

JACK MILLER CENTER

# American *Political Thought*

Political Science 6349  
American Political Thought

University of Houston  
Jeremy D. Bailey

Spring 2008

## Course Description:

In this seminar on American political thought, we will not attempt an encyclopedic catalog of every political theorist who happens to be an American, nor we will attempt to discern and categorize the representative strands typically included in this subfield—though either approach would be defensible and to some extent inescapable. Instead, we will attempt to understand the philosophic origins—or “founding”—of the United States, without forgetting its alternatives, and then turn to the most important theoretical challenges to that founding. Because the texts we study cannot be easily separated from politics, and because these texts cannot be easily reduced to politics, we will also have to consider the particular difficulty of our endeavor.

## Books available at the bookstore:

1. Roy P. Basler, ed., Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings (Da Capo)
2. Lester J. Cappon, ed., The Adams-Jefferson Letters (UNC UP)
3. Morton J. Frisch, ed., The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1794 (Liberty Fund)
4. Edmund S. Morgan, ed., Puritan Political Ideas, 1558-1794 (Hackett)
5. Robert Scigliano, ed., The Federalist, (Modern Library)
6. Herbert Storing, ed., The Anti-Federalist, (University of Chicago)
7. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, trans. Gerald E. Bevan (Penguin)
8. Jean M. Yarbrough, ed., The Essential Jefferson (Hackett)

## Requirements:

Students are expected to attend class and be prepared to discuss the readings for each week. There are no excused absences.

To sharpen our discussion, each student will submit six response papers. These papers should be two pages in length and submitted by noon on the Monday preceding class. The class will be divided in half, and each half will alternate by week in submitting a response paper. The average of your response paper grades will be worth 50 percent of your final grade.

You will also submit a longer paper, about 15-20 pages, which will be worth 50 percent of your grade. This paper will be due during finals week and also submitted to turnitin.com

## Assignments:

## **15 January 2008: Introduction**

### Recommended:

1. *Vernon Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought (1927)*
2. *Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (Harvest, 1955)*
3. *Wilson Carey McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America (California UP, 1973)*
4. *Robert H. Horwitz, The Moral Foundations of the American Republic Third Edition (Virginia UP, 1986)*
5. *Donald S. Lutz, A Preface to American Political Theory (Kansas, 1992)*
6. *Rogers Smith, Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U. S. History (Yale 1997)*
7. *Michael J. Sandel, Democracy's Discontent: American in Search of a Public Philosophy (Harvard UP, 1996)*
8. *James W. Ceaser, Nature and History in American Political Development (Harvard UP, 2006)*

## **22 January: Puritans**

### Required:

1. John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (Morgan, 75-93)
2. John Winthrop, "The Journal of John Winthrop" (Morgan, 94-143)
3. John Winthrop, "A Declaration made in Defense of an order in Court" (Morgan, 143-9)
4. John Winthrop, "On Arbitrary Government" (Morgan, 149-160)
5. John Cotton, "On Church and State" (Morgan, 160- 173)
6. John Cotton, "The Massachusetts Body of Liberties" (Morgan, 177-203)
7. Roger Williams, "The Bloody Tenent of Persecution" (Morgan, 203-212)
8. John Wise, "On the Principles of Government" (Morgan, 251-267)

### Recommended:

1. *Perry Miller, The New England Mind, Two Vols. (Harvard UP, 1939 and 1953)*

## **29 January: No Class (instructor at a conference)**

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## **5 February: The Declaration**

### Required:

1. *Thomas Jefferson, A Summary View of the Rights of British America (Yarbrough, 3-18)*
2. *Declaration of Independence, Jefferson's draft (Yarbrough, 18-22)*
3. *Declaration of Independence, (Yarbrough, 23-26)*
4. Jefferson-Adams Letters

### Shay's Rebellion

Abigail Adams, 29 January 1787, 168-9  
Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 22 Feb 1787, 172-3.

