

1997

Seminar: American Political Thought Syllabus

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DESCRIPTION

This seminar is designed to provide an overview of the key ideas and purposes that have shaped the American political experiment and to introduce students to major sources of American political thought from the colonial period to the present. Using an approach that is at once chronological and topical, we will also study methodological issues in light of the possibility (or impossibility) of a distinctly American political theory.

Chronologically the seminar is divided into three phases. We begin by reviewing the classical and Christian intellectual traditions transplanted by the European settlers. Special attention will be given to distinctly American contributions to the growth of institutional liberty. Next, we examine the development and broadening of this new political tradition as a practical response to the demands of nation-building, sectional rivalries, the Civil War, immigration, industrialization, the rise of great fortunes, social and racial conflict, foreign wars and economic crises. Here we will emphasize the contributions of individual thinkers and schools of thought. The seminar concludes by considering some of the challenges Americans face as they strive to realize their ideal of "one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student is responsible for assigned readings and should keep a looseleaf notebook for class materials.
2. Participation is an essential part of class. Reading assignments must be completed before the class meets.
3. Attendance is required. One week's absence may be excused for good cause. Each week's absence after the first will result in the loss of half a grade.
4. Students will be tested on their knowledge of reading and discussion material through three essay and identification exams (60%).
5. The remainder of the grade will be determined by three writing assignments.
 - A 4-6 page report on the intellectual background of American political thought from one of the following books: Barr, Burgess, Evans [8-17], Fischer [pp. 3-205, 783-898]; Kirk [1-8], Lippmann, Lutz, Reichley [1-5], Schlossberg, Voegelin, or Weaver (10%). DUE: February 12.
 - A 4-6 page bibliographic essay on a selected American political thinker based on a careful examination of at least one major work and a brief review of several other works (10%). DUE: March 5.
 - A 6-8 page original paper on a topic approved in advance (20%). It will be presented and critiqued in the manner of a formal academic conference. DUE: April 9. This paper may be consolidated with the bibliographic essay if the two are clearly related.
6. Good general sources of primary materials include The Annals of America (originally published in 1968) and the Evans Collection (up to 1800).

7. My surgery is scheduled for Friday, February 20th. Although it is possible I will be able to return for classes during the first week of May, I do not expect to be able to resume a full schedule until after Spring Break. Please continue the reading and pursue your research projects in my absence.

READING LIST

Textbooks

Boorstin, Daniel. The Genius of American Politics [B]
Levy, Michael B. Political Thought in America [L]
Lutz, Donald. A Preface to American Political Theory [P]

Reserve Desk

Barr, Stringfellow. Voices That Endured
Grimes, Alan Pendleton. American Political Thought [G]
Hall, Verna. Christian History of the Constitution, vol. 1 [H]
Kirk, Russell. The Portable Conservative Reader [K]
Mason, Alpheus Thomas. Free Government in the Making [M]

Stacks

Burgess, John W. Recent Changes in American Constitutional Theory
Evans, M. Stanton. The Theme Is Freedom
Fischer, David Hackett. Albion's Seed
Kirk, Russell. The Roots of American Order
Lippmann, Walter. Essays in the Public Philosophy
Lutz, Donald S. The Origins of American Constitutionalism
Reichley, A. James. Religion in American Public Life
Schlossberg, Herbert. Idols for Destruction
Voegelin, Eric. The New Science of Politics
Weaver, Richard M. Ideas Have Consequences

SCHEDULE

FIRST WEEK: INTRODUCTION (January 15-20)

B. 1; P. 1; Bruce Shelley, The Gospel and the American Dream, chs. 3-4.
Background: G. 1; R. J. Rushdoony, "The Importance of the Law," Institutes of Biblical Law, pp. 1-14.

