

AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEAS

E pluribus unum

"... those deluded People." -- King George III

The course will examine political ideas in the United States, concentrating on constitutionalism, individualism, and diversity. These large ideas may be of importance not just in theories but in practice as well; the course will do what it can to trace ideas not just in texts but also in practice.

Admittedly it is possible to approach the study of American political ideas from many angles of vision, and with other purposes in mind than those offered in this version of 573. One might proceed to survey noteworthy texts in chronological order, to examine other ideas or clusters of ideas than those selected, and of course there are many other authors that are well worth reading. The assigned readings have some capacity to sustain inquiry around other themes, and other materials are available in the library. If you have a definite focus of interest, consult instructor -- sooner rather than later -- on the possibility of pursuing it for credit in the course.

One important reason for the course's interest in studying ideas and theories in relation to political life (broadly conceived) in the U.S. is to consider how theories fare in practice. It is conceded at the outset that the course can not possibly either cover the range of knowledge or achieve the depth of analysis required to bring this inquiry to definite conclusions. But perhaps it is worth beginning the effort to trace how theories work out in practice. The rest of our lives involve that the effort in any case, although not necessarily in the conscious and articulate way that the course will attempt.

TEXTS

The following texts contain significant amounts of required reading, and are available for purchase at SBX:

A packet from Greyden Press of reproduced selections, marked * in the syllabus.

Publius (Hamilton, Madison, Jay), The Federalist Papers (Signet)

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (Harper & Row)

Garry Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg (Simon & Schuster)

Jennifer Hochschild, Facing Up to the American Dream: Race Class and the Soul of the Nation (Princeton U.P.)

Charles Taylor et al Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition" (Princeton U.P.)

OPTIONAL READING

Richard D. Heffner, A Documentary History of the United States, Fifth Edition (Mentor, 1991).

David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper, The American Intellectual Tradition A Sourcebook,

Volume 1:1630-1865; Volume II:1865 to the Present, Second Edition (Oxford, 1993). Robert Isaak, ed., American Political Thinking Readings from the Origins to the 21st Century

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(Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1994).

Pietro S. Nivola and David H. Rosenbloom, eds., Classic Readings in American Politics (St. Martin's, 1986)

Howard Zinn, A People's History of the United States (New York: Harper & Row, 1980)

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Class will combine some lecture with as much discussion as feasible. Students should know, however, that class cannot completely "cover" the assigned reading. You should accordingly plan systematically and habitually to read and re-read and think about what you have read, so that you can take part in shaping our discussions in class. It is strongly recommended that you make a practice of discussing what you have read with other members of the class. If you find you do not understand what you read, or if you just want to talk about it, it is your responsibility to raise questions, and questions are welcome.

Academic Honesty. All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy and, when appropriate, reported to the university Committee on Academic Misconduct.

DISABILITY:

_____ Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disabilities Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

EXAMS AND GRADES

In addition to studying the assigned texts and participating in class discussion, each student will take two exams, and write an essay. The Midterm Exam will be on Monday, 8 May, and the Final at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, 14 March (the regularly scheduled time). As a first approximation, each exam will count one third (33 1/3%) of the grade for the course. The essay will also count one third (33 1/3%).

The mid-term and final examinations will assess the work students have done with the assigned reading as interpreted in class. Answers are expected to show a good grasp of the text, insight into its meaning, and a grasp of its relevance to issues in political theory. Careful and REGULAR reading is an absolute prerequisite, but you must also THINK about what you have read. Daily activities in class will help with interpretation, as will further conversation with other members of the class. Do not count on last minute cramming. If you do the reading before each class and think about it, the exams will be easy; if you do not, expect to find them difficult.

At instructor's discretion, the grade for the course may also reflect the quality of your contributions to class discussion. The grade will be raised if your participation in class warrants. And it will be lowered if you do not regularly attend class, having completed the assigned reading.

ESSAY

The essay should run five to ten pages long, and is due at time of the final examination.

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ESSAY TOPIC: Draw on the course, both reading and class, in writing an essay on what it means to be an American (U.S. citizen). Pay attention, in your essay, to issues raised in the following quote:

Years ago it was more or less clear what it meant to 'to be an American.' Now, who has any idea at all? Indeed, paradoxically, the very question seems now to be somewhat un-American.

The eagerness to think of ourselves as one people provided a kind of spiritual underpinning to powerful forces for social change.... Now, the dream of homogeneity lies shattered. We no longer aspire to it as a people.

We are less innocent, vastly less trusting -- and unable, at least so far, to find a way to bring out of our current infatuation with confrontation and differences any kind of vision of harmony and wholeness.

-- Paul Goldberger, chief cultural correspondent of The New York Times, quoted in The Columbus Dispatch, December 14, 1994, p. E1.

