



Chaire Raoul-Dandurand
en études stratégiques et diplomatiques
Raoul Dandurand Chair
of Strategic and Diplomatic Studies

Call for Papers

Culture Wars in the United States The Politics of Religious Conservatism in the Obama Era

Conference Organized by the Center for United States Studies, Raoul Dandurand Chair,
University of Québec at Montreal

Organizer:

Frédéric Gagnon, Ph.D., Professor, Political Science Department, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), and Director, Center for United States Studies, Raoul Dandurand Chair of Strategic and Diplomatic Studies

Theme:

During the Republican Party's national convention in 1992, the ultraconservative politician Pat Buchanan claimed that a "culture war" was raging in the U.S. He saw it as a fight to define the American people's national identity — what America signifies as a society, what Americans were in the past, what they are today, and what they will become in future. In fact, the culture war has been the hobbyhorse of many U.S. social and political actors, or culture warriors, since the 1970s. In their view, the secular, liberal elites have seized power in the U.S. and are trying to destroy the spiritual foundations of American society. In response, the culture warriors are trying by all possible means to persuade Americans and their elected representatives to make the favourite issues of religious conservatives and the Christian Right the focal point of political debate.

There are several types of culture warriors, and they are waging a variety of "wars." Culture warriors can include the U.S. President himself, as when George W. Bush proposed a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. They also include judges who insist on having the Ten Commandments embroidered on their robes, pastors who encourage Christian pre-teens to reject homosexuality, bloggers who condemn nudity in video games, and media personalities like Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck who try to discredit anti-war groups, feminists, hip-hop artists and others.

The first few months of Barack Obama's presidency have shown that the culture wars continue unabated (a proposal to ban gay marriage in California was passed on the same day Obama was elected; in May 2009, a pro-life activist murdered a doctor who performed late-term abortions, etc.). Accordingly, the goal of this conference is to generate a deeper understanding of culture wars and their impact on U.S. society and policies.

The organizers are promoting a multidisciplinary approach. They are therefore inviting scholars from a broad range of disciplines — political scientists, historians, specialists in political communication, linguists, sociologists, philosophers, religious studies experts, etc. — to participate.

Participants will be invited to contribute their papers for publication in a collection (book or special issue of a peer-reviewed journal) after the conference.

Research angles and themes (not exhaustive):

- Concepts and theories pertaining to culture wars, religious conservatism and the Christian Right in the U.S.;
- Linkages between religion, conservatism and politics in the U.S.;
- Case studies of actors in the culture wars;
- Analysis of culture warriors' discourses;
- Culture war issues (gay marriage, abortion, stem cell research, control of firearms, death penalty, pornography, separation of Church/religion and State/politics, etc.);
- History of culture wars, religious conservatism and the Christian Right in the U.S. (context of emergence, changes over time);
- Comparative studies on different types of religious conservatism (with reference to the U.S. case);
- Political parties and culture wars in the U.S.;
- Role of left-wing actors (feminist, pro-gay-marriage, pro-choice groups, etc.) in culture wars;
- Representations of culture wars in popular culture (movies, cartoons, video games, advertising, TV series, novels, etc.);
- Communication, political and legislative strategies of culture war actors;
- Analyses of public opinion polls on culture wars;
- Electoral impacts of culture wars;
- Local and regional aspects of culture wars;
- Media coverage of culture wars;

- International perceptions of culture wars, religious conservatism and the Christian Right in the United States;

Deadline for proposals (paper abstracts): January 15, 2010

A scientific review committee will evaluate proposals and will announce the selected papers in mid-March 2010.

Conference date and location: October 14, 2010, University of Québec at Montreal, Montréal, Québec, Canada

Proposals should be a maximum of 300 words long and should include the following:

- Family name(s) and first name(s) of author(s)/collaborator(s);
- Title(s), function(s) and home institution(s);
- Contact information (mailing address, telephone number, e-mail);
- Paper title, research question and main arguments and outline of underlying analytical framework.

Languages: Proposals (and the papers themselves) may be in English or French.

Note: After the conference, the organizers will ask participants to send them a text for publication in a collection.

Please send your proposal by e-mail (in a Word attachment) to :

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