### Constitution

John Adams, 9 October 1787, 202-3 (permanence of aristocracy)  
John Adams, 10 Nov. 1787, 210  
Jefferson, 13 Nov 1787, 211-12  
John Adams, 6 Dec 1787, 213-214 (one and few)

### The Schism

Jefferson, 17 July 1791, 245-7  
Adams, 29 July 1791, 247-50  
Jefferson, 28 Dec 1796, 262-3

### Interlude

Abigail Adams, 20 May 1804, 268-9  
Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 13 June 1804, 269-271  
Abigail Adams, 1 July, 1804, 271-4  
Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 22 July 1804, 274-6  
Abigail Adams, 18 August 1804, 276-8  
Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 11 September 1804, 278-80  
Abigail Adams, 25 October 1804, 280-1

### Friendship

Jefferson 21 January 1812 (290-2)  
John Adams, 3 February 1812 (293-6)

### Politics

John Adams 25 June 1813 (333-35)  
Jefferson 27 June 1813 (335-8)  
John Adams 28 June 13 (338-40)

5. Jefferson, Letters to Lee and Weightman (Yarbrough, 267-8 and 277-8)

### Recommended:

1. Carl Becker, The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1958)
  1. *Benard S. Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Harvard UP, 1967)*
3. Gordon S. Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (North Carolina UP, 1969)
4. J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political

Thought and the Atlantic Political Tradition (Princeton UP, 1975)

5. Gordon S. Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution (Knopf, 1992)

1. *Thomas L. Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (Chicago UP: 1988)

1. *Michael Zuckert, The Natural Rights Republic: Studies in the Foundation of the American Political Tradition* (Notre Dame, 1999)

## **12 February: Religious Liberty**

### Required:

1. Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, Query XVII (Yarbrough, 125-129)

2. James Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance (to be distributed)

3. Thomas Jefferson, Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom (Yarbrough, 27-8)

4. George Washington, Proclamation of Thanksgiving (to be distributed)

5. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Danbury Baptists (Yarbrough, 59)

6. Jefferson-Adams Letters:

### Religion

John Adams, 10 Feb 1812 (296-8)

Prophecy

Jefferson, 20 April 1812 (298-300)

Prophecy

Adams, 3 May 1812 (302-4)

Jefferson, 11 June 1812, 305-8)

Native Americans and Religion

Adams, 28 June 1812, (308-11)

Native Americans and Religion and Plato

### Faith

All of ch. 10 (346-413)

### Politics

Jefferson 24 January 1814 (421-5)

John Adams, Feb 1814 (426-30)

Jefferson 5 July 1814 (430-34)

John Adams, 16 July 1814 (434-9)

John Adams, 19 June 1815 (443-4)

John Adams, 20 June 1815 (445-46)

John Adams 13 November 1815 (456-8)

Jefferson 11 January 1816 (458-61)

John Adams, 2 February 1816, (461-3)

John Adams, 2 March 1816, (464-6)

Jefferson, 8 April 1816 (466-9)  
Adams, 3 May 1816, (469-71)  
Adams, 6 May 16 (472-4)

Jefferson 10 December 1819 (548-550)  
John Adams 21 December 1819 (550-1)

### Science

John Adams, 20 January 1820 (559-60)  
John Adams, 21 February 1820 (560-1)  
Jefferson, 14 March 1820 (561-3)  
Adams, 12 May 1820 (563-65)  
Jefferson 15 December 1820 (565-69)

### Christianity

Jefferson, 11 April 1823 (591-4)

## **19 February: Ratification**

### Required:

#### *1. Anti-Federalists*

Federal Farmer (Storing, 23-101)  
Brutus (Storing, 103-197)

### Recommended:

- 1. Cecilia M. Kenyon, "Men of Little Faith: The Anti-Federalists on the Nature of Representative Government" William and Mary Quarterly 3<sup>rd</sup>. ser. 12: 1 (1955): 3-43.*
- 2. Herbert Storing, What the Anti-Federalists Were For (Chicago, 1981)*

## **26 February: Ratification: Union**

### Required:

1. The Federalist Nos. 1, 9, 10, 23, 25, 37, 38, 38, 40, 41

### Recommended:

- 1. Charles Beard, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States (Free Press, 1913).*
- 2. Douglas Adair, Fame and the Founding Fathers (Norton, 1974)*
- 3. Lance Banning, The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic (Cornell UP, 1995)*
- 4. Robert Dahl, How Democratic is the Constitution (Yale, 2002)*
- 5. Samuel Kernell, James Madison: The Theory and Practice of Republican Government (Stanford, 2003)*
- 6. David Brian Robertson, The Constitution and America's Destiny (Cambridge UP, 2005)*

