

HI\$T 2261 – True Believers: The Right & Left in Canadian Politics Since 1914 Fall 2015

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Office Hours Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30

[...] Oh you putters and takers, you reckoners of dollars
in the millions
-each digit of which is a piece of work, a piece of life,
usually a swindled piece:
Does conscience bother you? Or rather regret?
Do you think you have botched your lives?
And botched other peoples' lives even worse?
You students in Canadian Universities
Learning how to botch your lives
And botch other peoples' lives even worse:
Who are perhaps cynical, refusing to believe that a life
can be anything but botched;
Or perhaps incapable even of understanding the concept
of what is a life,
Really a life...Not botched:
Do you wonder "Where is Che Guevara?"
And does the thought make you unsteady, and do you
clutch for support to the nearest lie to you?
Not the truth...That would be too awfully thrilling
and demanding.
I tell you there are men on Earth who usually tell
the truth
I know
Because I am one of them,
And know I'm not unique.

And I have chosen who I will believe
And what I will believe.
I have chosen to believe in the ultimate...the Loveliest
thing I can imagine:
I have chosen to believe in You, not as you are
But as you should be...I believe in your happiest wishes!

Milton Acorn, "Where is Che Guevara?," Progressive Worker, 1965

True Believers was initially designed to introduce students to life on the political margins. Since the May 2011 election, however, True Believers of different stripes have occupied the political centre, and the national story depends on knowledge of how so-called "third party" political movements led us here.

A warning: much of the content we'll examine would, if used in certain ways today, qualify as hate speech under the laws now in force. To understand why movements such as fascism proved attractive to Canadians, we will of necessity encounter some pretty repulsive ideas. We cannot and should not ignore our emotional reactions, but in the spirit of scholarship, we must think about and examine our reactions. Talk to me if you find some aspect of the course's climate uncomfortable, and I will respond to your concerns as best I can.

This course will highlight the following major themes:

- a) the wide range of groups that participated. Farmers and workers, English and French, small business owners and financial magnates – all created and maintained movements on the right and left.
- b) the changing definitions of 'right' and 'left'. Ideas seen as radical in one era –the cradle-to-grave welfare state, for instance – came to be appropriated into the mainstream, while other concepts lost their legitimacy altogether.
- c) the emergence of political movements that called into question the 'right-left' political spectrum itself.
- d) the different visions of Canadian political structures offered by 'true believers'. Often, arguments about ideology turned into arguments about the limits of parliamentary liberal democracy and the virtues of other forms of collective decision-making.
- e) the divisions within these tendencies. Recent battles to 'unite the right/left' have a long history, as activists frequently battled with each other over the composition and direction of the movement, and the costs of moving from margin to centre.
- f) the response of the established parties and the governments they formed to these movements. Some political parties were outlawed, as was the case during wars hot and cold, while others saw their key ideas co-opted by the traditional parties.

Thanks to Steve Hewitt for answering my questions and Becki Ross for waiving certain copyright restrictions.

Also, one of the most provocative and effective historic-political interventions I've seen: Erica Violet Lee and Zoe Todd have collected videos of people reading the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's report: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vW4lQfOf3l>.

Class Schedule

Sept 15th "There is no place here for free-thinking and individuality": An Introduction

I'm the type of prof who assigns reading for the first class. After discussing the syllabus, we'll talk about Steve Hewitt's research on the RCMP's surveillance of leftist academic conferences in the 1970s and 1980s. Hewitt, who teaches at the University of Birmingham, is the author of numerous books, including Snitch! A History of the Modern Intelligence Informer and Spying 101: The RCMP's Secret Activities at Canadian Universities.

