

ADVANCED SEMINAR IN TOCQUEVILLE  
Government 3200

Professor Yarbrough  
Office Hours: Tu-Th 4:15-5:30 and by appointment  
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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 and 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 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 that included an important exchange about the political significance of race. 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 reading:

- *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 for your research are 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 in America*, George Wilson Pierson (Johns Hopkins)
- *Alexis de Tocqueville: Democracy's Guide*, Joseph Epstein (HarperCollins)
- *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)

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 with questions.

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. It is, however, only a beginning. Students should also use the resources in the library (especially the librarians!) to track down more recent essays and books. **Google is not enough.** Finally, in preparing the final draft, students should consult the most recent edition of Kate Turabian's *Chicago Guide for Writers of Term Papers* for proper style and usage. Turabian is **essential** reading, and the librarians will help you with it. 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 Tuesday, April 28**. This is a **FIRM** deadline.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

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

## READING ASSIGNMENTS:

- Jan. 21        Introductory remarks. If you have not done so over break, get started on Mansfield, *A Very Short Introduction*.
- Jan. 23        Editors' Introduction, pp. xvii-xlii and Author's Introduction, pp. 3-15, *Democracy in America*
- Jan. 28        Vol. I, part one, chs. 1-5, pp. 19-93
- Jan. 30        Vol. I, part one, chs. 6-8, pp. 93-161
- Feb. 4        Manent, chs. 1-4 and Editors' Introduction, pp. xliii-lii
- Feb. 6        Vol. I, part two, chs. 1-6, pp. 165-235
- Feb. 11        Vol. I, part two, chs. 7-9, pp. 235-302; Editors' Introduction, pp. lii-lvii; and Tocqueville to Mde. Swetchine, in Zunz and Kahan, pp. 334-337
- Feb. 13        Vol. I, part two, ch. 10, pp. 302-348, Pitts on the abolition of slavery in the French Colonies, (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Feb. 18        Vol. I, part two, ch. 10, pp. 349-400. Interlude: Tocqueville's Travels to England and Ireland; Letters, in Zunz and Kahan, pp. 142-150, 152-160
- Feb. 20        Vol. II, part one, chs. 1-21, pp. 399-476; Manent, ch. 8
- Feb. 25        Vol. II, part two, chs. 1-20, pp. 479-532
- Feb. 27        Vol. II, part three, chs. 1-12, pp. 535-576; Editors' Introduction, pp. lxxvii-lxxx; Manent, chs. 5 and 7
- Mar. 3        Vol. II, part three, chs. 13-26, pp. 577-635; Manent, ch. 9
- Mar. 5        Vol. II, part four to end; Editors' Introduction, pp. lxxx-lxxxvi

**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 7-22**

- Mar. 24      John Stuart Mill on *Democracy in America* (ELECTRONIC RESERVE), and Tocqueville's response in Zunz and Kahan, pp. 213-214
- Mar. 26      Tocqueville in Politics: Zunz and Kahan, pp. 217-231; and Tocqueville, Essay on Algeria (1841) (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)  
**OUTLINE OF PAPERS DUE**
- Mar. 31      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. 2      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. 7      Zunz and Kahan, pp. 232-273, except for letter to Gobineau; Selections from *Recollections*: Part II, ch. 2, "Paris, the day after the 24<sup>th</sup> Feb..." and Part II, ch. 11, "The Drafting Committee of the Constitution" (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
- Apr. 9      *Old Regime*, Preface, pp. 83-89; *OR*, pp. 93-124
- Apr. 14      *Old Regime*, pp. 124-171  
**UPDATED OUTLINES DUE**
- Apr. 16      *Old Regime*, pp. 171-192
- Apr. 21      *Old Regime*, pp. 195-247

Apr. 23	No class, but read Appendix, <i>Old Regime</i> , pp. 249-256
Apr. 28	<b>LAST DAY TO SUBMIT DRAFTS</b>
Apr. 30	Classroom presentations (we may play around with this schedule)
May 5	Classroom presentations
	<b>Tocqueville dinner: TBD</b>
May 12	<b>PAPERS DUE</b>