

AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Spring 2018

Government 2230
Hubbard Tower
Office Hours: Tu-Th 4-5:30 pm and by appointment

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This course focuses on the political thought of American statesmen, writers, and prominent citizens from the Founding up to the twentieth century, with special emphasis on three critical “moments”: 1) the Founding, 2) the Crisis of the House Divided, meaning the battle over slavery and the nature of the Union, and 3) the impact of evolutionary biology (in the forms of social Darwinism and pragmatism), historicism, and idealism on the development of American political thought and practice from the late 19th century to the present. The course concludes with a brief examination of contemporary liberalism and conservatism after 2016 and their place in the American political tradition.

The following books are required and are available for purchase or rent through Bowdoin’s textbook partner, Chegg, at www.chegg.com/bookstore/bowdoin:

- *Hamilton, Madison, Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Rossiter, with introduction by Charles R. Kesler (Mentor)
- **The Anti-Federalist Papers*, ed. Herbert Storing (Chicago)
- **The Essential Jefferson*, ed. Jean M. Yarbrough (Hackett)
- *Steven B. Smith, *The Writings of Abraham Lincoln* (Yale)
- *Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (Northeastern)

In addition, I have placed a number of short essays on electronic reserve and/or paper reserve in the library. **Note: these are on the LIBRARY reserves (not Blackboard).** They are marked on your syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are required to write three three-page thought papers. The first will be on the Anti-federalist-Federalist debates. The second paper will be on Abraham Lincoln, and the third on Herbert Croly, one of the great theoreticians of progressivism. There will also be a comprehensive final, consisting of a series of short to medium length essay questions.

Grades will be determined in the following manner:

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|----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Papers | 20% x 3 = | 60% |
| Final | | 35% |
| Class participation | 5% | (Thoughtful and sustained class participation can, and frequently does, make the difference in your final grade.) |

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Jan. 23 Is there such a thing as American Political Thought?

I. THE FOUNDING

Jan. 25 Principles of Liberal Republicanism

The First Founding:

- Mayflower Compact
(ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

The Second Founding:

- John Locke, Selections from *Second Treatise of Government*
(ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Declaration of Independence (in Kesler edition of *Federalist Papers*) and compare the final draft of the Declaration with Jefferson's version in *The Essential Jefferson*, pp. 18-22

Tocqueville and the Dynamic of Democracy:

- Part 2, chs. 1, 10, 13 from *Democracy in America*
(ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Jan. 30 Constituting the Liberal Republic

- Articles of Confederation
- Constitution of the United States
(Both in Kesler edition of *Federalist Papers*)

Republicanism: Three Views

- Montesquieu, Selections from *The Spirit of the Laws*
- David Hume, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth"
- Alexis de Tocqueville, "the spirit of religion" and the "spirit of liberty"
(All on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Feb. 1 Anti-Federalists: What is Their Legacy Today?

"Brutus," in Storing, # 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, pp. 108-126, 138-150

Feb. 6 "Federal Farmer," Storing, # 2, 6, 7, 16, pp. 39-43, 65-86; Patrick Henry, pp. 310-311 and 315-321

Feb. 8 "Report of the Pennsylvania Minority," Storing, pp. 202-222

"Brutus," # 11, 12, 15, pp. 162-170, 182-187

- Feb. 13 The Federalist Defense of the Extended Commercial Republic
Federalist Papers # 1, 9, 10, 11, 15, 23
- Feb. 15 *Federalist Papers* # 37, 39, 47, 48, 49, 51
- Feb. 20 *Federalist Papers* # 55, 57, 58, 62, 63
- Feb. 22 *Federalist Papers* # 68, 70, 71, 72, 78, 84
- Feb. 27 Hamilton and the Federalist Program
 - Excerpts from Report on Credit
 - Report on Manufactures
 - Argument for the Constitutionality of the Bank
 (All on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Mar. 1 - Pacificus (Hamilton)-Helvidius (Madison) Debate over which branch of
 government has primary responsibility for foreign affairs
 (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Jefferson and the Republican Program (in *Essential Jefferson*):
 - *Notes on Virginia*, Query 17, 18, 19, pp. 125-133
 - Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bank, 1791, pp. 32-36
- Mar. 5 **PAPERS DUE**
- Mar. 6 - Kentucky Resolutions, 1798, pp. 48-54
 - First and Second Inaugural Addresses, pp. 55-58, 60-64
- Letters (in *Essential Jefferson*):
 TJ to Messrs. Nehemiah Dodge and others, p. 59
 TJ to William S. Smith, Nov. 13, 1787, pp. 166-167
 TJ to Madison, Sept. 6, 1789, pp. 176-180
- Mar. 8 Letters
 TJ to Benjamin Banneker, Aug. 30, 1791, p. 181
 TJ to William Green Munford, June 18, 1799
 TJ to Henri Gregoire, Feb. 25, 1809, p. 205
 TJ to John Colvin, Sept. 20, 1810, pp. 208-210

