

Spring 2000

American Political Ideas: The Founders

Steven Alan Samson

Liberty University, ssamson@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs

 Part of the [Other Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Samson, Steven Alan, "American Political Ideas: The Founders" (2000). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 383.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs/383

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Helms School of Government at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu.

GOVT 402
American Political Ideas: The Founders
Liberty University
Office Hours

SPRING 2000
e-mail: ssamson@liberty.edu
MWF 9-10; 1:15-2:15; T 9:30-11:30; by appointment

Dr. Steven Alan Samson
Office: DeMoss 130
Phone: Ext. 2640

DESCRIPTION

The political thought of the Pilgrims, the Puritans, and the Founding Fathers, emphasizing the impact of Christianity upon American political ideas.

PURPOSE

1. Students will be introduced to key political and intellectual figures that helped shape the American political tradition at its founding.
2. Students will explore and evaluate the interplay of character, circumstance, and thought on the founding by examining primary as well as secondary sources.
3. Students will thereby be enabled to discern the elements of an American political theory that may be applied critically in reviewing current issues and events.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student is responsible for assigned readings and should keep a loose-leaf notebook of class materials.
2. Participation is an essential part of class. Reading assignments should be completed before the class meets. Be prepared to discuss readings and current events.
3. Class trips are planned for Monticello on February 3 and Montpelier on March 2. Carpooling will be arranged so that everyone may be accommodated.
4. Regular attendance is required. Persistent tardiness, lengthy absences, or erratic attendance will have a detrimental effect on grades. Three weeks of unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. If you expect to miss all or a substantial part of class, please notify me. Perfect attendance (no more than four tardies) is worth an extra grade level on one exam.
5. Students will be tested on the lecture and reading material through a series of three exams. The final grade will be determined by taking the average of the exam scores and the research papers, two copies of which should be submitted.
6. Exams should be taken at the scheduled date and time. Make-up exams must be taken in the testing center within five days except in case of a lengthy illness, which may be excused with a note from the doctor. After five days the student will lose one grade level on the exam.
7. The research project involves three phases of development. Each student will take responsibility for one of the founders, except George Washington. Preference will be given to such key figures as John Adams, Samuel Adams, Charles Carroll, John Dickinson, Oliver Ellsworth, Benjamin Franklin, Elbridge Gerry, Nathaniel Gorham, Alexander Hamilton, John Hancock, Patrick Henry, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, Rufus King, Richard Henry Lee, James Madison,

Luther Martin, George Mason, Gouverneur Morris, Robert Morris, James Otis, William Paterson, Charles Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Edmund Randolph, Benjamin Rush, John Rutledge, Roger Sherman, James Wilson, John Witherspoon, and Robert Yates. The first phase is to compile and write a 4-6 page bibliographic essay on primary and secondary sources by and about the founder [DUE DATE: February 29]. The second phase will involve reading and writing a 6-8 page review of a recent biography of the founder or a book from the recommended list [DUE DATE: March 30]. The third phase will be to contribute to classroom discussions of collateral readings and the roles played by the various founders. At least one classroom session will be devoted to a discussion of each founder, led in part by the students.

8. The grading scale is 100-90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59 and below=F.

READING

Textbooks

Brookhiser, Richard. Founding Father [B]
McDonald, Forrest. American Presidency [M]
Samson, Steven. GOVT 402 Readings

Recommended

Bailyn, Bernard. The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1967.
Banning, Lance. The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic, 1995.
Brookhiser, Richard. Alexander Hamilton, American, 1999.
Carey, George W. The Federalist: Design for a Constitutional Republic, 1989.
Collier, Christopher and James Lincoln. Decision at Philadelphia: The Constitutional Convention of 1787, 1986.
Ellis, Joseph J. American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson, 1996.
_____. Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adams, 1993.
Kirk, Russell. The Roots of American Order, 1974.
Lutz, Donald S. The Origins of American Constitutionalism, 1988.
_____. A Preface to American Political Theory, 1992.
Maier, Pauline. American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence, 1997.
Matthews, Richard K. If Men Were Angels: James Madison and the Heartless Empire of Reason, 1995.
_____. The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson: A Revisionist View, 1984. [Supplemented by Peterson]
Mayer, Henry. A Son of Thunder: Patrick Henry and the American Republic, 1991.
Peterson, Merrill D. Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue, 1978. [Supplemented by Matthews on Jefferson]
Smith, Richard Norton. Patriarch: George Washington and the New Nation, 1993.

SCHEDULE

FIRST WEEK: FOUNDLINGS AND FATHERS (1/20-25)

Required B. Introduction, Fathers; Kendall and Carey, Basic Symbols, ch. 1; Maier, American Scripture, Introduction; Lutz, Preface, ch. 4..

Collateral Wilder, "Covenantal Tradition."

SECOND WEEK: FEDERALISM: MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION ROOTS (1/27-2/1)

Required B. Nature; M. 1; Ellis, Cultures, ch. 9; Alvarado, "Fountainhead of Liberalism."

