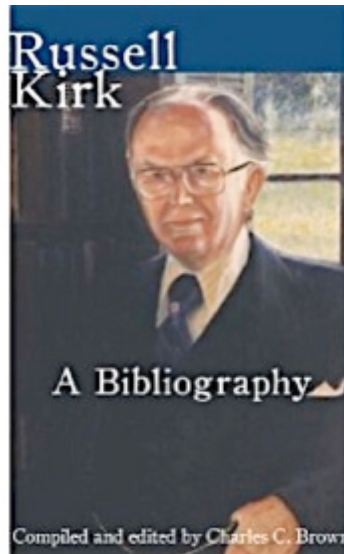




Written by [James Heiser](#) on August 15, 2011

A Review of Russell Kirk: A Bibliography

The developments that have taken place in the 17 years that have passed since the death of Dr. Russell Kirk (1918-1994) have demonstrated the enduring significance of the writings of one of the pivotal thinkers of 20th century American conservatism. The American body politic seems mortally ill, and many of the current crop of “conservative” writers are utterly incapable of addressing the actual needs of these United States with even a fraction of the wisdom that Kirk readily displayed throughout his long career. The Intercollegiate Institute’s 2006 collection of Kirk’s essays, *The Essential Russell Kirk*, offered a new generation of conservatives an opportunity to encounter a broad range of his scholarship. Now, a second edition of Charles C. Brown’s *Russell Kirk — A Bibliography*, will further aid in the study of the writes of the “Sage of Mecosta.”



The second edition of Kirk’s bibliography is not a minor update; the first edition was published 30 years ago — long before many of his significant later books had been written. The fundamental structure of Brown’s first edition has been retained, including every aspect of Kirk’s writings (and now expanded to include published interviews). The task undertaken by Brown — who serves as archivist of the Kirk Papers — provides a tremendous resource for a careful examination of various aspects of Kirk’s thought.

An area that has undergone a crucial expansion is that which deals with writings about Kirk’s life and scholarship. One cannot help but be impressed by the amount of foreign scholarship which is being devoted to Kirk’s writings. It is clear that, far from his direct influence having diminished, his books and articles are living on.

Certainly the weakness of much of what passes for conservative “thought” is one reason for the continued appeal of Russell Kirk; only among the [Paleo-conservatives](#) are there many authors who have demonstrated much capacity for continuing his work. The [neoconservatives](#) (concerning whom Kirk eloquently warned) about are legion — but only marginally literate, historically or otherwise. Thus, despite the pretensions of those who have emerged from the shadows to snipe at Kirk since his death, such efforts have usually ended rather badly for those foolish enough to attempt it.

An unfortunate decision on the part of the publisher was to only issue a paperback edition of this important work. the original (1981) bibliography was published in hardcover, and it would be preferable if the revised edition had be held to that higher standard. Still, this is a relatively minor concern. The most important thing is that this work is finally available to benefit a new generation of scholars and students who are only now becoming familiar with Kirk’s classics — works such as *The Conservative*



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Mind and The Roots of the American Order. Even — or perhaps especially — Conservatives who are only now becoming familiar with Kirk's writings will greatly benefit from Brown's revised edition of this bibliography. For those (such as the current writer) who have benefited from such study for over a quarter of a century, there is still a great deal of benefit to having this revised edition.

Russell Kirk: A Bibliography, compiled and edited by Charles C. Brown (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2011) 220 pages. Paperback. \$30.00



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