

FDR's Supporting Cast

The players behind FDR and his New Deal, 1933-1941

Purpose: The seminar's purpose is to learn about the New Deal, examining the motivations, policies, interactions, and politics of people who personally supported FDR, and/or worked with FDR on the design and implementation of the New Deal.

Course #	19SFD
Format:	Seminar
Moderator:	Tyll van Geel
Co-moderator:	Neil Novik
Date and Time:	Tuesday, 1:30-3:30 10 weeks, starting February 26
Location:	Smith College, Lilly Hall, Room 308

Description: In 1933, the New Deal was a multi-faceted response by the federal government to a catastrophic economic depression. Relying on cash relief, price fixing, labor regulation, work projects and other approaches, the New Deal assisted farmers, the unemployed, homeowners, the elderly, children, bank depositors, laborers, conservationists, artists, and workers on urban construction and national infrastructure projects, transforming the relationship between the federal government, the states, localities, and individual citizens.

But FDR didn't do it alone. Each session of this seminar will be devoted to an examination of two significant people who were part of this transformation –Eleanor Roosevelt, Missy Le Hand, Frances Perkins, Harry Hopkins, Harold Ickes, Fiorello La Guardia, young Lyndon Johnson, Mary McLeod Bethune, and others. Approaching the New Deal through these biographies expands our understanding by highlighting important details, the dynamism of the administration, and the internal divisions within it, thereby giving the New Deal a fresh slant not often emphasized in biographies of FDR and general histories.

Role of participants: Participants will give a 30-minute presentation on an individual of importance chosen by the participant from a list provided by the moderators (or an unlisted person, with approval of the moderators), after which they will lead a follow-up discussion.

Resources: Many biographies and articles regarding the individuals who will be the focus of the presentations are available in local libraries and from booksellers online, as will general histories of the New Deal and biographies of FDR. One example is Adam Cohen's *Nothing to Fear*. A suggested bibliography will be provided at the Preview.

About the Moderators: Tyll van Geel has moderated a number of LIR seminars and has had a lifelong interest in FDR. Neil Novik has moderated several seminars including one on the 1930's. He has also moderated seminars on cultural history, including those on the history of radio and the history of comedy.

Maximum number of participants: 18

Auditors accepted: yes, up to 2