If you prefer, with permission of instructor, you may select another essay topic.

SYLLABUS

1. WHAT DO WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEAS, AND HOW CAN WE LEARN IT? (Wednesday, 3 January - Monday, 8 January)

*Judith N. Shklar, "Redeeming American Political Theory," American Political Science Review 85 (1991): 3-15.

*Charles Taylor, "Social theory as practice," Philosophy and the Human Sciences. Philosophical Papers 2 (1985), pp.91-115.

I. CONSTITUTIONALISM AS AN AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEA

2. THE DOCUMENTS (Tuesday and Wednesday, 9-10 January)

*The Declaration of Independence

*The Constitution of the United States

3. SELLING THE CONSTITUTION (Thursday, 11 Jan. to Wednesday, 17 Jan.)

Publius, The Federalist Papers

Nos. 9, 10 and 14; pp.71-84 and 99-105. (an extended republic; republic vs. democracy)

Nos. 47, 48-49, and 51; pp.300-308 and 320-325. (separation of powers, checks and balances)

Nos. 23 and 33; pp.152-157 and 201-205. ~urposes, rational means, scope of government)

Nos.37 and 39; pp.224-231 and 240-246. (Theory, pol. sci. & pol. compromise; republican principles, including "indirect," not national or federal. Q: where's virtue?)

Feel free to read as much more as you like.

4. THE DISPUTE OVER "ORIGINAL" INTENT (Thursday, 18 Jan. to Tuesday, 23 Jan.)

*Robert H. Bork, "The Original Understanding," selection from The Temptin~ of America; reprinted in Susan J. Brison and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, eds., Contemporary Perspectives

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on Constitutional Interpretation (1993), pp.48-67.

*Ronald Dworkin, selection from Law's Empire: pp.225-232, 254-258, 355-365.

5. ECONOMIC AND/V.S. POLITICAL SCIENCE INTERPRETATIONS (Wednesday, 24 January to Friday, 26 Jan.)

***Charles Beard**, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution (1913; Macmillan), pp.12-18, 73, 152-158, 324-325..

*Robert A. Dahl, chapter 1 (1.p. 4-33) and pp.145-151, A Preface to Democratic Theory (1956)

6. LIBERALISM VS. REPUBLICANISM (Monday, 29 Jan. to Wednesday, 31 Jan.)

*Louis Hartz, selection from The Liberal Tradition in America, reprinted in Pietro S. Nivola and

David H. Rosenbloom, eds., Classic Readings in American Politics (1986), pp. 15-21.

*Terence Ball, "A Republic -- If You Can Keep It," in T. Ball and J.G.A. Pocock, Conceptual

Change and the Constitution (1988), pp.137-164.

7. LINCOLN: REINTERPRETING THE DECLARATION (Thursday, 1 February to Tuesday, 6 Feb.)

Garry Wills, Lincoln at Gettysbur~

FURTHER

The Articles of Confederation

Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (1967)

Sotirios A. Barber, On What the Constitution Means (1984)

Carl Becker, The Declaration of Independence

Paul Brest, "The Fundamental Rights Controversy: The Essential Contradictions of Normative Constitutional Scholarship," Yale Law Journal 90 (1981): 1063-1105.

Paul Brest, "The Misconceived Quest for the Original Understanding," Boston University Law Review 60 (1980); reprinted in Jack N. Rakove, ed., Interpreting the Constitution: The Debate over Original Intent (1990), pp.227-262.

Edward S. Corwin, "The 'Higher Law' Background of American Constitutional Law," Harvard Law Review XLII (1928-1929): 149-185, 365-409.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man

John P. Diggins, The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue Self-Interest and the Foundations of Liberalism (1984)

Russell Hanson, The Democratic Imagination in America: Conversations with Our Past (1985) Linda

R. Hirshman, ed., "Symposium on Classical Philosophy and the American Constitutional Order," Chicago-Kent Law School Review! 66 (1990)1-242.

E.J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution 1789-1848

Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition

Jerome Huyler, Locke in America (1995)

James T. Kloppenberg, "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse," Journal of American History 74 (1987): 9-33.

