

Boom or Bust: Social Struggles of the 1930s – Fall 2012 – Syllabus & Covenant

(subject to change; note changes to original in yellow highlighting)

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Fields of Study: business and management, economics, media studies, music, political economy and sociology.

Preparatory for further studies and/or careers in: business, government, non-governmental organizations, and the arts.

Fall CRN: 10199 (Fr), or 10343 (So - Sr) **Credits:** 16 (F) -- no partial credit. Maximum Enrollment: 60

Class Standing: Freshmen - Senior; additional advising sessions for students new to the college.

NOTE: Syllabus subject to change -- any changes will be clearly announced in class, and the syllabus on the Moodle site will be updated, and should be consulted regularly.

Description (from the online catalogue):

During the 1930s, the capitalist world economy experienced a prolonged and severe economic depression. International trade fell by more than 50%. Unemployment in the U.S. rose to 25%. In this program, we'll explore the economic circumstances of the Great Depression, the social movements engendered and empowered in the U.S. during those years, and the music and theatre that those tough times inspired. These studies will shed light on our own era of economic crisis and increasingly radicalized political culture.

We intend to look at competing theories of booms and busts, crises and crashes. We'll review basic concepts of classical economics that proved inadequate to the situation, and look at some new economic ideas (Berle and Means, Keynes, Coase) that the Great Depression helped spawn. We'll look at ecological disasters like the Dust Bowl, and grand technological experiments with vast environmental consequences like the Grand Coulee Dam. These stories offer cautionary lessons to our own times around issues of sustainability.

We'll examine political responses of the 1930s, including national initiatives, workers' movements, Marxist critiques, and the rise of fascist and anti-fascist movements. Readings will include works by contemporary journalists, activists, revolutionaries, and documentarians who produced creative and insightful analyses of their age. We plan to trace the increasing influence of mass media and propaganda, and will investigate songs, films, shows, and photographs. Students will do close listening to pieces of music, analyzing them as one might a poem or painting. The music of Woody Guthrie and the photography of Dorothea Lange will be in the mix.

Students should expect to become well-informed about the economic and political developments of the 1930s. They should be prepared to draw conclusions about the causes of economic crisis and the political, social, and aesthetic responses to crisis, and defend those conclusions in vigorous discussions with their classmates. This program will also prepare students for the winter quarter program, Boom or Bust: The U.S. Economy, 2013 and Beyond.

Some guiding questions: What were the causes and consequences in the US of the Great Depression, the New Deal, and union and workers' struggles in the 1930s? What did artists and writers create in response to these developments? Who were some of the union leaders, economists, politicians, artists, and other personalities who became prominent during these historical events? How can we understand some of the manifestations of the radicalism of the times (unemployed workers' movements, militant strikes, the rise of the CIO, the growth and influence of the Communist Party, and abroad, the Spanish Civil War)? How do we understand the 1930s as part of a larger historical trajectory that spans both world wars?

Some learning goals: Understand some of the principles of macroeconomics, including business cycles, the development of the Federal Reserve, and the components of the business climate, including indexes of confidence, inflation, and rates of return. Become familiar with some of the main Marxist approaches to understanding capitalist economic crises like that of the 1930s. Get introduced to some key Marxist concepts, and apply them to the analysis of social movements and the development of the capitalist state in the 1930s United States. Learn how to describe and criticize works of art, including songs, photographs, and films. Analyze the relationship between representation and reality, especially in documentary form. Develop research abilities.

Typical Weekly Schedule

PLEASE NOTE: LUNCH HOURS ON ALL DAYS MAY VARY. LUNCH HOURS WILL USUALLY MATCH THE ORIGINAL SCHEDULE, AND WILL BE FIXED ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE, BUT UNTIL THEN, DON'T SCHEDULE OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT ASSUME ANY PARTICULAR LUNCH HOUR.

M 11-12:30 Lecture in Sem 2 C 1105 **M 1:30-3** Seminars in Sem 2 B 2107 (Drew & Saki), C 2107 (David), C 2109 (Paul)

Tu 11-1 Lec/Wkshp in Sem 2 C 1105 **Tu 2-6** Lec/Wkshp/Film/Sem in Sem 2 C 1105; Sometimes D 2107 & D 2109, too.

Generally students will be working in assigned project groups, 4-6 pm.

WEDNESDAY--no classes--small study groups may meet. **1-3** Prep for Thursday workshops.

