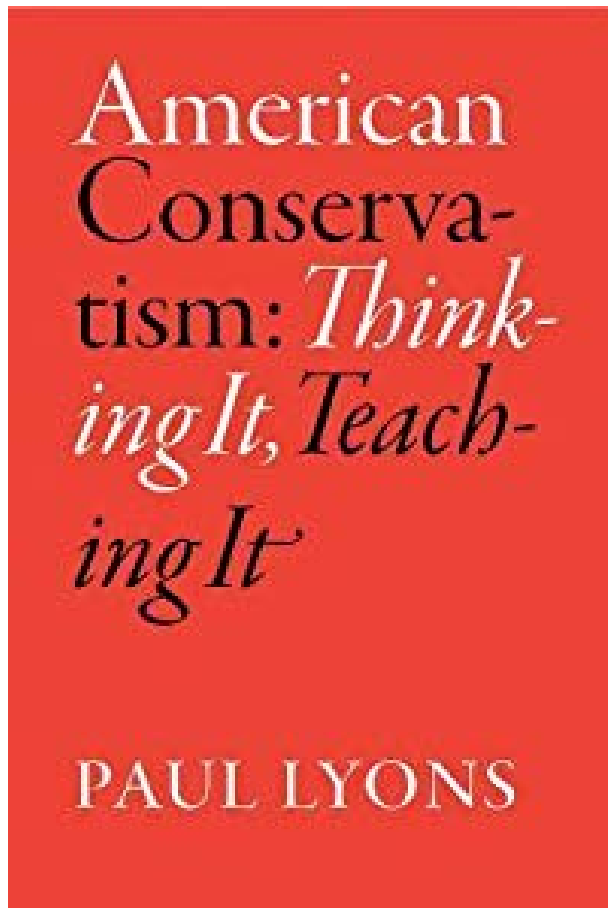


American Conservatism: Thinking It, Teaching It



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This book offers a rare opportunity to read about how a scholar's teaching informs his research, in this case an examination of the nature of American conservatism. It is based on an interdisciplinary senior seminar Lyons taught in Spring 2006. His teaching log, including student comments from an electronic conferencing system, gives a vivid sense of the daily frustrations and triumphs.

Lyons reflects on some of the most difficult issues in higher education today, such as how to handle racism and political passions in the classroom, as well as how a teacher presents his own political convictions. Lyons begins with the premise that most universities have been negligent in helping undergraduates understand a movement that has shaped the political landscape for half a century. In addition, in a series of essays that frame the teaching log, he makes the case that conservatives have too often failed to adhere to basic, Burkean principles, and that the best of conservatism has often appeared as a form of liberalism from thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Reinhold Niebuhr, and George Kennan. The essays also cover the history of conservatism, conservative use of the city-on-a-hill metaphor, and an examination of how the promise of Camelot sophistication was subverted by a resurgence of right-wing populism.