

## **GOV 312P: Constitutional Principles: Core Texts – Honors**

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MWF 2-3, MEZ 2.124

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Office Hours: T 9-10, W 3-5 and by appointment

This class is a study of the basic principles of American political life: Democracy, equality, and liberty. Through the close reading of core texts from the American political tradition, we will attempt to see how these ideals took hold in the US, what arguments were made on their behalf, and what possible pitfalls there are for a society dedicated to those ideals.

The course will proceed almost entirely through a close reading of primary sources, including some of the best, most penetrating analyses of American society ever written. The class has three basic units. First, we will explore the philosophic foundations of the American system of government by reading John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*. We will then turn to the debate over the ratification of the Constitution and the arguments made in its favor by the Federalists and against it by the Anti-Federalists. The last unit will consist of a study of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which is perhaps the most penetrating analysis of American democracy ever written. Tocqueville saw great virtues in America, but also great risks to its political and spiritual health. We will supplement Tocqueville with other sources that clarify and expand upon certain key points in the book, specifically race and slavery, and the role and character of religion in American society.

### **CLASS POLICY**

This is a *discussion intensive* class. Our meetings will be seminars, which I will lead but in which everyone will be expected to contribute their own ideas. That means it is imperative that you come to every meeting having done the reading carefully and having thought about it. You should know what the text says, and be ready to raise your own questions and present your own arguments about it.

Cell phones and laptops will *not* be permitted in class. You should silence and put away your cell phone before each meeting.

This is an honors class. That means the workload is high and the grading is demanding. You should expect to work more in this class than in most of your courses.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Since this is a discussion intensive class in which we will be making constant references to the texts under consideration, it is important that everyone have the assigned editions of these readings.

1. Course Packet (Available in Co-Op Bookstore)
2. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*. Crofts Classics. ISBN 0882951254.
3. Hamilton, Madison, Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. Introduction by Charles Kesler, edited by Clinton Rossiter. Signet Classics. ISBN 0451528816.
4. *The Anti-Federalist: An Abridgement*. Edited by Herbert Storing, selected by Murray Dry. The University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226775658.
5. Hugh Hecllo, *Christianity and American Democracy*. Harvard University Press. ISBN 0674032306.
6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Translated by Stephen Grant, introduction by Sanford Kessler. Hackett Publishing. ISBN 0872204944.\*

\* Be sure that you buy the abridged version. Hackett also publishes a two-volume, unabridged version of this translation, but that is not what we will be using for this class.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE CALCULATION

**60% - Three Papers (20% each):** You will write 3 3-5 papers on topics to be assigned in class. Papers will be due at the beginning of class on February 10, March 21, and April 23. In each case, please be sure to **bring two printed copies to class**; the second will be given to another student who will write a response to it. Your papers will be graded on their content, and also on the clarity and accuracy of your writing.

You will be given the opportunity to rewrite two of the three papers, at your choosing. In each case, the rewrite will be due one week after the paper is returned to you, and can bring your grade up by as much as one full letter grade.

**20% - Final Exam:** There will be a cumulative final given on Tuesday, May 15, from 9:00-12:00 noon. I will distribute study questions in advance.

**10% - Class Participation:** Since this is a discussion-intensive class, participation makes up an important part of your grade. You will be graded, not on how often you speak up in class, but on whether you have prepared for class and have thought about the material. Speaking a lot if you have not prepared will be a *detriment* to your grade. And trust me, I can tell the difference.

**5% - Paper Reviews:** Every time you turn in a paper, you will exchange your work with another student's and write a short (1-2 page, single-spaced) review of what he or she has written. These will be due on the class meetings after papers are due.

**5% - Quizzes:** There will be short pop quizzes on the reading at the beginning of many of our classes. If you miss class, you will be allowed to make up the quiz *only if* your absence is excused.

**Extra Credit:** You can earn extra credit by keeping a reading journal and turning it in at the end of the semester. There will also be opportunities to earn extra credit by attending public lectures and emailing me short responses. I will announce the lectures in class.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is **required** at every class meeting. You get one unexcused absence for free. After that, for every class you miss, your overall final average will drop by 1.5%. Missing more than 10 classes will result in automatic failure of the course. I will excuse absences only for serious reasons, such as illness (for which you have to bring in a doctor's note) or religious observances.