Th 11-1 Seminar (usually) in: Sem 2 C 1105 (Drew & Saki), C3107 (David), C 3109 (Paul)

[Some weeks we may have Lecture or Workshop in Sem 2 C 1105] **Th 2-5** Lec/Wkshp/Film/Discussion in Sem 2 C 1105

Th 7-9 Reserved for films on some weeks in Sem 2 A1105

Detailed Weekly Outline of the Program (with major written assignments IN CAPS):

Week 1 (Sept 24 – 28): 1910s/20s -- *The Roaring Twenties and the Crash of 1929*

Monday Seminar: No advance reading; ENTRANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Tuesday Workshop: Close listening and describing music: Song worksheets

Thursday Seminar: McElvaine, Intro to 25th Anniversary Edition and Ch. 1 (~50 pages); FREEWRITE

Film: “Reds” (1983; 187 mins)

Week 2 (Oct 1 – 5) :1930-1931 -- *Bank Failures, Dust Bowls, and Documenting Destitution*

2 FREEWRITES WRITTEN IN CLASS ON TUESDAY

Monday Seminar: McElvaine: Chs. 2 and 4

Thursday Seminar: Agee and Evans (400+ pages and photographs)

Film and Describing Film: Excerpts from 3 1930s films; “Tierra Sin Pan” (“Land Without Bread”) (27 mins)

Workshop: Primary Documents Orientation (1 hr) Thursday Night Film: “The Cradle Will Rock” (1999)

Week 3 (Oct 8 – 12) – 1932-33 – *Hoover's Out, Roosevelt to the Rescue (?), Lindbergh Baby*

Kidnapped, Revolutionizing Rockefeller; and other Memorable Moments

SONG WORKSHEET I DUE MONDAY MORNING (download from Moodle page)

Monday Seminar: McElvaine, Chs. 5 & 6

Tuesday Seminar: Kaufman, Woody Guthrie, American Radical (Introduction, Ch. 7 & Conclusion, Chs. 2 & 4)

Thursday Seminar: Listening Assignment: Woody & His World (follow YouTube links on Moodle page or email)

Workshops: Music: Write Your Own Folk Song (2-4 hrs), & Library & Folk Songs (go to one of each; simultaneous sessions)

Films: Excerpts from “Bound For Glory” (1976), performances, and documentaries

Week 4 (Oct 15 – 19) – 1934 -- *The New Deal I*

SONG WORKSHEET II DUE MONDAY AT 1:30; PRIMARY DOCUMENTS I WRITE-UP DUE THURSDAY AT 4 P.M.

Monday Seminar: McElvaine Chs. 7, 8, 9

Tues & Thurs Workshops: Primary Documents I; AND Zotero / Economics (two 55-minute sessions)

Thursday Seminar: Berle and Means (on Moodle site)

Week 5 (Oct 22 – 26) – 1935/36 -- *The New Deal II, Crises and Dance Marathons*

DRAFT SELF EVALUATION AND CURRENT PORTFOLIO DUE THURSDAY AT 5 P.M.

Monday Seminar: McElvaine Ch. 10

Tuesday Workshop: Explanations of the Depression/Capitalist Crises

Thursday Seminar: Skidelsky Introduction, Ch 3 and 4

Film: They Shoot Horses, Don't They?

Week 6 (Oct 29 – Nov 2) – *Down Week (work on annotated bibliography and synthesis paper, catch up, meet in small groups)*

SYNTHESIS PAPER DRAFT DUE ON FRIDAY AT 4 P.M. ----- Individual faculty/student **conferences**

Week 7 (Nov 5 – 9) -- 1937 -- *Double Dip, Dust Bowls, Dams, and Documentaries*

PRIMARY DOCUMENTS II WRITE-UP DUE THURSDAY AT 4:30 P.M.

Monday Seminar: McElvaine Ch 11-12

Thursday Seminar: Caponi-Tabery (Chs. 3 and 7)

Tues & Thurs Workshops: Primary Documents II; AND Assisted work on Annotated Bibliographies

Week 8 (Nov 12 – 16) – 1937-41 -- *Jumping for Joy, Swing Bands, Sweet and Hot*

•••Monday NO CLASS, Veteran's Day•••

ARTWORK PAPER DUE MONDAY AT 1:30 P.M.; ACADEMIC STATEMENT DRAFT DUE THURSDAY AT 11 A.M.;

Monday Seminar: McElvaine Ch. 13 and 14

Thursday Seminar: Caponi-Tabery Chs. 6, 11, and Afterword

Workshop: Assisted work on Synth Essay, Annotated Bib, and/or Final Paper

FINAL SYNTHESIS ESSAY DUE FRIDAY AT 4 P.M.

