

WHAT CAN JOE BIDEN LEARN FROM STUDYING THE NEW DEAL?

This lecture course uses history to understand current public policy. President Biden recognizes the similarities between the challenges confronting his administration and those that confronted Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932: the severity of the Great Depression in 1929, the worst economic crisis in US national history; the social crisis, with the emergence of homelessness, joblessness, population displacement, and social distress and unrest. FDR's New Deal, a program of unprecedented government intervention into economic and social management, may be the most important government experiment in American social engineering.

The New Deal attempted to modernize American views and practices of government, seeking to legitimize a proactive version of federalism (the use of centralized, national power) in a country born of a localist and governmentally minimalist revolution. Yet prior to World War II, the South forced Democrats to accept racism as the cost of reform.

Governmental activism still intersects with questions of race: think Black Lives Matter, Derek Chauvin, Kamala Harris. Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan resembles the New-Deal economic program yet it differs from Biden's 2020 racial pluralism. Yet has America really accepted national-governmental activism? Has President Biden learned the political lessons of the New Deal?

The course will cover readings from Ira Katznelson's *Fear Itself*; Eric Rauchway's short introduction, *The Great Depression and the New Deal* and *Why the New Deal Matters*; as well as current newspaper articles.

LEADER: Stanley Katz recently retired as a Princeton University professor of public policy at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, and has trained in history and law.

FRIDAYS: 1:00 to 3:00 pm, 8 weeks beginning October 1 through November 19

MAXIMUM: unlimited