

ADVANCED SEMINAR IN TOCQUEVILLE
Government 3200

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HUBBARD TOWER

More than 150 years after its publication, *Democracy in America* remains the most powerful sympathetic critique of modern liberal democracy ever written. What is the nature of democracy and how does it shape the character of those who live in it? How does Tocqueville's analysis differ from other political philosophers or American statesmen? Through a careful reading of the text and selected secondary sources, we consider Tocqueville's understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses to which modern democracy gives rise. Among other things, we shall consider whether, or in what way, Tocqueville is a political philosopher, the significance of history and Providence in his analysis, his distinctive treatment of America's "founding(s)," the connection between virtue and self-interest, the tension between liberty and equality, as well as between equality and excellence, the connection between the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty, and whether democracies are capable of greatness, and if so, what kind?

Although *Democracy in America* is Tocqueville's greatest book, we can gain further insights into his political thought by considering his analysis in *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, his study of pre-Revolutionary France, published near the end of his life.

Tocqueville was more than a man of letters, however. He also was actively involved in French politics, serving as a member of the Chamber of Deputies from 1839 to 1848. There he defended the French colonization of Algeria and called for the abolition of slavery. He served briefly as minister of foreign affairs in 1849 under the regime of Louis Napoleon, with Arthur de Gobineau as his personal secretary. Tocqueville and Gobineau later carried on an extensive correspondence over race and other political topics. In his *Recollections*, published posthumously, Tocqueville recalled his years in French politics. To gain a better appreciation of Tocqueville as a political actor and thinker, we read selections from these writings, as well as recently published letters on America published after 1840.

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

- *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville, trans. Winthrop and Mansfield (Chicago)
- *The Tocqueville Reader: A Life in Letters and Politics*, ed. Olivier Zunz and Alan S. Kahan (Blackwell Publishing)
- *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, Tocqueville, trans. Alan S. Kahan (Chicago)
- *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*, Pierre Manent (Rowman & Littlefield)

In addition, I have placed a number of readings on electronic reserve, and these are noted on your syllabi.

Finally, if you have not already done so, I strongly recommend that you read
- *Tocqueville: A Very Short Introduction*, Harvey C. Mansfield (Oxford)

Of special interest, depending upon your topics, may be the following:

- *Tocqueville's Political Science: Classic Essays*, ed. Peter A. Lawler (Garland)
Out of print, but a Xeroxed copy will be on reserve in the library.
- *Interpreting Tocqueville's Democracy in America*, ed. Ken Masugi (Rowman & Littlefield) On reserve
- *The Cambridge Companion to Tocqueville*, ed. Cheryl B. Welch (Cambridge)
- *The Chicago Companion to Tocqueville's Democracy in America*, James T. Schleifer (Chicago)
- *The Restless Mind: Alexis de Tocqueville on the Origin and Perpetuation of Human Liberty*, Peter A. Lawler (Rowman & Littlefield)
- *Tocqueville, Democracy, and Religion: Checks and Balances for Democratic Souls*, Alan S. Kahan (Oxford, 2015)
- *Alexis de Tocqueville: Selected Letters on Politics and Society*, trans. Roger Boesche (University of California Press, 1985)
- *Tocqueville Between Two Worlds: The Making of a Political and Theoretical Life*, Sheldon S. Wolin (Princeton)
- *Tocqueville's Voyages: The Evolution of His Ideas and Their Journey Beyond His Time*, ed. Christine Dunn Henderson (Liberty Fund)
- *Soft Despotism: Democracy's Drift, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Tocqueville*, Paul Rahe (Yale 2009)

The above list is selective, but it will give you a start. In addition, two journals, *The Review of Politics* and *American Political Thought*, have published MANY fine essays on Tocqueville.

This is an Advanced Seminar in Political Theory, and as such, I expect students to take the initiative in discussing each day's reading assignment. Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

An advanced seminar provides a great opportunity to write an extended **research** paper on a topic of your choosing. For some of you, this may be the first time you have written a research paper, weighing and analyzing scholarly interpretations as you develop your own argument. Moreover, because there is only one paper, and it is not due until the end of the semester, the seminar can also cause some anxiety about your progress in the course. To minimize the stress, I will be setting a number of deadlines, and asking to meet individually with each of you to discuss the progress of your papers as well as give you feedback on your classroom participation.

