

1.22.20

## Gov 3030: American Political Development

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Spring 2020, Tuesday and Thursday, 2:50-4:15  
Sills 209

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**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 3 to 5 PM and by appointment

### Course Description

This seminar will examine how the United States developed from a modest, agrarian republic into a “modern,” mass democracy. What economic, political, and institutional forces shaped this transformation? How did the path of development traced in the United States compare with that followed in Great Britain, France, Canada, Germany, and other comparable nation-states? Readings focus on the development of American federalism, the history of race relations, the formation of a bureaucratic establishment, and the rise of the presidency as the focal-point of party politics. Seminar discussion will examine how the relationships between these developments have shaped America’s liberal democratic values and transformed its political institutions.

### Course Requirements

All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade.

**1. Participation (25%)**—this includes several components:

- In-class participation, including “stupid” questions
- Pop-quizzes (if necessary)
- Attendance: you are required to attend all class sessions. Of course, people do get sick, have doctor’s appointments, etc. Nevertheless, I will grant excused absences sparingly. If you should miss class, it is your responsibility to secure notes from one of your classmates.

**2. Three essays (25% each):** 7-10 pages each. More information will be provided as the semester progresses.

### Writing Requirements

All written assignments must meet the specifications listed below. Failure to do so may result in a deduction of *at least* one-third of one grade (e.g. A- to B+, B+ to a B, B to B-):

- Stapled, Double-Spaced, with Pages Numbered
- Endnotes or footnotes required for all writing. If you have any concerns or questions about how to cite work appropriately, *please do not be afraid to ask*.
- Electronic (email) submissions will not be accepted.

*Late Papers:* Paper extensions will be granted only with a doctor or a dean’s note. Late papers will be penalized by two-thirds of a grade per day late (weekday or weekend day). The letter grade scale is A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, and so on. A reduction of two-thirds of a grade

would, for example, downgrade an A to a B+ or a B+ to a B-. Keep in mind: if you will be unable to submit a quality paper on time, it may make sense to take an extra day (and a one-day late penalty) to give yourself enough time to write a good paper. *You must inform me at least 24 hours in advance*, however, if you do plan to take a late day penalty. Failure to do so may result in an additional penalty.

### **Required Readings**

Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1997. [0-674-68937-2] (pbk.)

You must come prepared to discuss/write about all assigned readings. Since many of the readings are posted on Blackboard or are available as ebook chapters, it is your responsibility to find and read these articles/chapters.

### **Fineprint**

This syllabus is subject to change, and *probably will* change during the semester. Once we begin, I will get a better sense of the pace of our progress and of the reading preferences of the class. I will notify you of any changes that I make as soon as I make them.

### **Jan 21, Session 1: Introduction**

#### **Part I: Political Ideas and the Study of ‘American’ Identity**

#### **Jan 23, Session 2: Political scientists as storytellers**

- Ronald King and Thomas Langston, “Narratives of American Politics,” *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (June 2008): 235-252.
- Federalist Papers #10 and 51 (Madison) [BB]

#### **Jan 28, Session 3: Structure, expansion, and the reproduction of liberalism**

- Federalist Papers #6-8 and 11-13 (Hamilton) [BB]
- Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” [BB]

#### **Jan 30, Session 4: Liberalism and Republicanism**

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 9-20 [BB]
- Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, pp. 3-32 [BB]

#### **Feb 4, Session 5: Liberalism and Republicanism, cont’d**

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 31-57 and 87-98 [BB]

**I’ll be out of town Feb 6<sup>th</sup>—we’ll need to reschedule Session 6:** Race and the American tradition: just add and stir?

- Tocqueville, “The Three Races,” Vol. 1, Chapter 10 [BB]
- Rogers Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: the Multiple Traditions in America,” *American Political Science Review* 87 (September 1993): 549-566.

