

Advanced Institute, Winter 2016
GREAT FIGURES OF THE 20TH CENTURY: RONALD REAGAN
Instructor: Steven F. Hayward
Washington, D.C.

Our goal with these weekend seminars will be to examine the worldviews and leadership styles of four important figures of the twentieth century, in order to surface underlying questions about statesmanship. We will ask questions such as: What is statesmanship? How does one recognize it? And if one can, in fact, speak of statesmanship, what are (or should be) its fundamental constituent components?

These seminars are not intended to be mere biographical surveys of great lives well lived. While the (relatively brief) readings will give you the background that you need, you may also want to familiarize yourself with the basic biographies of our figures, with something as simple as their Wikipedia entries. Our goal, ideally, will be to spend some time covering the basic narratives of what transpired during each figure's career, but then to engage in extended, thoughtful seminar-style discussion of the issues that these events and narratives raise, exploring their unfolding in our past and reflecting on their implications for our future. We will hope not to simply learn *about* our figures – Churchill, Reagan, Thatcher, and Ben-Gurion – but *from* them.

Saturday, February 6, 2016

9:00 am to 10:30 am

The Rise of Ronald Reagan

Readings:

- Ronald Reagan, "A Time for Choosing," October 28, 1964
- Ronald Reagan, "The Creative Society," January 1967
- Ronald Reagan, "The New Republican Party," Speech to CPAC, 1977

Discussion Questions:

1. What did Ronald Reagan's rise reveal about the changing character of the Republican Party and the American electorate at large?
2. What are the distinctive aspects of "A Time for Choosing" that make it "vintage Reagan"?
3. What was the core of Reagan's critique of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society?
4. How did Reagan differ from conventional Republicans?

11:00 am to 12:30 pm

The Reagan Revolution

Readings:

- Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural Address, January 20, 1981
- Ronald Reagan, Address to the British Parliament, June 1982

Discussion Questions:

1. What were the major characteristics and policies of the Reagan Revolution? How revolutionary was it?
2. What were the major parts of Reagan's economic policy?
3. How did monetary policy fit into the Reagan policy mix?
4. How did Reagan's domestic-policy vision relate to his foreign policy?

2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Reagan's Foreign Policy

Readings:

- National Security Decision Directive 75, January 1983
- Herbert Meyer, "Why is the World So Dangerous?", November 1983
- Ronald Reagan, "Evil Empire" Speech, March 8, 1983
- Ronald Reagan, "Star Wars" speech, March 23, 1983

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the perception of the balance of power between the East and West when Reagan took office in 1981?
2. What was Reagan's strategy for reorienting America's approach to the Soviet Union? In what ways did it represent a counterintuitive revision of the historic bipartisan consensus of post-war "containment"?

Sunday, February 7, 2016

9 am to Noon

The End of the Cold War

Readings:

- Ronald Reagan, Second Inaugural Address, January 21, 1985
- Ronald Reagan, Berlin Wall Speech, June 12, 1987
- Ronald Reagan, Remarks to the World Affairs Council, Springfield, MA, April 21, 1988
- Ronald Reagan, Address at Moscow State University, May 31, 1988

Discussion Questions:

1. Why was Reagan's "strategic defense initiative" proposal so controversial with nearly everyone?
2. What was Reagan's strategy for hastening the collapse of Communism? What weaknesses in the Soviet Union did Reagan and Gorbachev both perceive?
3. What long-term lessons should be learned from the end of the Cold War, and Reagan's strategy for ending it?

Noon to 2 pm

Lunch and Closing Conversation

Reading:

- Ronald Reagan, Farewell Address, January 11, 1989

Discussion Questions:

1. What impact has the Reagan Revolution had on American society and politics?
2. What parts appear to be permanent or long-lasting features of American politics?
3. What forces or contradictions prevented it from achieving its goals, domestic and foreign?