

POLITICAL SCIENCE 206
American Values, Institutions and Culture
Wed/Fri 11:45-1:00
Gross 111

“I know nothing grander, better exercise, better digestion, more positive proof of the past, the triumphant result of faith in human kind, than a well-contested American national election” – Walt Whitman, Democratic Vistas

Course Description

What is the purpose of American democracy? Is it to protect natural rights? Encourage individuality? Ensure popular sovereignty? Promote civic virtue? Protect natural resources for future generations? Secure private property? Preserve wild spaces? Regulate corporations? In this overview of early American political theory and development, we will examine the competing political ideologies that shaped American political life from the colonial period to the Progressive Era. We will also explore the origins and evolution of key political institutions—including congress, federalism, the presidency, and the Supreme Court, paying special attention to the ways in which these institutions have shaped political outcomes.

We begin by examining the competing ideologies—liberalism, republicanism and puritanism—that shaped colonial America. Then we explore the Revolution and Founding in considerable depth. Next, we analyze how institutions and ideologies influenced the emergence of the two party system, and the ongoing conflict about slavery that eventually resulted in the Civil War. The final unit explores Progressive Era Reforms, including the emergence of the environmental movement and the beginnings of the welfare state.

The course concludes with group presentations, which have been for many students the highlight of the semester. Each group will hold a 20-minute panel discussion on an assigned topic. Participants are expected to play the role of different course thinkers.

Basis of Grade (2 extra percentage points in exchange for 2 hours participation in PSRP)

- Blog posts: 7.5%
- Attendance and Participation: 7.5 %
- Essay: 20 %
- Midterm: 20 %
- Group Presentation: 20 %
- Final: 25 %

Required Course Materials

- John Aldrich, *Why Parties?* (University of Chicago Press, 1995).

- Jock Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (Hackett, 1980)
- Publius, *Federalist Papers* (Bantam, 1982)
- David Robertson, *Federalism and the Making of America* (Routledge, 2011)

Attendance, Participation and Blog

Classes will be a combination of lectures and discussion. My lectures are designed to further your understanding of course readings. In addition to providing information about the historical context that shaped different thinkers, I will highlight important passages and discuss competing interpretations. Please complete the assignments prior to class and bring the readings with you so that we can discuss important sections together.

Your interests and questions will drive class discussions. This year, I am using a course blog to facilitate discussion. *You are expected to complete 2 blog posts, and comment at least twice on posts made by classmates. See Sakai for details about this assignment.*

Over the course of the semester, we will examine a number of controversial issues. You are encouraged to disagree with each other and with me, but are expected to do so without using offensive language or engaging in personal attacks. Participation grades will be based upon the overall quality of participation, including attendance, contributions to discussion, and respect showed to other students.

Each student is permitted one unexcused absence; each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a deduction of 1/3 of a letter from the participation grade. Excused absences fall into four categories: illness, personal emergencies, religious observances and varsity athletic performances. If you will be missing class due to athletic activities or religious observances, I expect to be notified in advance. Please notify me by means of a Short-Term Illness Notification Form if an illness or personal emergency prevents you from coming to class.

Essay

The essay will give you an opportunity for in-depth analysis of course material. I will give you prompts and detailed instructions several weeks prior to the due date. We will also go over the instructions in class. You may re-write the essay. If you choose to do so, I will re-grade the paper, and average both grades when calculating your final average. Re-writes are due two weeks after the papers have been handed back.

Exams

The midterm and final exams will test your understanding of the course material, and your ability to synthesize and apply information from the different readings. You will be provided with study guides to aid your preparation.

Group Presentation

After spring break, you will be assigned to a group tasked with conducting a panel discussion between different course thinkers. In addition to participating in the panel discussion, you must submit a written summary of your thinker's position.

Political Science Research Pool

In addition to these graded assignments, students enrolled in POLSCI 206 are strongly encouraged to participate in the political science experimental subject pool. Students will need to participate in 2 hours of Political Science Research Pool (PSRP) studies over the course of the semester to receive a 2 % extra credit toward their final grade. Besides, students who participated studies in the PSRP will be entered into a \$50 Amazon gift card lottery. More information about this option is available at: <http://www.duke.edu/web/psrp>. If you wish to participate, you can register at: <http://duke-psrp.sona-systems.com>.

