

Harvard University: History 1433
American Populisms: From the Thomas Jefferson to the Tea Party+
M, W 12-1, ROOM TBA



Brett Flehinger
Robinson Hall 216
bfllehing@fas.harvard.edu

Office Hours, Th 3-5
Or by appointment
Phone: 617 495-1736

In 1890 Populist orator Mary Elizabeth Lease advised America's farmers "to raise less corn and more hell." Throughout the semester we'll follow Mary Lease's injunction and study the history of a particular style of American hell raising—the populist tradition that defines the common "people" as the centerpiece of American economic and political life and thrives on opposition between the people and "elite" interests.

The course will progress in two phases. We'll start by studying the Populist movement and People's Party of the 1880s and 1890s. This was a decidedly left-leaning movement that devised new ways to use government (including the federal government) to aid the "people."

With this history in place, we'll look at contemporary populism, through the rise of the Tea Party after the 2008 election.



Our study will be guided by a central question: how did a movement on the left become a strongly anti-government movement dominated by those suspicious of government exercise of power? In addressing the breadth of populism, we'll consider a wide variety of sources including memoirs, novels, speeches, political cartoons, films, talk radio, and others.

The rise of Donald Trump has brought political populism into greater attention, and much like the rest of the political world, this course cannot take its eyes off of Trump. We will dedicate the final three classes of this to a critical appraisal of the rise and meaning of Trumpism, asking the research question, how does the rise of Trump and Trumpism help us to define and understand American populism. Because Trump's political fortunes will be defined as



the semester develops, the reading for these sections will be announced following November 8.

The following are required for this class. All are available for purchase at the Coop; you may also purchase these books elsewhere.

Omar Ali, *In the Lion's Mouth: Black Populism in the New South, 1886-1900*

Stephen Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*

Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.*

Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*

Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*

Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*

Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America*

Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*

Sarah Palin, *Going Rogue: An American Life*

Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*

In addition to the assigned books, Robert McMath's *American Populism: A Social History 1877-1898* will be optional reading.

Film: The course will also consider the film *Inherit the Wind*, which will be shown at a required screening on Tuesday, November 1 at 7:30 (Room TBA).

Assignments: There are two exams for this course, a midterm and a final. The midterm will take place in class and will count for twenty percent of your course grade. The final exam will be held at a day and time to be announced and will count for thirty-five percent of your grade. Seniors writing a thesis will be allowed to take a make-up exam during the ninth week (we will work out a time after the course list is final). Please note that if you are not a thesis writing senior the only reason you may miss either exam is for a documented emergency. Thirty percent of your grade will come from a primary-source research paper due before the end of Reading Period. You will choose a topic in the history of American populism (broadly understood) in consultation with the teaching staff.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNMENT TO PASS THIS COURSE

Class Participation/ Section Attendance: This class includes weekly discussion sections. These discussions are an integral part of the course and are the opportunity for you to ask questions, interpret the sources, and receive specific instruction in writing. The sections will be organized after the second class and will begin during the second week. You must use the online sectioning tool before 5pm on Monday, September 12.

Academic Integrity Policy:

The Harvard College Honor Code

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.

Please note that the academic integrity policy in this course is divided into two areas-- papers and exams:

Before both exams you are encouraged to study with your classmates and discuss (orally) potential test questions and the sources you would use to answer them. The learning that takes place in studying is something that can well be done socially. Please note, however, that group study guides and shared study documents are not allowed, and you should not exchange outlines or large scale notes. There is a pedagogical purpose to this limitation. Written study guides tend to promote memorization of factual material, rather than the interpretive skills the course aims to teach you. Once you enter the exam (midterm or final), no information can be shared.

For the research paper you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to discuss sources with each other. If you are working on the same topic or a very similar topic to a classmate, please see your T.F. and instructor right away. You should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also use *Chicago Manual of Style* footnotes and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you receive any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

If you have any questions, please ask the course staff. We will be happy to clear up any ambiguities.

Grading:

Midterm Exam	20%
Research Paper	30%
Final Exam	35%
Class Participation	15%

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 (August 31, September 7) Introduction/: republicans and democrats

Week 2 (September 12, 14): Irrational Agrarians

- Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America*, 5-135
- Woody Holt, *Unruly Americans* (excerpt) (WL)
- Alan Kulikoff, "The Rise and Demise of the American Yeoman Classes" (WL)
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, preface (WL)
- Joyce Appleby, "Commercial Farming and the 'Agrarian Myth' in the Early Republic," *The Journal of American History* (JSTOR)

Week 3 (September 19, 21): Rationality and the Populist Movement

- Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*, 1-49, 86-239
- William H. Harvey, *Coin's Financial School* (excerpt) (WL)
- Henry George, *Poverty and Progress*, excerpt (WL)
- Hamlin Garland, "Under the Lion's Paw" (WL)
- William A. Peffer, *Populism: Its Rise and Fall*, excerpt (WL)

Week 4 (September 26, 28): Modern Agrarians

- Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision*, 3-171, 260-289
- "The Omaha Platform" (WL)
- William Jennings Bryan, "The Cross of Gold" (WL)
- Luna Kellie, *A Prairie Populist*, excerpt (WL)

Week 5 (October 3, 5): James B. Rayner, Tom Watson, and Jim Crow

- Omar Ali, *In the Lion's Mouth: Black Populism in the New South, 1886-1900*
<http://muse.jhu.edu.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/book/1310>
- Postel, *The Populist Vision*, 173-204
- William F. Holmes, "The Leflore County Massacre and the Demise of the Colored Farmers' Alliance," (JSTOR)
- Mary Lease, *The Problem of Civilization Solved* (WL)

Week 6 (October 12):

- Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*, 1-48, 109 -291

Week 7 (October 17, 19): Midterm Week

Midterm Exam October 17—no reading this week

Week 8 (October 24, 26): Evangelizing the Klan

- Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*, 3-23, 52-188

- Edward J. Larson, “The Scopes Trial and the Evolving Concept of Freedom” (JSTOR)
- H.L. Mencken, “Homo Neanderthalis” (WL)

Week 9 (October 31, November 2): History is the Primary Source

- *Inherit the Wind* REQUIRED CLASS VIEWING TUESDAY, November 1 @ 7:30 (ROOM TBA)
- Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.*, 3-164
- Randy Moore, “The Lingering Impact of the Scopes Trial on High School Biology Textbooks” (JSTOR)

Week 10 (November 7, 9): Raging in Silence?

- Kevin M. Kruse. *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, pages TBA.
- Jonathan Rieder, “The Rise of the Silent Majority” (WL)
- James Boyd, “Nixon’s Southern Strategy: It’s All in the Charts.” (WL)
- Richard Nixon, “Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam”

Week 11 (November 14, 16): Occupied by the Tea Party

- Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*, 1-66, 100-172, 264-274
- Sarah Palin, *Going Rogue*, 1-62
- Vanessa Williamson, Theda Skocpol and, John Coggin, “*The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*,” (JSTOR)
- Ronald Reagan, “A Time for Choosing” (WL)

Week 12 (November 21): Trump

- Reading TBA

Week 13 (November 28, 30): More Trump

- Reading TBA

Final Paper Due: December 8, 2016

Final Exam TBA (Tentatively Scheduled December 14)