Reading Steve Hewitt, "Intelligence at the Learned's: The RCMP, the Learned's, and the Canadian Historical Association," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 9:1 (1998), 267-286. (OWL)

In one sense, we'd have to judge this particular RCMP mission a failure, since the files sought by the scholars under surveillance have become the basis for dozens of theses and scholarly articles, including my own research. One invaluable set of documents now made public are the weekly security digests created by RCMP officers for distribution to the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Thanks to Gregory Kealey and the Canadian Committee on Labour History, pdfs of some of these Security Bulletins – from 1920, 1926, and 1933-1945 – are available via the University of New Brunswick, <http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/RCMP>. While the bulk of each digest is devoted to the Communist Party and the industrial union movement, they also touch on fascist parties, religious dissidents and others thought potentially troubling to the liberal order. Much scholarship based on these documents appears in Labour/Le Travail, online at <http://www.lltjournal.ca/index.php/llt>.

Sept 22nd *The Before Time: The Liberal Order, 1867-1917/Conceptualizing True Belief/My Ziploc Bag of Hate*

I'll lecture on the historical background, especially classical liberalism and the effects of Canada's participation in foreign wars. I'll also explain the origin of the "True Believers" concept and the notion of the "long sixties." Finally, we'll immerse ourselves in our first example of hate literature, with my collection of "Chick Tracts," the Christian fundamentalist comic booklets published since the 1960s. If you'd like background on Chick Tracts, a good place to start is Daniel Raeburn's "The Holy Book of Chick with the Apocrypha and Dictionary-Concordance," Imp #2, 1998, online at <http://danielraeburn.com/The Imp, by Daniel Raeburn files/Imp JTC.pdf>.

Reading Fredric Jameson, Anders Stephanson, and Cornel West, "A Very Partial Chronology," Social Text 9/10 (Spring-Summer 1984), 210-215. (OWL)

Sept 29th *"War is the health of the state": War and the Labour Revolt*

The next five weeks will be organized on a lecture/discussion basis.

Reading Linda Kealey, "No Special Protection – No Sympathy: Women's Activism in the Canadian Labour Revolt of 1919," in D. Hopkin and G. Kealey, Eds., Class, Community and the Labour Movement (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1998), 134-159. (OWL)

Oct 6th *The End of Two-Party Politics, the Rise of National Liberation Movements & the Strongmen*

Readings PM Senese, "Catholique d'abord!: Catholicism and Nationalism in the Thought of Lionel Groulx," Canadian Historical Review 60:2 (June 1979), 154-177. (OWL)

Carla Marano, "'Rising Strongly and Rapidly': The Universal Negro Improvement Association in Canada, 1919-1940," Canadian Historical Review 91:2 (June 2010), 233-259. (OWL)

Oct 13th *The Great Depression*

Reading Dorothy Livesay, "The West 1936," in Right Hand Left Hand (Erin: Porcepic Press, 1977), 183-218. (Reader) 978-0888781055

Robert Heinlein, For Us, The Living: A Comedy of Customs (New York: Pocket Books, 2004 [1938]), 194-231. (Reader) 978-0-7434-9154-9

Oct 20th *The Day After: Fascism and other Apocalyptic Desires*

Reading Stanley R. Barrett, "Keegstra," in Is God a Racist?: The Right Wing in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 215-260. (Reader) 978-080206673

Oct 27th *"Socialist Hordes at the Gates": The CCF/NDP & Social Credit Fight the Cold War*

Readings Carmela Patrias, "Socialists, Jews, and the 1947 Saskatchewan Bill of Rights," Canadian Historical Review 87:2 (2006), 265-292. (OWL)

James M. Pitsula, "The Saskatchewan CCF Government and Treaty Indians, 1944-64," Canadian Historical Review 75:1 (1994), 21-52. (OWL)

Nov 3rd Revolutionary Nationalism and the New Communist Movement

Guest Expert: Chris Parsons, currently the Services and Campaigns Coordinator for the King's Student Union, is also a veteran researcher of Asian radical movements in North America. He'll take us through some of the key elements of the American Maoist experience.

Readings T.B.D.

Nov 10th Student Research Projects

In this and the next three classes, we'll discuss your research essays. Chapters from Debating Dissent will be assigned once the order of presentation has been established.

Nov 17th Student Research Projects

Nov 24th Student Research Projects

Dec 1st Student Research Projects

Dec 8th Gay Liberation & Lesbian Feminist Organizing

For the final class, we'll return to the lecture/discussion format.

