

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE  
CONSERVATISM

**Terms and concepts to know:**

Conservatism	Traditional conservatism (social)
Laissez-faire conservatism (economic)	<i>Noblesse oblige</i>
Edmund Burke / <i>Reflections...</i>	Evolutionary / Revolutionary
Kirk / <i>The Conservative Mind</i>	Lippman / <i>The Public Philosophy</i>
Classical liberalism	The New Deal
The Great Society	Welfare Liberalism
Nozick / <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i>	Hayek / <i>The Road to Serfdom</i>
The Chicago School	Contemporary Conservatism
Neoconservatism	

**Study and discussion questions:**

1. Discuss the various forms of conservatism and how the American hybrid developed from Europe. Examine the concept of *noblesse oblige* and discuss why it did not take root in the U.S.
2. Examine the philosophy of Edmund Burke and debate the advantages of accepting evolutionary change as opposed to revolutionary. Do you believe that “change should be gradual and consistent with a nation’s past”?
3. Discuss Kirk’s “six tenets of traditional conservatism.” Which of the six do you find legitimate? Are there any that you find “too conservative”?
4. Discuss Lippman’s view of the relationship between the public and government. Do you agree that the executive has “become too closely tied to the whims of the public” and executive power should be “strengthened and removed from daily obeisance to popular opinion”?
5. Examine some of the other conservative scholars. Was Hayek correct in assuming that “economic and social planning inevitably limit individual freedom”? How about Banfield’s concerns about the Great Society programs? Is Huntington correct in his beliefs of the ineffectiveness of reforms in the U.S.? Have conservative thinkers received “rough treatment” from intellectuals in the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

**Readings:**

Heineman. *Political Science*, chapter 6.

**Video:**

*Capitalism (Episode 5).*