

AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Spring 2020

Government 2230
Hubbard Tower
Office Hours: TBD

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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 and the civil war, 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 and their place in the American political tradition.

The following books are required and are available from our virtual partner, eCampus at <http://bowdoin.ecampus.com/> or from Amazon or other online booksellers such as Barnes and Noble.

- *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. For the first, students will write on *The Federalist Papers* and the Anti-federalists. The second paper will be on Abraham Lincoln, and the third on Herbert Croly. There will also be a comprehensive final, consisting of short to medium length questions. The exam is on Monday, May 11, from 1:30-4:30.

Grades will be determined in the following manner:

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. 21 Is there such a thing as American Political Thought?

I. THE FOUNDING

Jan. 23 **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. 28 **Constituting the Liberal Republic**

- Articles of Confederation

- Constitution of the United States

(Both in Kesler edition of *Federalist Papers*)

- *Federalist Paper* #38

James W. Ceaser, "The First American Founder" at

<https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-first-american-founder>

Jan. 30 **Republicanism: Three Views**

- Montesquieu, Selections from *The Spirit of the Laws*

- David Hume, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth," "Of Commerce"

- Alexis de Tocqueville, "the spirit of religion" and "the spirit of liberty"

(All on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Feb. 4 **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. 11 "Report of the Pennsylvania Minority," Storing, pp. 202-222; "Brutus," # 11, 12, 15, pp. 162-170, 182-187

- Abraham Lincoln's Birthday: February 12

Feb. 13 **The Federalist Defense of the Extended Commercial Republic**
Federalist Papers # 1, 9, 10, 11, 15, 23

Feb. 18 *Federalist Papers # 37, 39, 47, 48, 49, 51*

Feb. 20 *Federalist Papers # 55, 57, 58, 62, 63, 65*

- George Washington's Birthday: February 22

Feb. 25 *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
 - Pacificus (Hamilton)-Helvidius (Madison) Debate over which branch of government has primary responsibility for foreign affairs
 (All on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Mar. 3 **Jefferson and the Republican Program** (in *Essential Jefferson*)
 - *Notes on Virginia*, Query 17, 18, 19, pp. 125-133
 - to Messrs. Nehemiah Dodge and others, p. 59
 - Kentucky Resolutions, pp. 48-54
 - First and Second Inaugural Addresses, pp. 55-58, 60-64

Mar. 5 **Letters** (in *Essential Jefferson*):
 TJ to William S. Smith, Nov. 13, 1787, pp. 166-167
 TJ to Madison, Sept. 6, 1789, pp. 176-180
 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: March 7-22

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. 24 Calhoun, *Disquisition on Government from Union and Liberty*, pp. 5-51
(ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Mar. 26 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
- Mar. 31 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. 2 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. 7 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. 9 **Darwinism: Right and Left**
- William Graham Sumner, “Socialism”
- John Dewey, “The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy”
 (Both on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Apr. 14 - William Graham Sumner, “The Forgotten Man” (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
 - Herbert Croly, *Promise of American Life*, ch. 1
- Apr. 16 Croly, ch. 7, ch. 9
- Apr. 21 Croly, ch. 11 (pp. 369-381), ch. 13 (pp. 409-421)
- Apr. 23 No class: read on your own Woodrow Wilson, “What is Progress?” and
 Theodore Roosevelt, “The New Nationalism”
 (Both on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Apr. 28 **The Three Waves of Modern Liberalism/Progressivism**
&
Apr. 30 - 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 Addresses
- A Postmodern Postscript**
 - Richard Rorty, selection from *Achieving Our Country*
 (All on ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

May 5

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)
- Tocqueville, “The Kind of Despotism Democratic Nations Have to Fear”

N.B. I am purposely leaving the readings for the last class incomplete. I’ll update as circumstances unfold.

May 11

FINAL EXAM, 1:30 pm.