Reading Becki Ross, The House That Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 85-138. (Reader) 978-0802074799.

Viewing Watch the 1982 documentary *Track Two*, directed by Harry Sutherland, on "Operation Soap," the 1981 bathhouse raids in Toronto, online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN4_8eurids.

Texts

The following can be purchased at Bookmark, 5686 Spring Garden, <http://bookmarkinc.ca/halifax/>:

Lara Campbell, Dominique Clement and Gregory S. Kealey, Eds., Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

A handful of readings are collected in a reader available at the Dalhousie Bookstore. The remainder will be posted on OWL.

An extensive selection of Canadian leftist documents is offered at <http://www.socialisthistory.ca/Docs/docs.htm>.

Excerpts of thousands of leftist texts from around the world are available at <http://www.Marxists.org>.

On right-wing movements and anti-Semitism in Canada and internationally, see <http://www.nizkor.org/>.

Marking Breakdown

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|-----------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| Class Participation | 15% | |
| Research Essay Proposal | 10% | 12:00 pm, Oct 9 th |
| Research Essay First Draft | 20% | 12:00 pm, Nov 9 th |
| Research Essay Presentation | 15% | T.B.D. |
| Research Essay Second Draft | 40% | 3:00 pm, Dec 17 th |

All essays are expected to conform to the policies set out in the History Style Guide, online at: <http://www.dal.ca/faculty/arts/history/current-students/style-guide.html>.

Class Participation

Where indicated, all students are expected to evaluate the arguments in the readings before coming to class, and to have ideas and questions about the material for others to consider. No marks are earned for attendance. Your participation grade is earned based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions.

Written Assignments

The major written assignment is a research essay (3000 words) pertaining to “True Believers in Atlantic Canada during the Long Sixties,” based on both primary research (in this case, likely newspapers) and secondary research. Your topic must be chosen in consultation with the instructor.

1. For decades, historians have recognized that the so-called “Sixties” neither began nor ended during the decade in question. Depending on which authors one reads, the political, social, and cultural upheavals we know as the Sixties began in 1955 or 1957, and ended in 1975 or 1976.

We’ll use the recent collection, Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties, to provide the context for this period. It may also prove invaluable in helping you select a topic. Students are expected to have Debating Dissent read by the class on November 3rd. This will allow every student to contribute to the work of other students.

It is suggested that you choose a project during the “long sixties,” but it is not mandatory. Students interested in other periods and who locate an adequate set of primary sources will be able to pursue projects outside the period of focus.

2. Generally speaking, the movements of “True Believers” have enjoyed little success in Nova Scotia and other Atlantic Canadian provinces compared to their achievements elsewhere. Nonetheless, it’s also clear that much of this region’s radical past has been forgotten: developments that attracted international attention decades ago

It is suggested that you choose a project on some aspect of the Atlantic Canadian experience, but it is not mandatory. Students interested in other regions and who locate an adequate set of primary sources will be able to pursue projects outside the area of focus.

3. Students are free to research parties and ideologues associated with “True Believers” movements. Also possible are projects that consider how mass media outlets have portrayed one or more of these movements. What did the so-called “Establishment” have to say about the “hippie kids” who gathered en masse in Victoria Park? How did newspapers cover far-right groups such as the Heritage Front?

4. Primary sources are typically 1) produced within the context under study; 2) produced for reasons other than the writing of history; 3) incomplete and partial; 4) and finally, in need of careful evaluation. Secondary sources are typically 1) produced after the event or process in question; 2) written because of political notions about the

value of history, even when the notion is as simple and Wiggumesque as “writing history is fun”; 3) incomplete and partial; 4) and finally, in need of careful evaluation. Of course, these secondary sources are also primary sources themselves: a book written today about the War of 1812 is likely a source about our current attitudes about war and the politics of commemoration.