SECOND WEEK: PURITANISM (January 22-27)

L. 1 [pp. 1-37]; B. 2; P. 2; John Cotton [M 2: 3]; Fundamental Orders of Connecticut [H. pp. 253-61]. Background: G. 2.

THIRD WEEK: ENGLISH REVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT (January 29-February 3)

L. 1 [pp. 38-47]; P. 5; Algernon Sidney [H. pp. 126-30]; John Locke and James Harrington [M. 1: 3-4]; Petition of Right and English Bill of Rights [H. pp. 42-47]. Background: G. 3

FOURTH WEEK: AMERICAN WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE (February 5-10)

L. 2; B. 3; James Otis, John Dickinson, James Wilson [M. 3: 3-5]. Background: G. 4; Gary Amos, "Government by the Consent of the Governed."

FIFTH WEEK: AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM (February 12-17)

L. 3 [pp. 93-137]; P. 4. Background: G. 5; Ellis Sandoz, "Reflections on Spiritual Aspects of the American Founding;" Carl J. Richard.

REPORT DUE: February 12

SIXTH WEEK: FEDERALISTS AND ANTI-FEDERALISTS (February 19-24)

L. 3 [pp. 138-64]; P. 3; James Wilson [M. 6: 4]; John Adams, Fisher Ames [K. 2: pp. 51-66, 84-112]. Background: G. 6-7.

FIRST EXAM: February 26

SEVENTH WEEK: THE EARLY REPUBLIC (March 3-5)

L. 4 [except pp. 216-71, 306-17]; Joseph Story [M. 10: 1]; John Randolph, James Fenimore Cooper, Orestes Brownson [K. 4, 5, 7]. Background: G. 8; Samuel Blumenfeld.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY DUE: March 5

EIGHTH WEEK: SPRING BREAK (March 10-12)

NINTH WEEK: REFORM AND SLAVERY (March 17-19)

L. 4 [pp. 232-71]; William Lloyd Garrison, William Ellery Channing, George Fitzhugh, William Harper [M. 13: 1-2, 5-6]; Thomas Macaulay, [K. 6: pp. 214-18]. Background: G. 9-11.

TENTH WEEK: SECTIONALISM AND NATIONALISM (March 24-26)

L. 4 [pp. 216-31, 306-17]; B. 4; John Taylor, Hugh Legare, John C. Calhoun,

Francis Lieber, Salmon P. Chase [M. 14: 1-2, 4-5, 7]. Background: G. 12.

ELEVENTH WEEK: THE GILDED AGE (March 31-April 2)

L. 5; Lester Ward, Walter Rauschenbusch [M. 15: 2, 6]; E. L. Godkin [K. 9]; Zach. Montgomery, "Political Poison; Justice Stephen Field's dissent in Juilliard v. Greenman. Background: G. 13-14.

SECOND EXAM: April 7

TWELFTH WEEK: THE PROGRESSIVE ERA (April 9-14)

L. 6 [pp. 391-435]; B. 5; Theodore Roosevelt, Brooks Adams, Walter Lippmann [M. 16: 2, 6, 9]; Irving Babbitt [K. 12]; J. Gresham Machen, "Shall We Have a Federal Department of Education?" Background: G. 15-17.

THIRTEENTH WEEK: THE IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM (April 16-21)

L. 6 [pp. 436-490]; B. 6. Background: G. 18-19.

PAPER DUE: April 16

FOURTEENTH WEEK: WINDOW ON THE WORLD AND WRAP-UP (April 23-30)

L. 7; P. 6; Portland Declaration

PRESENTATIONS

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 5, 8:30 AM

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AMERICAN POLITICAL THINKERS

Francis E. Abbot
 Lyman Abbott
 John Dalberg-Acton
 Brooks Adams
 Henry Adams
 John Adams
 John Quincy Adams
 Samuel Adams