#### **Feb 11, Session 7: Settler Empire**

- Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom*, pp. 1-19 and 99-153 [ebook]

#### **Part II: Democratization and the Arrested Development of the Civil Rights State**

**Feb 13, Session 8:** Party development and abolitionist protest

- Jeffrey Selinger, “Rethinking the Development of Legitimate Party Opposition in the United States, 1793-1828,” *Political Science Quarterly* 127 (November 2012): 263-287.
- Frances Fox Piven, *Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America*, chapter 4 [ebook]

**Feb 18, Session 9:** ‘Progress’ towards universal, white male suffrage

- David Bateman, *Disenfranchising Democracy*, pp. 75-150 [ebook]

**Feb 20, Session 10:** Dissensus and the civil rights movement

- Frances Fox Piven, *Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America*, chapter 5 [ebook]

**Feb 25, Session 11:** An institutionalist approach to the civil rights movement

- Richard Valelly, “Party, Coercion, and Inclusion: The Two Reconstructions of the South’s Electoral Politics,” *Politics and Society* 21 (March 1993): 37-67.

**Feb 27, Session 12:** Slavery and historical causation

- Selections from Richard Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions* [ebook]
- Selections from Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen, *Deep Roots* [ebook], OR Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen, “The Political Legacy of Slavery,” *Journal of Politics* 78 (July 2016): 621-641.

**Mar 3, Session 13:** Weighing the case for reparations . . .

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic* [BB]

**Part III: Liberal Democracy, the Modern State, and Political Time**

**Mar 5, Session 14:** Socialism and the modern state

- Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, pages TBA [BB]

**Spring Break!!!**

**Mar 24, Session 15:** The Cold War state

- A teaser—foreshadowing the rest of the syllabus! Thomas Edsall, “The Fight Over How Trump Fits in With the Other 44 Presidents” [BB]
- Peter Gourevitch, “Reinventing the American State: Political Dynamics in the Post-Cold War Era,” *Shaped By War and Trade*, chapter 11 [BB]

**Mar 26, Session 16:** Modern governance and its discontents

- Theodore Lowi, “The Public Philosophy: Interest-Group Liberalism,” *American Political Science Review* 61 (March 1967): 5-24.
- Steven Teles, “Kludgeocracy: the American Way of Policy,” *New America Foundation* (December 2012) [BB]

**Mar 31, Session 17:** Political Time

- Skowronek, *The Politics That Presidents Make*, Part I (Chapters 1, 2, and 3)

**Apr 2, Session 18, 3:30-5 PM:** Arthur Brooks (The Kennedy School at Harvard) will visit with the class

- Eric Posner and Adrian Vermuele, “Tyrannophobia” [BB]

**Apr 7, Session 19:** Reconstructive Leadership: Jackson, Lincoln, and FDR

- Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, Ch. 5, P. 1; Ch. 6, P. 1; Ch. 7, P. 1

**Apr 9, Session 20:** FDR, Johnson, and Carter

- Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, Ch. 7, Ps. 2 and 3

**Apr 14, Session 21:** Reagan, Bush I, and the Waning of Political Time

- Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, Part III

**Apr 16, Session 22:** Is Transformational Leadership Still Possible?

- Skowronek, “Is Transformational Leadership Still Possible? Barack Obama in Historical Perspective” (BB)
- Skowronek, “What time is it?” Interview with *The Nation* [link on BB]

**Part IV: Historical Perspectives on Populism and Democratic Backsliding**

**Apr 21, Session 23:** Political nightmares of the past

- Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 305-388 [ebook]

**Apr 23, Session 24:** Dystopian fantasy or reality?

- Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* cont’d, pages TBA
- Lecture/podcast by Timothy Snyder, TBA

**Apr 28, Session 25:** Approaches to ‘democratic backsliding’

- Yoni Applebaum, “How America Ends,” *The Atlantic* [BB]
- Noam Gidron and Daniel Ziblatt, “Center-Right Parties in Advanced Industrialized Democracies” [BB]

**Apr 30, Session 26:** Negative partisanship and political ‘dysfunction’

- Alan Abramowitz and Steven Webster, “Negative Partisanship: Why Americans Dislike Parties But Behave Like Rabid Partisans,” *Advances in Political Psychology* 39 (2018): 119-135.
- John Ferejohn, “Judicializing Politics, Politicizing Law,” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 65 (Summer 2002): 41-68.

**May 5, Session 27:** Populists with pitchforks?

- Paul Pierson, “American Hybrid: Donald Trump and the strange merger of populism and plutocracy,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 68 (2017): 105-119.
- Selections from Stephen Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, pages TBA