

NEW YORK INTELLECTUALS

Freshman Seminar 30W

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This seminar explores the social and political thought of four New York intellectuals: Daniel Bell (1919-), Richard Hofstadter (1916-1970), C. Wright Mills (1916-1962), and Lionel Trilling (1905-1975). Although they worked in different intellectual fields--Hofstadter in history, Trilling in literary criticism, Bell and Mills in sociology--they belonged to the same undergraduate faculty, and addressed the same questions by virtue of common ethical convictions. What do intellectuals owe to state and society? Does democracy encourage cultural excellence, or inhibit the full flowering of the mind? What happens to a nation's political psychology when "security" becomes the governing ethos? Bell, Hofstadter, Mills, and Trilling did not apply a strict intellectual system to these questions. Yet the push and pull of their answers transformed American thought in the middle of the twentieth century. The differing directions of the transformation will make the main subject of our discussions.

Like all freshman seminars at Harvard, this one is graded on a pass/fail basis. To earn a final grade of "satisfactory" you may not miss more than TWO meetings for any reason. You must turn in six two-page synopses; give one oral presentation; and compose one long essay, due at the end of the semester. For the essay, you may select one of our thinkers; or you may select two or three, and then show how their ideas converged or diverged in sympathy with changing perspectives. Either way, the intention of this assignment is to offer practical instruction in the biographical history of ideas.

The syllabus consists of two films, one novel, one short story, and several essays, with the remainder filled up by books. I will supply the films, the story, and the essays. You may purchase the books at the Harvard COOP:

Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*
Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*
C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*
C. Wright Mills, *White Collar*
C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*
Lionel Trilling, *The Middle of the Journey*

We meet every Thursday from 1pm to 3pm, at 6 Prescott Street.

I. THE BIG CITY

Sept. 21: Film: “Arguing the World.” (1999)

Sept. 28: Daniel Bell, “The ‘Intelligentsia’ in American Society” (1976); Richard Hofstadter, “Interview” (1960); Lionel Trilling, “Some Notes for an Autobiographical Lecture” (1971); Trilling, “The Princess Casamassima” in *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (1950).

Oct. 5: C. Wright Mills, *White Collar* (1950)

II. PSYCHOPATHOLOGIES OF THE COLD WAR

Oct. 12: Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1965), Part 1.

Oct. 19: Lionel Trilling, *The Middle of the Journey* (1947).

Oct. 26: C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (1956).

Nov. 2: Daniel Bell, “Is There a Ruling Class in America? The Power Elite Reconsidered” and “Status Politics and New Anxieties” in *The End of Ideology* (1960); Richard Hofstadter, “The Idea of the Power Elite” (1959).

III. POWERS OF IMAGINATION

Nov. 9: Lionel Trilling, “Of This Time, Of That Place” (1943); “Preface” to *The Liberal Imagination* (1950); and “The Situation of the American Intellectual at the Present Time” (1952).

Nov. 16: C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (1959).

Nov. 23: No Class. Thanksgiving.

Nov. 30: Richard Hofstadter, “Democracy and Anti-Intellectualism in America” (1953); and “A Note on Intellect and Power” (1961); Daniel Bell, “The End of Ideology in the West” in *The End of Ideology* (1960).

IV. COLUMBIA ‘68

Dec. 7: Film: “Columbia Revolt, 1968”; C. Wright Mills, “Letter to the New Left” (1960); Daniel Bell, “Vulgar Sociology: On C. Wright Mills and the ‘Letter to the New Left’” (1960); Students for a Democratic Society, *Who Rules Columbia?* (1968); Daniel Bell, “Columbia and

the New Left” (1968); Lionel Trilling, “Interview” (1968); Richard Hofstadter, “Commencement Address” (1968)

Dec. 14. Individual meetings with instructor.

