



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
**HUMANITIES  
SEMINARS**

## **How America Became a Right-Wing Nation:**

**Lessons from the 1970s**

Spring Semester 2023

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The decade of the 1970s represented a turning point in US politics, which shifted in a rightward direction toward free market economics at the domestic level; combined with more militaristic and interventionist policies overseas. The course explores the origins of this political shift, with a special emphasis on the role of elite business interests in orchestrating the project. The course will also assess how the rightward shift in US domestic politics helped generate the globalization of the economy and the off-shoring of US jobs. I argue that many of the sources of political conflicts in twenty first century America -- including conflicts over stagnant living standards, overseas military intervention, free trade, and cultural/social issues -- had their origins in the 1970s.

### Required Text:

David M. Kotz, *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberal Capitalism*.  
Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.

February 3  
Introduction

Kotz, *Neoliberal Capitalism*, chaps. 1, 2.

February 10  
The Legacy of the New Deal

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "State of the Union Message to Congress,"  
February 11, 1944, Roosevelt Presidential Library,  
<http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/011144.html>.

John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1964 [originally published 1936], chap. 24. Full text at: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/economics/keynes/general-theory/ch24.htm>.

February 17  
Revolt of the Rich

Kotz, *Neoliberal Capitalism*, chap. 3.

Lewis F. Powell Jr, "Attack on the Free Enterprise System: Confidential Memorandum for the US Chamber of Commerce," August 23, 1971. Full text at:  
<http://law2.wlu.edu/deptimages/Powell%20Archives/PowellMemorandumPrinted.pdf>

February 24  
The Voice of the People

Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, "The Myth of America's Turn to the Right," *Atlantic*, May 1986. Full text at:  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/95dec/conbook/fergrt.htm>.

David R, Swartz, "Politics and the Fragmenting of the 1970s Left," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 21, no. 1, 2011.

Earl Smith, "Racism and the Boston Schools Crisis," *The Black Scholar* 6, no. 6, 1975.

March 3  
Foreign Policy: The Nixon Doctrine

Richard M. Nixon, "Informal Remarks in Guam with Newsmen," July 25, 1969,  
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/informal-remarks-guam-with-newsmen>.

Memorandum from Henry Kissinger to the President, "My Talks with Chou En-Lai," July 14, 1971, from National Security Archive, George Washington University,  
<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB66/ch-40.pdf>.

March 17  
Selling a New Cold War

Norman Podhoretz, "The Present Danger," *Commentary*, March 1980. For full text, [click here](#).

Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Les Révélations d'un Ancien Conseiller de Carter: 'Oui, la CIA est Entrée en Afghanistan avant les Russes...'" *Le Nouvel Observateur* [Paris], January 15-21, 1998, p. 76. English translation at:  
[https://dgibbs.faculty.arizona.edu/brzezinski\\_interview](https://dgibbs.faculty.arizona.edu/brzezinski_interview).

March 24

The Strategy of Globalization

Michael Moffitt, *The World's Money: From Bretton Woods to the Brink of Insolvency*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983, chaps. 1, 2.

March 31

The International Politics of Oil

Amin Mirzadegan, "Nixon's Folly: The White House and the 1970s Oil Price Crisis," *Yale Historical Review* 5, no. 2, 2016, <https://historicalreview.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/mirzadegan.pdf>.

Andrew Cooper, "Showdown at Doha: The Secret Oil Deal that Helped Sink the Shah of Iran," *Middle East Journal* 62, no. 4, 2008.

April 7

The Carter Presidency

"An Interview with Paul A. Volcker," in Paul A. Samuelson and William A. Barnett, eds, *Inside the Economist's Mind: Conversations with Eminent Economists*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007.

Jimmy Carter, "Energy and National Goals – A Crisis of Confidence," July 15, 1979, <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/newtop100speeches.htm>.

Walter Dean Burnham, "The 1980 Earthquake: Realignment, Reaction, or What?" in Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, eds, *The Hidden Election: Politics and Economics in the 1980 Presidential Campaign*. New York: Random House, 1981.

April 14

Into the Reagan Era

Kotz, *Neoliberal Capitalism*, chaps.4, 5, 7.