

American Political Thought¹
Trevor Latimer
Office Hours: TBA
Contact Info: tlatimer@uga.edu

This course will explore the subject of American political thought. Questions we will be considering include: what distinguishes American political thought from political theory in the Western tradition? Is there such a thing as American political thought? When we study American political thought, who should we study? Should we read Americans only, or authors who have influenced American politics? What about Montesquieu (a French nobleman)? Thomas Paine (an English immigrant who returned to Europe shortly after the American revolution)? Alexis de Tocqueville (another French nobleman)? Hannah Arendt (a German immigrant)? Herbert Marcuse (another German immigrant)?

We will also be exploring the relationship between political thought and political action. How theoretical should a text be for it to be the proper subject of political theory? Should we study only theoretical treatises (e.g. John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*)? What about newspaper articles, political pamphlets, official government documents, and speeches?

Required Texts

1. Isaac Kramnick and Theodore J. Lowi. *American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009.
2. Whittington, Keith E. *American Political Thought: Readings And Materials*. New York: Oxford University Press (forthcoming).

Requirements

Two short papers (approximately 1500 words). One longer paper (approximately 2500 words).

Goals

We shall be attempting to identify arguments in the assigned readings. What are the authors' premises and conclusions? Do their arguments work on their own terms? Do their arguments work on our terms? What do the authors' arguments mean for contemporary political life?

Recommended Background Reading

1. Richard Hofstadter. *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It*. New York: Knopf, 1948.

¹Draft syllabus. Last updated: November 9, 2015

2. Daniel Walker Howe. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
3. James M. McPherson. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
4. Robert Middlekauff. *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*. Revised ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
5. Gordon S. Wood. *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Readings & Schedule

Week 1. Colonial Political Thought

1. John Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity*
2. John Winthrop, *Little Speech on Liberty*
3. Perry Miller. "Declension in a Bible Commonwealth." *American Antiquarian Society*, 1942.
4. *Background Reading*: Nick Bunker. *Making Haste from Babylon: The Mayflower Pilgrims and Their World*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

Week 2. Revolutionary Era Political Thought

1. Merrill Jensen. *Tracts of the American Revolution, 1763-1776*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003.
 - "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved"
 - "Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies, For the Purpose of Raising a Revenue, by Act of Parliament"
 - "A Summary View of the Rights of British America"
 - "Common Sense Addressed to the Inhabitants of America"
2. Hannah Arendt. *On Revolution*. New York: Penguin Books, 1963, pp. 11-48

Week 3. The Founding I

1. *The Articles of Confederation*
2. Gordon S. Wood. *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*: University of North Carolina Press, 2011, pp. 393-468.
3. *The Constitution of the United States*
4. *Federalist 1, Federalist 10, Federalist 23, Federalist 51, Federalist 70*

Week 4. The Founding II: Anti-Federalism

1. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan, eds. *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Centinel I

Federal Farmer, "Letters to the Republican"

Brutus I-IV

Week 5. Jacksonian Democracy

1. Henry Clay, *Speech on the Tariff*
2. Andrew Jackson, *First Annual Message to Congress*
3. Andrew Jackson, *Veto of the Maysville Road Bill*
4. Andrew Jackson, *Bank Veto Message*
5. Andrew Jackson, *Farewell Address*
6. Daniel Webster, *Speech on Jackson's Veto of the United States Bank Bill*

Week 6. Slavery and Union

1. John C. Calhoun. *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1992.

A Disquisition on Government

Fort Hill Address

2. George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South; or, the Failure of Free Society*
3. George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters*
4. Louis Hartz. *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution*, 1955; repr., Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 1991, pp. 145-200

Week 7. Slavery

1. William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator*
2. Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave. Written by Himself*. Boston, 1845, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23/23-h/23-h.htm>
3. Frederick Douglass, *What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?*
4. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly*

Week 8. Popular Sovereignty

1. Lewis Cass to A.O.P. Nicholson, December 1847, <http://elektratig.blogspot.com/2010/06/lewis-cass-nicholson-letter.html>
2. Stephen A. Douglas. "The Dividing Line between Federal and Local Authority: Popular Sovereignty in the Territories." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 19, no. 112 (1859): 519-537.
3. Fifth Joint Debate, Galesburg, October 7, 1858 in Robert W. Johannsen, ed. *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Week 9. African American Political Thought I

1. Booker T. Washington, *Atlanta Exposition Address*
2. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
3. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Talented Tenth*
4. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Immediate Program of the American Negro*
5. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Souls of White Folk," in *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1920, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15210/15210-h/15210-h.htm>
6. Marcus Garvey, *The True Solution of the Negro Problem*

Week 10. The Progressive Era

1. Jane Addams, *The Spirit and Youth of the City Streets*
2. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*
3. Charles A. Beard, *The Economic Basis of Politics*
4. John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*
5. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*
6. Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life*
7. Theodore Roosevelt, *New Nationalism*
8. Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom*

Week 11. The New Deal

1. Herbert Hoover, *American Individualism*
2. Charles A. Beard, *The Myth of Rugged American Individualism*
3. John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*
4. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *The Four Freedoms*
5. Henry Wallace, *New Frontiers*
6. Walter Lippmann, *Planning in an Economy of Abundance*

Week 12. The Cold War

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense*
2. William F. Buckley, Jr., *God and Man at Yale*
3. Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*
4. Walter Lippmann, *The Public Philosophy*
5. Louis Hartz, *The Concept of a Liberal Society*
6. Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*

Week 13. The 1960s, the New Left, and Participatory Democracy

1. C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*
2. C. Wright Mills, *Letter to the New Left*
3. Students for a Democratic Society, *The Port Huron Statement* in James Miller. "Democracy Is in the Streets": *From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.
4. Carole Pateman. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 1-44.
5. Herbert Marcuse. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Second edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991, pp. 1-18.

Week 14. Race, Black Power, and African American Political Thought

1. Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Power of Nonviolence*
2. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*
3. Martin Luther King, Jr. *I Have a Dream*
4. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), *Statement of Purpose*
5. *Message to the Grass Roots*, speech by Malcolm X, Detroit, November 10, 1963, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~public/civilrights/a0147.html>.
6. *The Ballot or the Bullet*, speech by Malcolm X, sound recording.
7. Stokely Carmichael. "What We Want." *The New York Review of Books* 7, no. 4 (1966).
8. Cornell West, *Race Matters*

Week 15. Feminist Political Thought

1. Abigail Adams, *Letter to John Adams*
2. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions*
3. Betty Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique*
4. Phyllis Schlafly, *The Power of the Positive Woman*
5. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*