

AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT
SPRING 2010

PROFESSOR TARR

OFFICE HOURS: MW, 12:15-1:15 or by appointment at 401 Cooper St.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The aim of the course is to introduce students to thoughtful and provocative analyses of American society and American politics. You will find that the authors we study hold distinctive and often incompatible views on freedom, equality, human nature, historical dynamics, and the prospects of American society. Serious consideration of the diverse perspectives they put forth should lead you to reexamine and deepen your own political views and to reevaluate your own perspective on American society. If the course is to serve this purpose, it is necessary that you take seriously the views of even those authors with whom you initially disagree. To encourage such serious consideration, I shall act as an advocate for the views of each author.

TEXTS: All assigned readings in this course are primary sources. The three books listed below should be available at the Rutgers Bookstore or other bookstores. Other materials are available either on the internet or on the Sakai site for this course. For particulars, see the schedule below.

Jefferson, THE PORTABLE JEFFERSON
Hamilton et al., THE FEDERALIST PAPERS
De Tocqueville, DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

OPERATION OF THE COURSE: One best understands political theory and alternative understandings of America by examining the implications of competing perspectives and probing their strengths and weaknesses. Class discussion will thus be a prime element in the course. Students are expected to attend every class, and they are encouraged to put forward their views vigorously. But they are also expected to respect the views of other students and to conduct discussion with civility.

EVALUATION: Students will take two non-cumulative exams and will write 3 short papers based on the assigned readings in the course. There will be a total of 5 short paper opportunities, so you will be able to choose from that number. Each test is worth roughly 1/3 of your grade; the three papers cumulatively are worth roughly 1/3 of your grade. Worthwhile contributions to class discussions may help your grade.

There is no "extra credit" work in this course. ALL late papers are penalized a half-grade per day late. Make-up exams will be HARDER than the original exams, so it is not wise to miss an exam. Students who miss too many classes will receive a lower course grade.

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY: Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and adhere to the University's standards relating to plagiarism, etc.

COURSE OUTLINE:

1. Setting Basic Directions: The Alternatives at the Founding (1/20-2/22)
2. The Character and Tendencies of the American Regime (2/24-3/22)
3. Minority and Majority: African-American Perspectives (4/5-4/14)
4. Twentieth Century Perspectives (4/19-5/3)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1/20 Introduction
- 1/25 Thomas Jefferson: Declaration of Independence; the problem of power
READ: pp. 235-241, 414-418, 552-561, 584-585, 162-172
- 1/27 Thomas Jefferson: The character of the people, problems of republican government, civic virtue, and the natural aristocracy
READ: pp. 383-386, 216-217, 547-550, 395-398, 363-366, 251-253, 303-304, 398-400, 332-346, 533-539
- 2/1 Lecture by Christian Fritz at the Law School
- 2/3 Thomas Jefferson: The three races in America
READ: pp. 93-101, 305-307, 318-319, 185-193, 214-215, 454-455, 517, 544-547, 567-569
- 2/8 The Federalist: Combating the evils that beset republican government
READ: Federalist #1, 37, 10
- 2/10 No Class
- 2/15 Structuring republican government to make it good government
READ: Federalist #15, 39, 47, 51, 70, 72
- 2/15 First short paper due
- 2/17 The Federalist: Governors and governed in republican government
READ: Federalist #49, 53, 35 (pp. 182-185), 57, 62, 65
- 2/22 The Federalist: Limited government and unlimited problems
READ: Federalist #17, 23, 84, 45
- 2/24 Alexis de Tocqueville: Introduction; democracy and history; basic themes; liberty and the Puritans
READ: pp. 1-33, 142-146, 169-170

- 3/1 Alexis de Tocqueville: Equality and liberty; small states, large states, and the problems of democracy; maintaining liberty in large states; democracy and its propensities
 READ: pp. 34-62, 68-73, 82-102
- 3/1 Second short paper due
- 3/3 Alexis de Tocqueville: Democracy and its propensities; the problem of majority tyranny; religion in America
 READ: pp. 102-123, 127-142, 178-186
- 3/8 Alexis de Tocqueville: Democracy and its propensities; majority tyranny; religion in America; economy and society; social relations
 READ: pp. 224-247, 268-70, 281-85
- 3/22 Alexis de Tocqueville: The effect of democracy on patterns of thought; individualism and its discontents; the prospects of democracy
 READ: pp. 170-177, 187-195, 197-210, 286-319
- 3/24 TEST 1
- 3/29 Abraham Lincoln
<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.htm>
<http://www.historyplace.com/lincoln/divided.htm>
- 3/31 Abraham Lincoln
<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm>
<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/inaug2.htm>
- 3/29 Third short paper due
- 4/5 Frederick Douglass
 Fourth of July Oration
<http://www.libertynet.org/edcivic/freddoug.html>
 The Destiny of Colored Americans
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1105>
 What Are the Colored People Doing for Themselves?
<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=766>
 Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=39>
- 4/7 W. E. B. DuBois
 The Conservation of Races
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1119>
 Of Our Spiritual Strivings
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1108>

The Talented Tenth (Sakai site)
The Denial of Economic Justice to Negroes (Sakai site)

- 4/12 Martin Luther King
Pilgrimage to Non-Violence
(<http://www2.volstate.edu/socialscience/FinalDocs/1960s/MLK2.htm>)
Letter from Birmingham Jail
(http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)
- 4/14 Malcolm X
The Ballot or the Bullet
(<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/065.html>)
Message to the Grassroots
(<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1145>)
- 4/19 20th Century Liberalism: Franklin Roosevelt
(www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrcommonwealth.htm)
(www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrthefourfreedoms.htm)
- 4/21 20th Century Conservatism: Ronald Reagan
First Inaugural
(<http://reagan2020.us/speeches/>)
1984 State of the Union Address
(<http://reagan2020.us/speeches/>)
- 4/21 Fourth short paper due
- 4/26 20th Century Radicalism: Emma Goldman
Anarchism
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Goldman/toc.html>)
Minorities versus Majorities
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Goldman/minorities.html>)
Patriotism
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Goldman/patriotism.html>)
- 5/3 Emma Goldman
Woman Suffrage
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Goldman/suffrage.html>)
The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Goldman/tragedy.html>)
Marriage and Love
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Goldman/marriage.html>)
- 5/10 Fifth short paper due—submit electronically
- TBA Final exam