Jane Addams
Fisher Ames
Hannah Arendt
Thurman Arnold
Irving Babbitt
Isaac Backus
Leonard Bacon
Robert Baird
George Bancroft
Jacques Barzun
Charles A. Beard
Daniel Bell
Edward Bellamy
Arthur F. Bentley
Raoul Berger
Adolph A. Berle
Edward Bernays
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Alexander M. Bickel
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Allan Bloom
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Albert Brisbane
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William Jennings Bryan
James Bryce
William F. Buckley, Jr.
John W. Burgess
James Burnham
John C. Calhoun
Henry Seidel Canby
Henry Carey
Matthew Carey
Stokely Carmichael
Andrew Carnegie
William Ellery Channing
Frank Chodorov
John Bates Clark
Henry Clay
James Fenimore Cooper
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W. E. B. DuBois

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T. S. Eliot

Richard T. Ely

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Stephen J. Field

John Fiske

George Fitzhugh

John T. Flynn

Felix Frankfurter

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William Lloyd Garrison

Marcus Garvey

Henry George

Elbridge Gerry

William J. Ghent

Washington Gladden

Nathan Glazer

E. L. Godkin

Emma Goldman

Barry Goldwater

Samuel Gompers

Paul Goodman

Madison Grant

Simon Greenleaf
Francis J. Grund
Alexander Hamilton
Learned Hand
Michael Harrington
Nathaniel Hawthorne
Tom Hayden
Friedrich A. Hayek
Robert Hayne
Isaac Hecker
George D. Herron
Richard Hildreth
Morris Hillquit
Eric Hoffer
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.
Sidney Hook
Thomas Hooker
Herbert Hoover
Frederick C. Howe
William Dean Howells
Charles Evans Hughes
Thomas Hutchinson
Andrew Jackson
Robert H. Jackson
William James
Thomas Jefferson
Jesse H. Jones
Chief Joseph
James Kent
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Russell Kirk
Joseph Wood Krutch
Robert LaFollette
John Lansing
Harold D. Lasswell
Richard Henry Lee
Daniel Leonard
Francis Lieber
Abraham Lincoln
Walter Lippmann
Henry Demarest Lloyd
Henry Cabot Lodge
Jack London
James Russell Lowell
John Lukacs
J. Gresham Machen

Marshall McLuhan
James Madison
Alfred Thayer Mahan
Malcolm X
Horace Mann
Karl Mannheim
Herbert Marcuse
John Marshall
Luther Martin
George Mason
Cotton Mather
Increase Mather
Jonathan Mayhew
Herman Melville
Charles E. Merriam
C. Wright Mills
Ludwig von Mises
Thomas Molnar
James Monroe
Paul Elmer More
Lewis Henry Morgan
Felix Morley
Gouverneur Morris
Jedidiah Morse
Samuel F. B. Morse
Lewis Mumford
John Courtney Murray
Scott Nearing
Reinhold Niebuhr
Robert Nisbet
Albert Jay Nock
George W. Norris
Walter Ong
James Otis
John L. O'Sullivan
Thomas Paine
Theodore Parker
William Paterson
Simon Patten
William Penn
Ralph Barton Perry
U. B. Phillips
Wendell Phillips
Roscoe Pound
Robert Rantoul, Jr.
John Randolph of Roanoke

Walter Rauschenbusch
Franklin Delano Roosevelt
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Josiah Strong
Thomas Szasz
William Graham Sumner
George Sutherland
William Howard Taft
Roger B. Taney
Frederick Winslow Taylor
John Taylor of Caroline
Norman Thomas
Henry David Thoreau
Alexis de Tocqueville
Benjamin R. Tucker
Frederick Jackson Turner
Mark Twain
Abel Upshur
Thorstein Veblen
Peter Viereck
Oswald Garrison Villard
Eric Voegelin
Lester Frank Ward
Nathaniel Ward
Josiah Warren

Booker T. Washington
George Washington
Francis Wayland
Richard Weaver
Daniel Webster
Noah Webster
Walt Whitman
Roger Williams
Rene de Visme Williamson
James Wilson
Woodrow Wilson
John Winthrop
Robert Winthrop
John Wise
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