Accessibility

I am happy to work with students who require accommodations in order to succeed in this course. If you think you require accommodations, please arrange a meeting with me during the first three weeks of the semester.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Instances of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with university procedures. For more information on how to comply with the Duke Community Standard, see <http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/index.html>.

Green Classroom

"This course has achieved Duke's Green Classroom Certification. The certification indicates that I have taken significant steps to green the delivery of this course, such as grading papers electronically and using recycled paper for handouts. Learn more at <http://sustainability.duke.edu/action/certifications/classroom/index.php>

Schedule of Topics and Readings

All readings not from required texts are available on Sakai

Introduction

Jan 15: Introduction

The Ideological Roots of the American Founding

Jan 20: Lockean Liberalism

- John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, chapters II-V; VIII-IX

Jan 22: Lockean Liberalism

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters X-XII, XIV: XVIII-XIX

Jan 27: Montesquieu

- Selections from *Spirit of the Laws*

Jan 29: Colonial America

- John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity”
- Roger Williams, “The Bloody Tenet of Persecution”

Feb 3: Benjamin Franklin

- Selections from *Autobiography*

Feb 5: Revolutionary Ideas

- Thomas Paine, selections from *Common Sense*
- Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence

Feb 10: Interpreting American Political Development

- Louis Hartz, “The Perspective of 1776”

Feb 12: Interpreting American Political Development

- James Marone, “A Nation With the Soul of a Church”
- Rogers Smith, “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America”

The Founding

Feb 17: Federalism at the Founding

- The Constitution
- Robertson, chapters 1-2

Feb 19: Defending the Constitution

- *Federalist Papers*, no. 1, 2, 9, 10, 23

Feb 24: Midterm Exam

Feb 26: Defending the Constitution

- *Federalist Papers*, no. 51, 57, 62, 78
- Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Samuel Kercheval"

Conflict and Institutional Development in the Early Republic

March 2: Supreme Court

- Robert Dahl, "Decision-Making in a Democracy: The Role of the Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker"
- Marbury vs. Madison

March 4: Why Parties

- Aldrich, *Why Parties*, chapters 1-2

March 9: The First and Second Party System

- Aldrich, *Why Parties*, chapters 3 and 4

March 11: State Nullification

- Jefferson/Madison, "The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions"
- *Class Debate! Come prepared to defend either position*

SPRING BREAK

The Civil War: A New Birth?

March 23: Responses to Slavery

- David Walker, selections from *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*
- Abraham Lincoln, "Speech to the Young Men's Lyceum"
- Henry David Thoreau, selections from "Resistance to Civil Government"

March 25: NO CLASS

March 30: Lincoln

- "Speech on the Dred Scott Decision," "First Inaugural," "Gettysburg Address," "Second Inaugural"

April 1: The Post-Reconstruction South

- Robertson, pages 57-66
- W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" and "Of the Dawn of Freedom" from *The Souls of Black Folk*

Ideology and Institutions of the Progressive Era

April 6: Federalism and Industrialization

- Robertson, chapters 5-6

April 8: Environmental Conflict at the Turn of the Century

- Fred Light v. United States
- John Muir, "Hetch Hetchy Valley"
- Gifford Pinchoit, "Prosperity"
- George Knapp, "The Other Side of Conservation"
- H. J. M. Mattes, "Another National Blunder"

April 13: Environmental Conflict at the Turn of the Century

- William Cronon, "The Problem With Wilderness"

April 15: Progressive Ideas

- Jane Addams, "A Modern Lear," and "Activities and Investigations"

April 20: Progressive Ideas

- Jane Addams, "If Men Were Seeking the Franchise," and "Survivals of Militarism in City Government"

April 22: Presentations

April 27: Presentations/Conclusion

Final Exam: See schedule put out by registrar