Collateral Morgan, Inventing, Origins, ch. 3; Bradford, Remembering, Part I.

THIRD WEEK: LEGAL BACKGROUND (2/3-8)

Required MONTICELLO (2/3) (May be canceled due to snow); B. Morals; M. 2.

Collateral Amos, Declaration, ch. 2;" Alvarado, Common Law, 6-8.

FOURTH WEEK: PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (2/10-15)

Required B. Ideas; M. 3; Lutz, Colonial Origins, Introductory Essay.

Collateral Elazar, "Federal Theology; Alvarado, Common Law, chs. 9-10.

FIFTH WEEK: COVENANTS AND COMMONWEALTHS (2/17-22)

Required M. 4; Lutz, Colonial Origins, nos. 3-8; 18-20, 22, 43. Mason, Free Government, II, 1-4; Lieber, "Rise of the Constitution," pp. 17-36.

Collateral Kendall and Carey, Basic Symbols, chs. 2-3;

SIXTH WEEK: COLONIAL EXPERIENCE (2/24-29)

Required M. 5; Samson, "Covenant Origins; Mason, Free Government, II, 5-6; Lieber, "Rise of the Constitution," pp. 36-63; ESSAY DUE (2/29)

Collateral Sandoz, Political Sermons, 4, 9, 11; Kendall and Carey, Basic Symbols, ch. 4

SEVENTH WEEK: MONTPELIER

MONTPELIER (3/2); FIRST EXAM (3/7)

EIGHTH WEEK: DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE (3/9-21)

Required Lieber, "Rise of the Constitution," pp. 64-85; Amos, Declaration, Introduction; Titus "Declaration;" Lutz, Origins, ch. 9; Drayton, "Charge;" Declaration of Independence.

Collateral Kendall and Carey, Basic Symbols, ch. 5; Maier, American Scripture, II, 3

NINTH WEEK: REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE (3/23-28)

Required B. War; M. 6; Adams, Jubilee Address, pp. 5-16; Jones, "Christianity."

Collateral Lutz, Origins, ch. 10; Lutz, Colonial, nos. 78, 80

TENTH WEEK: FRAMING THE CONSTITUTION (3/30-4/4)

Required B. Constitution; M. 7; Lutz, Origins, ch. 11; Adams, Jubilee Address, pp. 16-57; Lieber, "What Is Our Constitution?"

Collateral Bradford, Original Intentions, ch. 1; Kendall and Carey, Basic Symbols, ch. 6.

ELEVENTH WEEK: RATIFYING THE CONSTITUTION (4/6-11)

Required SECOND EXAM (4/6); M. 8; Lutz, Origins, ch. 12; Adams, Jubilee Address, pp. 57-76; Federalist, nos. 10, 39, 51; Letters from a Federal Farmer, nos. 1-2.

Collateral Morgan, Inventing, ch. 11; Bradford, Original Intentions, ch. 5.

TWELFTH WEEK: WASHINGTON ADMINISTRATION (4/13-18)

Required B. President; M. 9; Adams, Jubilee Address, pp. 76-120; Lieber, "Washington and Napoleon."

Collateral; Forgie, Patricide, ch. 1; Kendall and Carey, Basic Symbols, ch. 7.

THIRTEENTH WEEK: FOUNDING FATHERS (4/20-25)

Required M. 10; B. Founding Father; Lincoln, "Lyceum Address."

Collateral Forgie, Patricide, ch. 2; Sheldon, Jefferson, chs. 1, 9;

FOURTEENTH WEEK: WRAP-UP (4/27)

Required B. Death; Lutz, Preface, ch. 6; THIRD EXAM

Collateral Kendall and Carey, Basic Symbols, ch. 8; McDonald, Constitutional History, ch. 9

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alvarado, Ruben. A Common Law: The Law of Nations and Western Civilization. Aalten, The Netherlands: Pietas Press, 1999.

Amos, Gary T. Defending the Declaration: How the Bible and Christianity Influenced the Declaration of Independence. Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1989.

Bahnsen, Greg L. "Introduction to John Cotton's Abstract of the Laws of New England," Journal of Christian Reconstruction, 5 (Winter 1978-79): 75-81.

Bailyn, Bernard. Faces of the Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

Bailyn, Bernard. The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1967.

_____. The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1974.

Banning, Lance. The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Boorstin, Daniel J. The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993 [1948].

Bradford, M. E. A Better Guide Than Reason: Studies in the American Revolution. LaSalle, IL: Sherwood Sugden, 1979.

_____. Original Intentions: On the Making and Ratification of the United States Constitution. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993.