In preparing your research papers, you will find the list of suggested readings in the Winthrop/Mansfield edition beginning on page lxxxvii indispensable. See also the list of suggested readings in Zunz and Kahan, pp. 342-343. Students should also use the resources in the library (including the librarians!) to track down more recent essays and books. Google is not enough. Finally, in preparing the final draft, students should consult Kate Turabian's *Chicago Guide for Writers of Term Papers* for proper style and usage. Turabian is **essential** reading. The librarians stand ready to assist you. You must cite sources properly. (Tocqueville insists on the importance of form, especially in a democracy!)

N.B. This is the **ONLY** class in which I read first drafts of your papers. If you wish me to do so, you must give me a draft of your paper by April 27. This is a **FIRM** deadline.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Regular and active class participation	30%
Half hour classroom presentation on draft of paper topic	20%
Research paper, approx. 20 pp.	50%

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Jan. 23	Introductory remarks. If you have not done so over break, read Mansfield, <i>A Very Short Introduction</i> .
Jan. 25	Editors' Introduction, COMPLETE, and Author's Introduction, pp. 3-15, <i>Democracy in America</i>
Jan. 30	Vol. I, part one, chs. 1-5, pp. 19-93
Feb. 1	Vol. I, part one, chs. 6-8, pp. 93-161
Feb. 6	Vol. I, part two, chs. 1-5, pp. 165-220
Feb. 8	Vol. I, part two, chs. 6-8, pp. 220-264
Feb. 13	Vol. I, part two, ch. 9, pp. 264-302; and Tocqueville to Mde. Swetchine, in Zunz and Kahan, pp. 334-337
Feb. 15	Vol. I, part two, ch. 10, pp. 302-348
Feb. 20	Vol. I, part two, ch. 10, pp. 348-396
Feb. 22	Vol. II, part one, chs. 1-10, pp. 399-439
Feb. 27	Vol. II, part one, chs. 11-21, pp. 439-476
Mar. 1	Vol. II, part two, chs. 1-20, pp. 479-532

- Mar. 6 Vol. II, part three, chs. 1-17, pp. 535-589
- Mar. 8 Vol. II, parts three and four to end, pp. 589-676

Note: Before you leave for spring break you should have identified a research topic, along with a working bibliography, and cleared it with me. When you return, you should have an outline of your research paper, and a more complete bibliography.

Spring Break

- Mar. 27 Manent, *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*, entirety
- Mar. 29 Zunz and Kahan, pp. 136-160, 334-337
- Apr. 3 Tocqueville in Politics: Zunz and Kahan, pp. 217-231; and Tocqueville, Essay on Algeria (1841) (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
OUTLINE OF PAPERS DUE
- Apr. 5 Letters on America after 1840, in Craiutu and Jennings, Nos. 83, 85, 105, 110, 122, 129, 136, 144, 159, 172, and Speech on the Right to Work, Sept. 12, 1848 (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Apr. 10 Tocqueville correspondence with Arthur de Gobineau: Oct. 11, 1853, Nov. 17, 1853, Dec. 20, 1853, Jan. 8, 1856, July 30, 1856, Jan. 14, 1857, Jan. 24, 1857 (ELECTRONIC RESERVE); James Ceaser, ch. 6, "Racialism vs. Political Science: The Tocqueville-Gobineau Exchange," in *Reconstructing America* (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Apr. 12 Zunz and Kahan, pp. 232-273, except for letter to Gobineau; Selections from *Recollections*: Part II, ch. 2, "Paris, the day after the 24th Feb..." and Part II, ch. 11, "The Drafting Committee of the Constitution" (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Apr. 17 *Old Regime*, Preface, pp. 83-89; *OR*, pp. 93-138
- Apr. 19 *Old Regime*, pp. 138-192
UPDATED OUTLINES DUE

Apr. 24 *Old Regime*, pp. 195-247, and entry on Languedoc

Apr. 26 RECAP

Apr. 27 **LAST DAY TO SUBMIT DRAFTS**

May 1 Classroom presentations (we may play around with this schedule)

May 3 Classroom presentations

May 8 Classroom presentations

Tocqueville dinner: TBD

May 19 **PAPERS DUE**