 11, 2007

Week 5 (Feb. 22, 2012)

### Screening: It Happened One Night

Week 6 (Feb. 29, 2012)

### The First New Deal

#### Required Reading:

- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chap. 7
- McCraw, "The New Deal and the Mixed Economy," in Sitkoff, ed., *Fifty Years Later*
- Gene Smiley, *Rethinking the Great Depression* (2002), chap. 3
- Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Three Essentials for Unemployment Relief," Speech to Congress, March 21, 1933
- A New Deal for Farmers, Extract from Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address to Farmers," 1935

Week 7 (Mar. 7, 2012)

### Challenges Right and Left

#### Required Reading:

- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chap. 10
- Brinkley, *Voices of Protest* (chaps TBA)
- Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, pp. 114-132
- Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years*, chap. 3 and 4
- FDR, Acceptance Speech for his Renomination for President, June 27, 1936

Week 8 (Mar. 11, 2012)

### A New Role for Government

#### Required Reading:

- Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years*, chap. 5
- Cranston Clayton, "The TVA and the Race Problem," *Journal of Negro Life* 12:4 (April, 1934): 111

## Week 9 (Mar. 14, 2012) Spring Break - No Class

## Week 10 (Mar. 21, 2012)

### The New Deal and Social Welfare

+++Required Reading:

- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chap. 11
- Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935*(1994), pp. 253-289
- Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, pp. 72-88
- Franklin D. Roosevelt, A Message to the Congress on Social Security, January 17, 1935
- Mark H. Leff, "Soaking the 'Forgotten Man': Social Security, Taxation, and the New Deal's Fiscal Conservatism," in Hamilton, ed. *The New Deal*, 103-125.

## Week 11 (Mar. 28, 2012)

### Cultural Legacy of the Great Depression and New Deal

#### Required Reading:

- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chap. 9
- Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, pp. 89-92
- Hallie Flanagan, "Is This the Time and Place?" Oct. 5, 1935

### Screening: The Cradle Will Rock

## Week 12 (Apr. 4, 2012)

### Labor, the Depression and the New Deal

#### Required Reading:

- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chap. 13
- Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, chaps. 5-6
- Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, pp.68-71

## Week 13 (Apr. 11, 2012) ## ++ blue | No Class##

## Week 14 (Apr. 18, 2012)

### Race and Gender in the Depression and the New Deal

+++Required Reading:

- Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, pp. 93-107 and 133-160
- Harvard Sitkoff, "The New Deal and Race Relations," in Sitkoff, *Fifty Years Later*
- Susan Ware, "Women and the New Deal," in Sitkoff, *Fifty Years Later*
- FDR, "Greater Freedom and Greater Security," Sept. 30, 1934
- Robert C. Weaver, "The New Deal and the Negro: A Look at the Facts," *Journal of Negro Life* 13:7 (July 1935): 200

Winifred Wandersee, "Women and the New Deal," in Hamilton, ed. *The New Deal*, 220-230

## Week 15 (Apr. 25, 2012)

### Foreign Policy of the New Deal

+++Required Reading:

- Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years*, chap. 8
- Offner, "Appeasement and Aggression: The New Deal and the Origins of World War II," in Sitkoff, *Fifty Years Later*

## Week 16 (May 2, 2012)

### Perspectives on the Great Depression and the New Deal

Required Reading:

- McElvaine, *Great Depression*, chaps. 14 and 15
- Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years*, chap.9
- Alan Brinkley, "No Deal: Learning from FDR's Mistakes," *The New Republic*, December 31, 2008