This course will examine the rise and fall of New Deal liberalism as the dominant political and social order of mid twentieth century America. It will begin with the onset of the Great Depression as the event which sets in motion profound transformations in the economy, in the balance of political power, in the role of the State, and in the relations between social classes and ethnic/racial groups. It will explore the rise of the labor movement and the creation of the welfare state. Classes will analyze the remaking of the Democratic Party and the impact of the Cold War on domestic politics. Discussions will probe the emergence of the civil rights, anti-war, and counter-culture movements as they developed alongside the expansion of the welfare state under Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society. The class will assess the accomplishments as well as the limitations of New Deal reform. It will wrestle with the question of when and why that reform impulse weakened, analyzing the growing conservative reaction against the New Deal culminating in the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Classes will deal with the rise of the “Silent Majority”, George Wallace, and the assault on “limousine liberalism”. Students will read primary documents as well secondary sources.

Course Requirements: Class participation, which may include brief oral and/or written presentations of the week’s readings, is very important. So is attending class. Being absent more than once without very good reason is a bad idea. Students will be asked to write two papers (as well as short reports based on class readings). The first will be devoted to some aspect of the rise of the New Deal, should be limited to the period 1929 through 1945, and should be about 8-10 pages in length. The second paper will ask students to examine closely some aspect of the decline of the New Deal and the rise of conservatism, and evaluate the accomplishments and failures of the New Deal political order. It should be approximately 10-12 pages in length. Papers need only be based on secondary sources, although ones not limited to the class readings. The use of primary sources is encouraged.

Office Hours: Rm 508 Gallatin, Friday, 3:00 – 4:30
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Books to Purchase: Available at the NYU bookstore

Coming of Age in Mississippi – Anne Moody
The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents – Ellen Schrecker, editor
America in Our Time: From World War II to Nixon; What Happened and Why – Godfrey Hodgson
Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal – William E. Leuchtenburg
Blood on the Forge: William Attaway
The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-80 – Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds.
Suburban Warriors – Lisa McGirr
Course Packet

Week 1
January 28
Course Overview

Week 2
February 4
Crisis of the Old Regime
Chs. 1 & 2, Leuchtenburg; Blood on the Forge; “Triumph of Liberal Reform”/Leuchtenberg (course packet); “The Conservative Achievement of New Deal Reform”/Bernstein (course packet); Major Problems, Ch. 10, Documents 1-5

Week 3
February 11
The First New Deal
Chs. 3 & 4, 6 (pp. 137-42) Leuchtenburg; Major Problems, Ch. 9, Introduction, Documents 1-8 and Ch. 11, Documents 1, 3, 6; Film: “Grapes of Wrath” (on reserve Bobst)

Week 4
February 18
The Rise of Labor
The Many and the Few; Leuchtenberg, Ch. 5 (pp. 106-17); “Workers Common Ground” (course packet); Major Problems, Ch. 12, Documents 3, 4, 5, 6 and “Organizing the Packinghouses” and “Race and Unionism: The CIO in the South”

Week 5
February 25
The Second New Deal
Leuchtenburg, Chs. 5 (pp. 95-106), 6 (pp 118-37), 7 and 8; Major Problems, Ch. 13, Introduction, Documents 3, 4, 5, and “Dissidents and Demagogues”; “Why Blacks Became Democrats” (course packet)

Week 6
March 4
Consolidation of the New Deal Order
“The New Deal and the Idea of the State” by Alan Brinkley, and “From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining” by Nelson Lichtenstein both in Fraser and Gerstle, The Rise and
Fall of the New Deal Order; Leuchtenburg, Chs. 10 & 11; Major Problems, Ch. 14, Introduction, Documents 1, 5, 6, and Ch. 15, Document 4

Week 7
March 11
The Domestic Politics of Anti-Communism/McCarthyism
Schrecker, “The Age of McCarthyism” and Documents 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22; America in Our Time, Hodgson, ch. 2, pp. 34-47; Film – “The Manchurian Candidate” (on reserve Bobst) First Paper Due

Week 8
March 25
Anatomy of Consensus Liberalism
“Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Corporate Commonwealth” by Robert Griffith, The American Historical Review, vol. 87, No. 1, February, 1982, pp. 87-122 (access in Bobst); Hodgson, Ch 3, pp. 48-54, Ch.4 pp. 74-90; “Cold War-Warm Hearth: Politics and the Family in Postwar America” by Elaine May in Fraser and Gerstle

Week 9
April 1
The Politics of Race
Coming of Age in Mississippi, Moody; Hodgson, Ch. 3, pp. 54-62 and Chs. 9, 10, 13; “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, and “Message to the Grass Roots” by Malcolm X (both in course packet)

Week 10
April 8
Vietnam and the Crisis of the New Deal Order
Hodgson, Chs. 6, 12, 14, 15, 18; “The Failure and Success of the New Radicalism” by Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin in Fraser and Gerstle; “The Port Huron Statement”; “Up Against the Ivy Wall”; “The Problem That Has No Name”; Roe.v. Wade”(course packet); Film – “Dr. Strangelove” (on reserve Bobst)

Week 11
April 15
Blue Collar Blues and the Rise of Conservative Populism

Week 12
April 22
The Rise of the Religious and Suburban Right
McGirr, Chs. Introduction, 2, 3, 4, 6; “Women Against Feminism” by Rebecca Klatch (course packet)
Week 13
April 29
The Rise of the Business-Conservative Right
“Why Americans Hate Politics/The Demand for the Supply Side” by E.J. Dionne (course packet); “The Changing Shape of Power” by Thomas Byrne Edsall in Fraser and Gerstle; McGirr Ch. 1; Chait, “The Sum of All Lobbies” (hand-out)

Week 14
May 6
Class Discussion: Was the fall of the New Deal inevitable? “Introduction” to The Emerging Republican Majority by Kevin Phillips (course packet); “The New Liberalism” by George Packer, The New Yorker, 11/17/08 Final paper which is due this day – the 6th