**Grade Calculation:** Papers and class participation will be given letter grades. In order to calculate your final grade, these will be translated into number grades as follows:

A: 97; A-: 91; B+: 88; B: 84.5; B-: 81; C+: 78; C: 74.5; C-: 71; D: 65; F: 30

Final grades are calculated numerically, then translated into a letter grade using the following scale. Please note that your final grade will not be rounded.

A: 93.5-100; A-: 90-93.5; B+: 87-90; B: 83-87; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-80; C: 73-77; C-: 70-73; D+: 66-70; D: 60-66; F: below 60.

## **SCHEDULE OF READINGS**

Readings marked "CP" are in the course packet, which is available in the Co-Op Bookstore. Readings marked "AF" are in the Dry / Storing edition of *The Anti-Federalist*. For classes which include multiple readings, I recommend doing them in the order listed below.

January 18: Introduction: Declaration of Independence, ONLY

January 20: Aristotle, Excerpts (CP)

January 23: Locke, Second Treatise: 1-4

January 25: Locke, Second Treatise: 5

January 27: Locke, Second Treatise: 6-8

January 30: Locke, Second Treatise, 9-14

February 1: Locke, Second Treatise, 15-19

February 3: Introduction to the Founding: Federalist 1 & 39; Patrick Henry 5.16.1 (AF)

February 6: Federalist 2-5, 6-8, 11-12, 14  
February 8: Melancton Smith Speech, June 21, 1788; Brutus I; Federal Farmer II, III (2.24-27 only); Agrippa IX (all in AF)  
February 10: Continued (**Paper due**)

February 13: Federalist 23-25, 41; Brutus VII (2.83-90 **only**), IX, X (AF); Federal Farmer XVIII (CP), Philadelphiensis III (CP)  
February 15: Agrippa VIII (AF); Federal Farmer XVII (AF); Pennsylvania Farmer (CP); Patrick Henry 5.16.2 and 23 (AF); Federalist Papers 17, 39 (read from 239 top – “But it was not sufficient...” – to end)  
February 17: Federalist 9-10

February 20: Federalist 35-37, 39 (beginning to 239 top)  
February 22: Cato V (CP), Henry 5.16.17, Federal Farmer VII (AF), Federal Farmer IX, X (CP)  
February 24: Federalist 52-53, 55-57

February 27: Cincinnatus IV, Federal Farmer XI (CP); Federalist 62-66  
February 29: Federalist 47-48, 51  
March 2: Patrick Henry 5.16.2, 7-8, 14 (AF); Centinel I (AF), Mason speech (CP); Maryland Farmer V (AF)

March 5: Cato IV (CP); Henry 5.16.6-7, 5.16.11 (AF), Federalist Papers 67, 70  
March 7: Brutus, XI, XIV, and XV (AF); Federal Farmer XV (CP); Federalist 78  
March 9: Brutus 2, Federal Farmer XVI (AF); Wilson Speech (CP); Federalist 84

### March 12-16: **Spring Break**

March 19: *Democracy in America*, Introduction, I.1.3, II.2.1  
March 21: Continued (**Paper Due**)  
March 23: *Democracy in America*, I.1.2

March 26: John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity,” and Nathaniel Niles, “Two Discourses on Liberty” (CP)  
March 28: *Democracy in America*, I.2.1, I.2.7  
March 30: *Democracy in America*, I.1.5

April 2: *Democracy in America*, II.2.1-2, 4-5, 7-8  
April 4: *Democracy in America*, I.2.9  
April 6: GOOD FRIDAY – NO CLASS

April 9: *Democracy in America*, II.1.5, II.2.9-13, 15, 17  
April 11: Hecla, *Christianity and American Democracy*, 3-35  
April 13: *Christianity and American Democracy*, 35-79

April 16: Hugh Hecla, *Christianity and American Democracy*, 79-123  
April 18: Hugh Hecla, *Christianity and American Democracy*, 123-144  
April 20: *Democracy in America*, I.2.10

April 23: Frederick Douglass reading (CP) (**Paper Due**)

April 25: *Democracy in America*, II.4.1-3

April 27: *Democracy in America*, II.4.6-7

April 30: Lincoln readings (CP)

May 2: *Democracy in America*, II.4.8

May 4: Conclusion

### **OTHER POLICIES**

**Students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

**Academic dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty will be treated extremely seriously. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. The university's policy on academic integrity may be found at the following website: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>

**Accommodations for religious holidays:** If anyone needs to miss class for a religious observance, I will hold a make-up session and the absence will be excused. If anyone misses a religious observance for class, they can take it up with their god.