Thanksgiving week – No classes (Nov 19 – 23)

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DRAFT DUE WEDNESDAY AT 5 P.M.

Week 9 (Nov 26 – 30) – 1937-41 -- *Stand Up and Fight Against Fascism in Spain; Sit Down and Fight Against Capital in Flint*

Thursday Seminar: Orwell (all)

Workshop: Crisis/Explanations of the Depression.

FRIDAY AT 5 p.m.: CRISIS WORKSHOP PAPERS DUE.

Week 10 (Dec 3 – 7) – *Student presentations and wrap-up--The Great Recession, 2008-?*

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE WEDNESDAY AT MIDNIGHT

PORTFOLIOS AND FINAL SELF EVALUATIONS DUE ON THURSDAY AT 11 A.M.

Monday Seminar: McElvaine Ch. 15

Student presentations, Potluck

OUTLINE OF WRITTEN WORK:

Various Free Writes in Class

Primary Document Flash Research Project Groups: 2 workshops, each involving an Individual Response Essay, an Individual Bibliography in Zotero, a Group Write-up and Wikipedia contributions, and possibly Small Group Presentations

One Synthesis Essay: first and final drafts, bringing several of our seminar texts and primary documents into contact with each other within the framework of your own cohesive argument.

Song worksheets; Analysis & Critique of an Artwork

Explanations of the Depression and Capitalist Crises Workshop: This is a group essay—a careful written exposition of one existing argument about the economic crisis of the 1930s, followed by your (possibly different) explanation of (and remedies for) that crisis and crises of capitalism more generally.

One Annotated Bibliography (draft and final)

Draft and Final Self-Evaluations (weeks 5 & 10); Draft Academic Statement

Portfolio of all notes on lectures, books, films, research projects, and seminars; creative work, additional projects optional (weeks 5 & 10)

Required Texts

IMPORTANT NOTE: EACH WEEK, at least two ADDITIONAL reading assignments will be posted on our Moodle site!

WEEK ONE (and every week thereafter): **McElvaine**, Robert S.. *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941*. Three Rivers Press, 2009 (orig 1984). (25th Anniversary (2009) edition preferred; any edition acceptable; the introduction to the 25th Anniversary edition is reproduced on the program Moodle)

WEEK TWO: Evans, Walker, and James **Agee**. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Three Tenant Families*. Mariner Books, 2001 (orig. 1941). (You can use any unabridged edition, but you will need to buy this and begin reading *before* Week Two if you hope to finish it for our Week Two seminar – this one is 400+ highly unusual pages)

WEEK THREE: **Kaufman**, Will. *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*. 1st ed. University of Illinois Press, 2011. (new book)

WEEK FIVE: **Skidelsky**, Robert. *Keynes: The Return of the Master*. Public Affairs, 2009. (any edition; also available as an ebook through our library). You do not necessarily need to buy this book -- it is available in electronic form (for free) through the Evergreen Library. The electronic version allows you to read, highlight, and take notes via your laptop. Downloading to ereaders may depend on your specific hardware, so don't count on that until you try it out. You cannot print the entire text from the ebook. You must have a copy, digital or print, of the book in seminar. So, if you are not comfortable reading text on your laptop or ereader, or if you do not have one or the other, then you must buy the print copy.

WEEK SEVEN: **Caponi-Tabery**, Gena. *Jump for Joy: Jazz, Basketball, and Black Culture in 1930s America*. Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2008. (We will use this in Week 9 as well.)

WEEK EIGHT: **Orwell**, George. *Homage to Catalonia*. Benediction Classics, 2010 (orig. 1938) You can use any unabridged edition. Freely available online at <http://www.studyplace.org/w/images/3/38/Orwell-1938-homage-to-catalonia.pdf> Only use the electronic text if you have a reading device (laptop or ereader) that you can bring to seminar. Otherwise, buy the book. You must have the text, digital or print, in seminar.