TJ to John Adams, Oct. 28, 1813, pp. 214-219
TJ to John Taylor, May 28, 1816, pp. 233-236
TJ to Samuel Kercheval, July 12, 1816, pp. 239-245

SPRING BREAK - No classes Mar. 13-22

II. CRISIS OF THE HOUSE DIVIDED

"No policy that does not rest upon some philosophical public opinion can be permanently maintained." Abraham Lincoln, 1860

- Mar. 27 Calhoun, *Disquisition on Government from Union and Liberty*, pp. 5-51
 (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Mar. 29 Lincoln (in Smith): Introduction, xi-xxiii
 Lyceum Speech, Jan. 27, 1838, pp. 7-14
 Temperance Address, Feb. 22, 1842, pp. 14-22
 Eulogy on Henry Clay, July 6, 1852, pp. 43-54
 Address from Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Sept. 30, 1859, pp. 268-278
- Apr. 3 Steven Douglas from Lincoln-Douglas Debate, July 9, 1858
 (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Lincoln (in Smith):
 Fragments on Slavery, [1854?] p. 58
 Peoria Speech, Oct. 16, 1854, pp. 59-92
 Dred Scott Speech, June 26, 1857, pp. 108-119
- Apr. 5 Lincoln (in Smith):
 House Divided Speech, June 16, 1858, pp. 126-133
 On Slavery and Democracy, p. 150
 Pro-Slavery Theology, [1858?] p. 189
 Letter to H.L. Pierce, and Others, Apr. 6, 1859, pp. 243-244
 Fragment, [1861?] pp. 321-322
 Cooper Institute Speech, Feb. 27, 1860, pp. 283-298
 Speech at New Haven, Mar. 6, 1860, pp. 299-314

Apr. 10 Lincoln (in Smith):
 First Inaugural, Mar. 4, 1861, pp. 324-332
 Meditation on Divine Will, pp. 362-363
 Annual Message, Dec. 1, 1862, beginning at bottom of p. 384 to 392
 Final Emancipation Proclamation, Jan. 1, 1863, pp. 395-396
 Gettysburg Address, Nov. 19, 1863, p. 417
 Letter to Albert Hodges, Apr. 4, 1864, pp. 418-419
 Second Inaugural, Mar. 4, 1865, pp. 428-430
 Speech on Reconstruction, Apr. 11, 1865, pp. 431-434

Walt Whitman on the death of Lincoln: (April 15, 1865)

*“When lilacs last in the door-yard bloom’d,
 And the great star early droop’d in the western sky in the night,
 I mourn’d—and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.*

*O ever-returning spring! trinity sure to me you bring;
 Lilac blooming perennial, and drooping star in the west,
 And thought of him I love.”*

III. EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY, HISTORICISM, IDEALISM, PROGRESS, AND THE RISE OF THE MODERN ADMINISTRATIVE STATE

Apr. 12 Darwinism: Right and Left
 - William Graham Sumner, “Socialism”
 - John Dewey, “The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy”
 (Both on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Apr. 16 **PAPERS DUE**

Apr. 17 - William Graham Sumner, “The Forgotten Man”
 (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
 - Herbert Croly, *Promise of American Life*, ch. 1

Apr. 19 Croly, ch. 7, ch. 9

Apr. 24 Croly, ch. 11 (pp. 369-381), ch. 13 (pp. 409-421)

- Apr. 26 The New Freedom and The New Nationalism
 - Woodrow Wilson, “What is Progress?” and “The Meaning of Democracy”
 - Theodore Roosevelt, “The New Nationalism”
 (All on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Apr. 30 **PAPERS DUE**
- May 1 From Progressivism to Modern Liberalism—and Back
 - John Dewey, “The Future of Liberalism”
 - FDR, “The Commonwealth Club Address”; Selections 1944 SOTU
 - Students for a Democratic Society, (SDS) “Port Huron Statement”
 - Lyndon Baines Johnson, “The Great Society,” 1964
 - Barack Obama, First and Second Inaugural Messages
 (All on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- May 3 - Richard Rorty, selection from *Achieving Our Country*
 (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- The Conservative Counter-Revolution: a roadmap
 - James W. Ceaser, “Four Heads and One Heart: The American Conservative Movement” and “What Next for the Left?”
 (Both on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- May 8 The Conservative Counter-Revolution and the Trump Phenomenon
 - Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural, 1981; Farewell Address, Jan. 11, 1989
 - Milton Friedman, “Defining Principles: Capitalism and Freedom”
 - Tocqueville, “The Kind of Despotism Democratic Nations Have to Fear”
 - “Publius Decius Mus,” “The Flight 93 Election”
 (All on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

FINAL EXAM, Monday May 14, 2pm.