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**


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 Prospectus 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

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
- The Long Demise of Glass-Steagull

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.

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
• 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
- 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

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

**Week 10 (Mar. 21, 2012)**

The New Deal and Social Welfare

+++Required Reading:

- McElvain, *Great Depression*, chap. 11
- Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, pp. 72-88
- Franklin D. Roosevelt, A Message to the Congress on Social Security, January 17, 1935

**Week 11 (Mar. 28, 2012)**

Cultural Legacy of the Great Depression and New Deal

Required Reading:

- McElvain, *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:

- McElvain, *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
- Susan Ware, “Women and the New Deal,” in Sitkoff, *Fifty Years Later*
- FDR, Greater Freedom and Greater Security,” Sept. 30, 1934

**Week 15 (Apr. 25, 2012)**

**Foreign Policy of the New Deal**

+++Required Reading:

- Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years*, chap. 8

**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