## **4 March: Ratification: Separation of Powers**

### Required:

1. The Federalist Nos. 47, 48, 49, 51, 55, 56, 57, 62, 63, 68 -77

Recommended:

1. *Jack Rakove, Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution (Knopf, 1996)*
2. David F. Epstein, The Political Theory of the Federalist (Chicago, 1984)
  1. *Harvey C. Mansfield Jr., Taming the Prince: The Ambivalence of Modern Executive Power (Johns Hopkins, 1989), 247-78.*

**11 March: Hamilton vs. Jefferson**

Required:

1. *Alexander Hamilton, Opinion on the Bank (to be distributed)*
2. *Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, Query XIX (Yarbrough, 132-4)*
3. *Thomas Jefferson, Opinion on the Bank (Yarbrough, 32-6)*
4. *Jefferson, Letter to Washington, (Yarbrough, 182-89)*
5. *Pacificus Helvidius Debates:*  
Pacificus, Nos. 1 and 4 (8-17, 30-34)  
Helvidius Nos. 1- 4 (55-89)
7. *Jefferson, Draft of the Kentucky Resolutions (Yarbrough, 48-54)*
8. *Jefferson to Elbridge Gerry, 26 January 1799 (Yarbrough, 190-2)*
  1. *Jefferson to Joseph Priestley, 21 March 1801 (Yarbrough, 196-7)*
  2. *Jefferson, First Inaugural (Yarbrough, 55-8)*

Recommended:

1. Forrest McDonald, Alexander Hamilton: A Biography. New York: Norton, 1979
2. Stanly Elkins and Eric McKittrick, The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800 (Oxford, 1993)
3. Harvey Flaumenhaft, The Effective Republic: Administration and Constitution in the Thought of Alexander Hamilton. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.
4. David P Currie, The Constitution in Congress: The Federalist Period, 1789-1801. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
5. Colleen A Sheehan, "Madison v. Hamilton: The Battle Over Republicanism and the Role of Public Opinion." American Political Science Review 98 (2004): 405-424; and "Public Opinion and the Formation of Civic Character in James Madison's Republican Theory," Review of Politics 67 (2005): 37-48.
6. Jeremy D. Bailey, Thomas Jefferson and Executive Power (Cambridge UP, 2007), ch. 3.

**18 March: No Class (spring break)**

**25 March: Jefferson's Revolution of 1800**

Required:

1. *Notes on the State of Virginia, Queries XI, XIII, XIV, and XVIII* (Yarbrough)
2. *To Peter Carr, 10 August 1787* (Yarbrough, 161-5)
3. *to William S. Smith, 13 November 1787* (Yarbrough, 166-7)
4. *To James Madison, 20 Dec 1787* (Yarbrough, 168-171)
5. *To James Madison, 15 March 1789* (Yarbrough, 174-5)
6. *To James Madison, 6 September 1789* (Yarbrough, 176-180)
7. *To Benjamin Banneker, 30 August 1791* (Yarbrough, 181)
8. *To Breckinridge* (to be distributed)
9. *To Wilson Cary Nicholas, 7 Sept 1803* (Yarbrough, 203-4)
10. *Second Inaugural* (Yarbrough, 60-4)
11. *To John B. Colvin, 20 September 1810* (Yarbrough, 208-10)
12. *To Thomas Law, 13 June 1814* (Yarbrough, 222-5)
13. *To P.S. Dupont de Nemours, 24 April 1816* (Yarbrough, 229-332)
14. *To John Taylor, 28 May 1816* (Yarbrough, 233-236)
15. *To Francis W. Gilmer*, (Yarbrough, 237-8)
16. *To Samuel Kerchaval, 12 July 1816* (Yarbrough, 239-245)
17. *To Isaac Tiffany, 26 July 1816* (Yarbrough, 246)
18. *To Judge Spencer Roane, 6 Sept 1819* (Yarbrough, 250-3)
19. *Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia* (65-75)

**Recommended:**

1. *Henry Adams, History of the United States during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson* (Library of America, 1984)