With Debating Dissent providing contextual knowledge about the “long sixties” in Canada, a good place to start your primary research is with one of the Nova Scotian newspapers at the sites below:

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|----------------------------------|---|
| <u>Dalhousie Gazette,</u> | http://dalspace.library.dal.ca/handle/10222/28094. |
| <u>The 4th Estate</u> | http://novascotia.ca/archives/virtual/newspapers/results.asp?nTitle=The+4th+Estate |
| <u>Micmac News</u> | http://beatoninstitute.com/micmac-news. |
| <u>Halifax Chronicle Herald</u> | Online via Killam Library |

I also own partially complete runs of the following New Left magazines:

The Last Post (Toronto)
Mysterious East (Fredericton)

Nor are students limited to newspapers; research essays can be based on other kinds of primary sources, provided they are sufficient to the task. We'll spend considerable time discussing these and other newspapers as well as additional types of sources.

Research Essay Proposal

Essay proposals can be written only after completing a considerable amount of research, primary and secondary. In the process of deciding on a topic, you may end up discarding several ideas because they turn out to be impractical given the sources available to us here.

With a minimum of 500 words, explain the subject and scope of your research, including a clearly defined thesis statement. In a separate bibliography, list at least 5 secondary sources that will figure prominently in your paper. Your bibliography should also contain a list of your primary sources, with brief descriptions of each.

You must submit 1 paper copy of the proposal by noon, October 9th. There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies.

Research Essay, First Draft

With comments from me and more research, you will be able to finish a first draft (10 pages in length). Note that a first draft is a complete essay, not a partially finished portion of what might become an essay.

Research essays are built with the following components:

1. An introduction that conveys the significance of the subject, and your research questions & answers.
2. A clear, concise thesis statement, ie an argument that can be proven by marshalling evidence.
3. A historiographical section that describes & evaluates the major schools of thought on your subject.
4. The so-called ‘body’ of the paper, which combines evidence and analysis in order to demonstrate the validity of your thesis.
5. A conclusion that restates the arguments.

You must submit 2 paper copies of the first draft of your essay by 6 pm, November 9th. There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies.

Research Essay Presentation

Over four weeks, each student will have 20 minutes to present their research and respond to comments from others. Each presentation (between 5-10 minutes) should introduce the subject, explain the argument, and describe the key sources: provide your critics with information sufficient for them to make judgements and develop questions designed to assist you improve your work.

During these sessions, students are both creators and critics. When evaluating the work of other people, considering the following questions:

Is there a clear thesis? Is it supported by strong evidence? Is the evidence clearly explained?
Does the essay flow logically from paragraph to paragraph?
What new thematic issues should be developed in the final version?

In short, give them the type and quality of advice that you would like to receive.

I will set the schedule of presentations in class on November 3rd. I will also provide healthy snacks.

Research Essay, Final Draft

With a second round of comments from me as well as a fresh view from your fellow students, you will complete your final draft, of 12 pages in length. You must make substantial improvements to your initial effort to maintain or raise your grade. In practical terms, this means more research, both primary and secondary. It also means rewriting sentences, restructuring paragraphs, and sometimes even tossing out whole sections.

You must submit 1 paper copy of the final draft of your essay by noon, December 17th. There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies.

Departmental Grade Scale

| | |
|----|--------------|
| A+ | 90-100 |
| A | 85-89 |
| A- | 80-84 |
| B+ | 77-79 |
| B | 73-76 |
| B- | 70-72 |
| C+ | 65-69 |
| C | 60-64 |
| C- | 55-59 |
| D | 50-54 |
| F | Less than 50 |

Accommodation Policy

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers experienced related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian human rights legislation.

Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of

the regular academic year. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 494-2836 for more information or send an email to notetaking@dal.ca

Academic Integrity Policy

Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Online Dalhousie website. The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer-readable format, and to submit any paper to be checked electronically for originality. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand.

To quote the policy, "academic integrity means that we are honest and accurate in creating and communicating all academic products. Acknowledgement of other people's work must be done in a way that does not leave the reader in any doubt as to whose work it is. Academic integrity means trustworthy conduct such as not cheating on examinations and not misrepresenting information."