- _____. Remembering Who We Are: Observations of a Southern Conservative. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985.
- _____. A Worthy Company: Brief Lives of the Framers of the Constitution. Marlborough, NH: Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1982.
- Brookhiser, Richard. Alexander Hamilton, American. New York: Free Press, 1999.
- Carey, George W. The Federalist: Design for a Constitutional Republic. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- Collier, Christopher and James Lincoln. Decision in Philadelphia: The Constitutional Convention of 1787. New York: Ballantine, 1986.
- Diamond, Martin. The Founding of the Democratic Republic. Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock, 1981.
- Eidsmoe, John. Christianity and the Constitution: The Faith of Our Founding Fathers. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.
- Elazar, Daniel J. "From Biblical Covenant to Modern Federalism: The Federal Theology Bridge," American Political Science Association, 1990.
- Ellis, Joseph J. American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson. New York: Vintage, 1996.
- _____. Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adams. New York: W. W. Norton, 1993.
- Ellis, Richard J. American Political Cultures. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Evans, M. Stanton. The Theme Is Freedom: Religion, Politics, and the American Tradition. Washington: Regnery, 1994.
- Fischer, David Hackett. Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Fisher, Gene, and Glen Chambers. The Revolution Myth. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1981.
- Fleming, Thomas. Duel: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and the Future of America. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Forgie, George B. Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age. New York: W. W. Norton, 1979.
- Greene, Jack P., ed. Colonies to Nation, 1763-1789: A Documentary History of the American Revolution. New York: W. W. Norton, 1975 [1967].
- Hall, Verna M., comp. The Christian History of the American Revolution: Consider and Ponder. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1976.
- _____. The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America, 2 vols. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1966.
- Jaffa, Harry V. How to Think About the American Revolution. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1978.
- Kammen, Michael, ed. The Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History. New York: Penguin, 1986.
- Kendall, Willmoore, and George W. Carey. The Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970.
- Kennedy, Roger G. Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Kirk, Russell. America's British Culture. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1993.

- _____. The Roots of American Order. LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1974.
- Langguth, A. J. Patriots: The Men Who Started the American Revolution. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988.
- Lutz, Donald S., ed. Colonial Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998.
- _____. The Origins of American Constitutionalism. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.
- _____. A Preface to American Political Theory. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992.
- Maier, Pauline. American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.
- Mason, Alpheus Thomas. Free Government in the Making: Readings in American Political Thought, New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Matthews, Richard K. If Men Were Angels: James Madison and the Heartless Empire of Reason. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995.
- _____. The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson: a Revisionist View. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984.
- Mayer, Henry. A Son of Thunder: Patrick Henry and the American Republic. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991 [1986].
- McDonald, Forrest. A Constitutional History of the United States. New York: Franklin Watts, 1982.
- _____. Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985.
- McIlwain, Charles Howard. The American Revolution: A Constitutional Interpretation. Ithaca, NY: Great Seal Books, 1958 [1923].
- _____. Constitutionalism: Ancient and Modern., revised ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1947.
- McLaughlin, Andrew C. The Confederation and the Constitution, 1783-1789. New York: Collier, 1962.
- Morgan, Edmund S. Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America. New York: W. W. Norton, 1988.
- Morison, Samuel Eliot. The Oxford History of the American People. 3 vols. New York: New American Library, 1972 [1965].
- Morris, Richard B. Seven Who Shaped Our Destiny: The Founding Fathers as Revolutionaries. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
- Nock, Albert Jay. Mr. Jefferson. Tampa: Hallberg, 1983 [1926].
- Pangle, Lorraine Smith and Thomas L. The Learning of Liberty: The Educational Ideas of the American Founders. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993.
- Parrington, Vernon Louis. Main Currents in American Thought: An Interpretation of American literature from the Beginnings to 1920. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1930.
- Phillips, Kevin. The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics, and the Triumph of Anglo-America. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Rahe, Paul A. Republics Ancient and Modern. Vol. 3: Inventions of Prudence: Constituting the American Regime. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

- Richards, Carl J. The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen. Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man. Providence, RI: Berg, 1993 [1938].
- Rossiter, Clinton. 1787: The Grand Convention. New York: W. W. Norton, 1987 [1966].
- Sandoz, Ellis. A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion, and the American Founding. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990.
- _____, ed. Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805. Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991.
- Shain, Barry Alan. The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Sheldon, Garrett Ward. The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Smith, Richard Norton. Patriarch: George Washington and the New American Nation. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
- Storing, Herbert J. What the Anti-Federalists Were For. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Swanson, Mary-Elaine. The Education of James Madison: A Model for Today. Montgomery, AL: Hoffman Education Center, 1992.
- Titus, Herbert W. "The Christian Legacy of America's Declaration of Independence."
- Vaughan, Alden T., ed. Chronicles of the American Revolution: Originally Compiled by Hezekiah Niles as "Principles and Acts of the Revolution in America". New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965.
- Warren, Charles. "Frequent Recurrence to Fundamental Principles: The Constitution and American Ideas," The Journal of the Foundation for American Christian Education, 2 (1990): 98-130.
- Wills, Garry. Explaining America: The Federalist. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981.
- _____. Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978.
- Wilson, Edmund. Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977 [1962].
- Wood, Gordon S. The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969.
- Zuckert, Michael P. Natural Rights and the New Republicanism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.