1. *Harvey J. Mansfield, Jr., "Thomas Jefferson," in American Political Thought: The Philosophic Dimension of American Statesmanship*, ed. Morton J. Frisch and Richard J. Stevens (Scribner, 1971)

1. *Lance Banning, The Jeffersonian Persuasion* (Cornell UP, 1978)

2. *Richard K. Matthews, The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson* (Kansas UP, 1984)

1. *Garret Ward Sheldon, The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1991)

1. *David N. Mayer, The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson* (Virginia UP, 1994)

1. *Jean M. Yarbrough, American Virtues: Thomas Jefferson on the Character of a Free People* (Kansas UP, 1998)

1. *Jeremy D. Bailey, "Executive Prerogative and the 'good officer' in Thomas Jefferson's Letter to John B. Colvin," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 34:4 (2004): 732-754.*

1. *Clement Fatovic, "Constitutionalism and Presidential Prerogative: Jefferson and Hamiltonian Perspectives," American Journal of Political Science 48 (2004): 429-44.*

1. *Bruce Ackerman, The Failure of the Founding Fathers: Jefferson, Marshall, and the Rise of Presidential Democracy* (Harvard UP, 2005)

1. *Peter S. Onuf, The Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (Virginia UP, 2007)

2. *Jeremy D. Bailey, Thomas Jefferson and Executive Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

## **1 April: Lincoln I**

### **Required:**

1. *Address to Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, IL (76-85)*
2. *Temperance Address (131-41)*
3. *Fragment on Slavery (278-9)*
4. *Speech on Dred Scott (352-66)*
5. *House Divided Speech (372-81)*
6. *First Lincoln-Douglas Debate (428-69)*
7. *Address before Wisconsin State Agricultural Society (493-505)*
8. *Address at Cooper Institute (517-39)*

### **Recommended:**

1. Harry Jaffa, Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates (Doubleday 1959)
2. Harry Jaffa, A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War (Roman and Littlefield, 2000)
3. William Lee Miller, Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography (Knopf, 2002)

## **8 April: Lincoln II**

### **Required:**

1. *Speech on the Mexican War and exchange with Herndon (202-21)*
2. *Fragment on the Constitution (513)*
3. *First Inaugural Address (579-90)*
4. *Special Message to Congress (594-609)*
5. *Emancipation Proclamation (689-91)*
6. *Letter to Corning and Others (699-708)*
7. *Response to a Serenade (709-10)*
8. *Letter to Ohio Democrats (to be distributed)*
9. *Letter to Conkling (720-5)*
10. *Gettysburg Address (734-7)*
11. *Response to a Serenade (763-4)*
12. *Second Inaugural (792-3)*

### **Recommended:**

1. Larry Arnhart, "The God-Like Prince': John Locke, Executive Prerogative, and the American Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 9 (1979): 121-30.
2. Phillip Shaw Paludan, The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln (Kansas 1994)
3. Daniel A. Farber, Lincoln's Constitution (Chicago, 2003)
4. Benjamin A. Kleinerman, "Lincoln's Example: Executive Power and the Survival of Constitutionalism," *Perspectives on Politics* 3: 4 (2005): 801-16.

## **15 April: Progressives**

### **Required:**

1. *Eisenach:*

Chapter 1 (only documents by Croly and Adams),  
Chapters 2-5, Chapter 6 (only Croly), Chapters 8-10



**Recommended:**

1. Richard S. Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (Knopf, 1955)
2. Stephen S. Skowronek, Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920 (Cambridge, 1982)

**22 April: Tocqueville**

Required:

- 1.) I. 1. 3-4: The Social Condition of the Americans (58-71)
- 2.) I. 2. 2: Parties in the United States (202-9)
- 3.) I.2. 4: Political Associations in the United States (219-227)
- 3.) I. 2. 7-9: The Tyranny of the Majority (287-370)
5. II. 2. 13 Why Americans are so restless (622-9)
- 6.) II. 3. 19 Many Ambitious But No Lofty Ambition (728-734)
- 7.) II. 4. 2-3 Ideas tend toward Concentration of Powers (777-783)
- 8.) II. 4. 6-7 What Sort of Despotism to Fear (803-822)