Program Covenant

This covenant is an outline of the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty. In order to receive full credit for each quarter's work students are expected to: (1) attend all regularly scheduled program activities including lectures, seminars, workshops, and conferences with faculty, on time; (2) prepare thoroughly, via careful and critical reading of program texts; take legible and well-organized notes on texts and class sessions; and participate verbally and through writing, as appropriate, in each of these activities, to the best of their ability; (3) complete all program assignments (including reading and writing) in a satisfactory and timely fashion; (4) participate in the evaluation process through the writing of self and faculty evaluations and attending evaluation conferences.

In addition, it is essential that each student take full responsibility to help make her/his group exercises and projects productive and collaborative. In discussing works with substance, sometimes the material or viewpoint is likely to be controversial. To grow as communicators and as effective team players, we must be sensitive to others in our group and converse civilly and in good faith. A student's commitment includes acceptance of the responsibility to work competently and collectively in group activities such as seminar, projects, and workshops, whether or not the faculty is present at such meetings.

Be sure you do your own work. Submitting work that bears your name makes the claim that the work is yours. Plagiarism, that is, passing off as one's own something that was actually written or otherwise prepared by someone else, is an affront to one's peers and faculty. Students should be mindful that any acts of plagiarism discovered by faculty must be treated seriously. The penalty for plagiarism is expulsion from the program and possible expulsion from the college. Please get to know

the college's Social Contract and Student Conduct Code, specifically with regards to plagiarism and the disruption of college functions.

Mere completion of assignments is not sufficient to receive credit: your work must also be of appropriate (lower- or upper-division) quality, as determined by faculty. Those who appear not to be working at a full-credit capacity will be notified of their status during the fifth week of each quarter (though poor work in the 2nd half of the quarter can lead to reduced credit as well). In return, students can expect full and active participation by the faculty in all program activities, the timely return of written work with evaluative comments, adequate time for individual consultation via regular office hours or individual appointments, and written and oral evaluations at quarter's end.

No alcohol or drugs are allowed at program functions, including field trips and informal gatherings. If a student has a grievance, it is his/her responsibility to first take it up with the individual involved. If that does not resolve the situation, the faculty should be consulted. If still no resolution is reached, the faculty will refer students to the Academic Deans, and finally, to follow the college's formal grievance procedure.

Each student must have a copy of the seminar text with them in order to participate in seminar. That text can be in print or digital, but must be the text designated in the syllabus. Late work will be accepted only at the discretion of the faculty – there is no guarantee the late work will be accepted, read, or returned.

Digital devices may be allowed in lectures or seminar, at the discretion of the faculty. At no time may those devices be used for activities that are not clearly related to the *current* program activity. We are serious – violation of this will be grounds for expulsion from the class, and possibly from the program. Our goal is to allow for productive uses of digital and networked technologies – focused and appropriate use of those technologies at all times and by all students is a necessary precondition of productive use. If you may need to text, call, email, or use the Web in ways not related to the current program activity during class for any reason, you must clear this with the faculty in advance. Unpredictable emergencies may be excepted.

Audio or video recording of any program activity is prohibited, except at the discretion of the faculty.

Attendance will be noted, in one form or another, every class session. Sometimes, this will help us to get to know one another. Other times, it may be a simple record of attendance. Generally, we assume that you will attend the class regularly because you want to, because programs at Evergreen are full-time learning communities, and because you understand that you can't learn if you're not there. With these things in mind, we don't have a specific policy on absences (i.e., only "x" number of absences are allowed). On the other hand, we do reserve the right to consider excessive absence (and lateness) from class session in both your narrative evaluation and your total credit allocation. If you need a target to keep in mind, consider that 3 or more unexcused absences would pretty much *guarantee* loss of credit.

Students may be required to submit some work in electronic form.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

In accordance with federal and state law, it is the policy of The Evergreen State College that "...no otherwise qualified person with a disability shall, solely on the basis of that disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination by any College program or activity." Access Services for Students with Disabilities (<http://www.evergreen.edu/access/>) coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. If students have a disability for which they wish to request accommodations, they are encouraged to contact this office as soon as possible. Access Services is located in the library (L2129; phone: 306.867.6348; 306.867.6834 [V/TTY]). Students are encouraged to contact faculty members privately concerning special needs that may affect their performance in this program. Faculty will also make referrals to other student support programs on campus if needed (among others, the Writing Center, Key Student Services, First Peoples' Advising, Health & Counseling Center).