Sanford V. Levinson, Constitutional Faith (1988)

Leonard Levy, ed., Essays on the Making of the Constitution

Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., America's Constitutional Soul (1991)

Bertell Ollinan and Jonathan Birnbaum, The United States Constitution (1991)

R.R. Palmer, The Age of the Democratic Revolution

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J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment esp. Part

William H. Riker, Liberalism Against Populism (1982)

Garrett Ward Sheldon, The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson (1991)

Herbert Storing, ed., The Antifederalist

Gary Wills, Inventing America

Sheldon S. Wolin, The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution (1990)

Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787 (1969)

MIDTERM EXAMINATION: WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY

II. INDIVIDUALISM AS AN AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEA

10. INDIVIDUALISM THEN (Thursday, 8 Feb. to Monday, 19 Feb.)

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. J.P. Mayer, tr. George Lawrence. Pay particular attention to:

1. "a new political science" — one pregnant thought": pp.9-20 (Author's Intro.)
2. "Tyranny of the Majority": pp.231-261 (Vol.1, Part II, chs. 6, 7)
3. "Individualism": pp.503-517, (Vol.11, Part II, chs. 1-5)
4. "the most formidable evil" and "delusion": pp.340-363
5. "habits of the heart": pp.286-301
6. "The whole man... in the cradle"; "patriotism and religion are the only things": pp.31-57, 87-98, and 287-315 (Vol.1, Part I, chs. 2, 3 and pp.87-98, and Pt. II, most of Ch. 9, pp.287-315)
7. "the superiority of their women": pp.600-603 (Vol.11, Part III, ch. 12)
8. association, pp.513-517
- "self interest properly understood,"¹¹ pp.525-528, 534-538 (Vol.11, Part II, chs. 8, 13)
10. "freedom, . in the times in which we live, I am disposed to worship it.": pp.690-702 (Vol.11, Part IV, chs. 6, 7)

11. INDIVIDUALISM NOW (Tuesday, 20 Feb. to Thursday, 22 Feb.)

*selection from Robert D. Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," PS: Political Science and Politics (December 1995), pp.664-666, 674-677..

*Robert N. Bellah et al Habits of the Heart, chs I & 2 ~p. 3-51)

FURTHER

Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind (1987)

Thomas L. Dumm, United States (Cornell U.P., 199?)

Richard J. Ellis, American Political Cultures

Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom

Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, Revised Edition (George Braziller, 1959)

Irying Horowitz, ed., Moral Foundations of the American Republic

Robert Lane, Political Ideology

Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (1981)

J.S. Mill, On Liberty

Karl Polyani, The Great Transformation
William L. Riordan, Plunkett of Tammany Hall

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H. Mark Roelofs, The Poverty of American Politics (199?)
Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations
William Graham Sumner, What Social Classes Owe to Each Other
Henry Thoreau, Walden and Civil Disobedience
Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History

III. DIVERSITY AS AN AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEA

12. RACE, CLASS, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM (Friday, 23 Feb. to Friday, 2 March)

Jennifer Hochschild, Facing Up to the American Dream

The American dream and racial paradoxes: Ch. 1 ~p. 15-38), skim ch. 2 ~p. 39-51). "What's all the fuss about?" pp.55-71, 85-88.

"Succeeding more and enjoying it less," pp.102-108, 112-121, 124-140, 142-143. "Remaining under the spell," pp.157-158, 167-173, 195-199,209-213. The future of the American dream,~pp. 151-153, 214-221, ch. 14 (1)p. 250-260).

13. MULTICULTURALISM (Monday, 5 Mar. to Friday, 9 Mar.)

READ: Charles Taylor etal Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition" (1992)

FURTHER

Peter Bachrach, The Theo~ of Democratic Elitism
Daniel Bell, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (1976)
Brown v. Board of Education
Derrick Bell, Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism. (1992)
Paul Berman, ed., Debating P.C. (Dell)
Richard J. Bernstein, The New Constellation (1991)
Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Motherin2 (1978)
John Dewey, The Public and Its Problems
Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (1982)
Andrew Hacker, Two Nations
Gary Jeffrey Jacobsohn and Susan Dunn, eds., Diversity and Citizenship: New Challenges for American Statehood (1995)
Richard Kirkendall, ed., The New Deal: The Historical Debate
A. Lincoln, "Lyceum Address," "Temperance Address," "Springfield Speech," in Johannsen, ed., Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858
Charles Lindblom, "Another State of Mind," American Political Science Review 76 (1982), 9-21.
Charles Lindblom, Politics and Markets (1977)
Theodore Lowi, The End of Liberalism (1969)
Catherine MacKinnon, Feminism Unmodified (1987) Towards a Feminist Theo~ of the State
Dale R. Marshall, "The Continuing Significance of Race: The Transformation of American Politics," American Political Science Review 84 (1990): 611-616.

Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism

C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (1956)

Plessv v. Fer~uson

Franklin D.Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1933 in Henry S. Commager, ed.,

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Documents of American History (7th ed., 1963), vol.2 no.476. (It is possible to listen to the speech on J82 D6 1968 PHONOTAPE in the O.S.U.Library.)

Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," American Political Science Review 87 (1993): 549-566.

FINAL EXAMINATION, ESSAY DUE: 1:30 P.M., WEDNESDAY, 14 MARCH

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