

USA 312H1F

Alexandra Rahr

Man of the People: Populism and Demagoguery in the Age of Trump

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Th 12-2; UC 85

Office Hours: T 11:30-1:30; Th 2:30-4:30; 1 Devonshire Place, Room 326N

Course Description: Both the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* have called Donald Trump a populist, while *The Economist* and Barack Obama have deemed the president a demagogue. But what do these terms mean – in both the American present and the American past? This class will examine the figure of the demagogue and the ideology of populism, considering how appeals to ‘the people’ mobilize rage and resentment in American politics. We'll examine the historical and contemporary texts of these movements and leaders - both left and right - from Alexander Hamilton's fears of demagoguery to Occupy Wall Street to Donald Trump's tweets. Along the way we'll interrogate the techniques which pit the 'average American' against putatively corrupt institutions and privileged elites.

Texts: All texts available online through Blackboard class website.

Evaluation:

Informed Participation (15%): In this class, each student bears an equal responsibility for the discussion. You will be evaluated based on both the quality and quantity of your oral participation.

Short Paper (25%): Write a short paper taking a populist position on an issue – either historical or contemporary - and then refute that position. 5 pages; due October 12.

Online Presentation: (25%): Choose a week and orient one aspect of that class's topic; include images as well as text and analysis. Due on the Blackboard site by 5pm the day before class.

Final Essay (35%): Write an 8-10 page research paper on one aspect of American populism: an event, speech, political strategy or piece of art. Due November 23.

Late Policy: The penalty for late essays is two percentage points a day to a maximum of fourteen points (e.g., from 80% to 66%). Essays will not be accepted more than one week after the due date unless accompanied by medical documentation.

Plagiarism: According to the Code of Behaviour established by the Governing Council of the University of Toronto, to plagiarize is “to represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another.” This includes borrowing ideas as well as words without attribution, from print and from online sources. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me.

Schedule:

September 7: Demagogues Past and Present

Thomas Jefferson and Donald Trump

Michael Kazan, *The Populist Persuasion* (Excerpts)

September 14: Agrarian Roots

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Excerpts)

Blake Shelton, 'Kiss My Country Ass'

Homi Bhabba, *The Location of Culture* (Excerpts)

September 21: The People's Party and William Jennings Bryan – America's Iconic Populist

William Jennings Bryan, 'Cross of Gold'

The People's Party Platform

Ignatius Donnelly, Preamble to Omaha Platform

The Wizard of Oz, Film

September 28: Black Populism and Racial Alliance

John B. Rayner, Speech

E.V. White, Testimony

Omar H. Ali, *In the Lion's Mouth: Black Populism in the New South* (Excerpts)

October 5: Prohibition: Women Making America Dry

Carrie Nation, Speech

Mary Elizabeth Lease, Speech

Gretchen Wilson, 'Redneck Woman'

Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* (Excerpts)

October 12: Huey Long and the Populist Personality

Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men* (Excerpts)

Huey Long, 'Share Our Wealth'; 'Every Man a King'

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Film

SHORT PAPER DUE

October 19: Racing the Populace: Father Coughlin and George Wallace

Charles Coughlin, Radio Broadcasts

George Wallace, Speeches

Alexander Hamilton, *Federalist Papers* (Excerpts)

Judith Shklar, 'The Liberalism of Fear'

October 26: Populist Violence and Occupation

Timothy McVeigh, Letters

Bundy Family, Statements

'American Patriot: Inside the Armed Uprising Against the American Government,' Documentary

Richard Hofstadter, 'The Paranoid Style in American Politics'

November 2: Occupy Wall Street

'We Are the 99%' Tumblr

Occupy Wall Street Posts

Bernie Sanders, Speech

John Edwards, 'Two Americas' Speech

Bruce Springsteen, 'Jack of All Trades,' 'Death to My Hometown'

NOVEMBER 9: READING WEEK

November 16: The (Second) Tea Party

Sarah Palin, Speech

Rick Santelli, Speech

Eric Cantor and Paul Ryan, 'A Pledge to America' (Excerpts)

Talk Radio excerpts, 2009-2012

Kid Rock, 'Born Free'

Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Excerpts)

November 23: Trumpism

Donald Trump, Tweets

Donald Trump, Speeches

Bernie Sanders, Speeches

Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Excerpts)

FINAL PAPER DUE

November 30: Populist Futures

Vice News 'American Populist Party' Platform