Further Reading

DANIEL BELL

Daniel Bell, *The Winding Passage: Essays and Sociological Journeys, 1960-1980* (1980)

Howard Brick, *Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism: Social Theory and Political Reconciliation in the 1940s* (1986)

Job L. Dittberner, *The End of Ideology and American Social Thought, 1930-1960* (1979)

The End of Ideology Debate, ed. Claim I. Waxman (1968)

RICHARD HOFSTADTER

Susan Stout Baker, *Radical Beginnings: Richard Hofstadter and the 1930s* (1985)

David Brown, *Richard Hofstadter: An Intellectual Biography* (2006)

The Hofstadter Aegis, eds. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick (1974)

Eric Foner, “The Education of Richard Hofstadter” in Foner, *Who Owns History?* (2002)

Richard Gillam, “Richard Hofstadter, C. Wright Mills, and ‘the Critical Ideal,’ *American Scholar*, v. 47 (1978)

David Hawke, “Interview: Richard Hofstadter” *History*, number 3 (1960)

Richard Kostelanetz, “Richard Hofstadter: Historian’s Indomitable Skepticism” in *Master Minds* (1967)

Jack Pole, “Richard Hofstadter” in *Clio’s Favorites: Leading Historians of the United States, 1945-2000* (2000).

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., “Richard Hofstadter” in *Pastmasters* (1969)

C. WRIGHT MILLS

C. Wright Mills, 3 vols., ed. Stanley Aronowitz (2004)

Power, Politics, and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz (1963)

The New Sociology: Essays in Social Science and Social Theory in Honor of C. Wright Mills, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz (1964)

C. Wright Mills: Letters and Autobiographical Writings, eds. Kathryn Mills with Pamela Mills (2000)

LIONEL TRILLING

Lionel Trilling, *The Moral Obligation to be Intelligent: Selected Essays*, ed. Leon Wieseltier (2000)

Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *When Men Were the Only Models We Had: My Teachers Barzun, Fadiman, Trilling* (2002)

Diana Trilling, *The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Diana and Lionel Trilling* (1993)

Thomas Bender, "Lionel Trilling and American Culture" in Bender, *Intellect and Public Life* (1993)

Lionel Trilling and The Critics: Opposing Selves, ed. John Rodden (1999)

Art, Politics, and Will: Essays in Honor of Lionel Trilling, eds. Quentin Anderson, Stephen Donadio, and Steven Marcus (1977)

NEW YORK INTELLECTUALS

Irving Howe, "The New York Intellectuals" (1969)

Daniel Bell, "The 'Intelligentsia' in American Society" (1976)

Alexander Bloom, *Prodigal Sons: The New York Intellectuals and Their World* (1986)

Terry A. Cooney, *The Rise of the New York Intellectuals* (1986)

Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (1987)

Neil Jumonville, *Critical Crossings: The New York Intellectuals in Postwar America* (1991)

Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect* (1987)

Norman Podhoretz, *Making It* (1967)

Richard Pells, *The Liberal Mind in Conservative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s* (1985)

Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals* (1987)

Joseph Dorman, *Arguing the World: The New York Intellectuals in Their Own Words* (2000)

NEW YORK CITY

Dan Wakefield, *New York in the Fifties* (1992)

E.B. White, "Here is New York" (1949)

Jed Perl, *New Art City* (2005)

Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (1974)

Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (1961)

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961)

Paul Goodman, *The Empire City* (1959)

James Agee, *Southeast of the Island* (1968)

Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road* (1961)

A.C. Spector, *The Exurbanites* (1955)

COLUMBIA COLLEGE

Robert A. McCaughey, *Stand, Columbia: A History of Columbia University in the City of New York, 1754-2004* (2003)

A Community of Scholars: The University Seminars At Columbia, ed. Frank Tannenbaum (1965)

Daniel Bell, *The Reforming of General Education: The Columbia College Experience in its National Setting* (1966)

Lionel Trilling, “The Van Amringe and Keppel Eras” in *A History of Columbia College on Morningside* (1954)

Richard Hofstadter, “The Department of History” in *A History of The Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University*, ed. R. Gordon Hoxie (1955)

Rosalind Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject: How the Women of Columbia Shaped the Way We Think about Sex and Politics* (2004)

Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Living Legacies at Columbia* (2006)

COLUMBIA ‘68

Crisis at Columbia: Report of the Fact-Finding Commission Appointed to Investigate the Disturbances at Columbia University in April and May 1968 (1968)

Jerry L. Avorn, et. al., *Up Against the Ivy Wall: A History of the Columbia Crisis* (1968)

Roger Kahn, *The Battle for Morningside Heights* (1970)

Stephen Spender, *The Year of the Young Rebels* (1968)

Diana Trilling, “On the Steps of Low Library” (1968) in *We Must March My Darlings* (1977)