

POLS XXXX
American Political Thought
FALL 2022

Instructor Information

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Course Information

Lecture: DAY and TIME
Location

Learning Outcomes

American political thought is full of contradictions, change, and promise. In this course, we will consider the major themes, controversies, and innovations in American political thought from the colonial period to America's most recent political challenge: the January 6th Insurrection. This is a seminar style course, meaning that students will be expected to have completed all assigned reading before class, make extensive notes about the readings, and come to class ready to discuss, interrogate, and debate the readings, individually and as a collection addressing a particular theme. Each week will have canonical works with which you may already be familiar, with less familiar voices in an effort to understand when and why some voices are included and excluded from American political thought.

In this class, we will examine the origins of American Political Thought, what citizenship and democracy mean in the American context, how various identities shape, challenge, and define America throughout different eras, and what freedom, liberty, and justice mean in this context.

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand and examine the major developments of American Political Thought.
- Develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. In particular, developing the ability to integrate both theoretical arguments and evidence.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of contemporary challenges in American politics and how they relate to past conflicts.

Course Readings

McCarthy, Timothy Patrick and John McMillian. 2003. *The Radical Reader*. New York: New Press. (Abbreviated as RR in the course outline).

Miscellaneous readings and multimedia posted on the course's Sakai page and listed in the course outline below.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

(1) Seminar Participation (30% total): This course is a seminar class, meaning that instead of the instructor lecturing, we will spend class time discussing the readings. In particular, their strengths and weaknesses, how they relate to each other, and what they mean for American (and global) politics and democracy. You must all be active participants in these discussions, and that entails careful and thoughtful reading of each week's assignment. As you prepare for each class, you should think about three things:

(a) Criticisms of particular readings: are there weaknesses in the types of arguments certain authors use, in the theoretical assumptions or development of the piece, or in the conclusions that the authors reach based on the evidence?

(b) How the readings relate to each other and what they tell us about American politics: How do the readings for a given week fit together (or not) and how are they related to earlier readings or current events? Taken together, what do the readings tell us about American society, politics, and democracy?

(c) Lines of future research: What questions do these readings leave unanswered? Do they point to new directions for future research? What theories, data, or methods are needed to address these new directions/questions?

You should come to class prepared to discuss all three of these things about the readings for the week—about both the reading in general and particular articles/chapters.

(2) Discussion Questions (20%): Twice this semester, you must work with 1-2 other classmates to come up with 5-7 questions to help guide our classroom discussion if conversation dwindles. It may be the case that we will not get to all of your questions, but we will get to at least 3 of them. You may rely solely on the readings assigned that week, or bring in a new reading, news story, piece of art, etc. to help expand and enhance the discussion for that week.

(3) Midterm Paper/Project (20% total): You will write a paper of approximately 5-7 double-spaced pages or another project of comparable effort (please see project assignment sheet to be handed out by the second week of classes). In the paper or project, you will choose to address one of three prompts.

(4) Final Paper (30%): You will write a paper of approximately 20-25 double-spaced pages containing original research on a topic of relevance to the seminar. There are several pieces of this assignment:

(a) A paper proposal (approximately two pages, double-spaced) should lay out the topic of the papers, its theoretical importance, and the types of data you plan to use.

(b) A paper "preview" (about six to eight pages) that includes your thesis and the main sources you intend to use in the final research paper.

(c) A brief five to ten minute presentation of your paper to the class.

(d) The final draft of your research paper.

Grading is based on the following distribution:

Participation	30%
Reaction Papers	15%
Research Paper Proposal	5%
Research Paper Preview	10%
Research Paper Presentation	10%
Research Paper Final Draft	30%

The following scale will determine your final grade:

93% +	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
60-69%	D

Course Policies

(1) No extensions or make-ups: There will be no extensions on papers or make-up exams except in the cases of serious illness (with a doctor's letter), deaths in the family, or university-sponsored activities (with a note from the particular university organization). Without such an excuse, anyone not taking an exam during the specified class time or not turning in a paper by the specified due date will receive a grade of zero on the exam or paper. If you need an extension, please contact me 24 hours before the due date so we can talk about an alternative timeline.

If you are having trouble managing your time and worry you will not complete assignments on time, please come talk to me or seek resources from your academic advisor and the McDonald Center, which has resources to develop better time management skills.

(2) Academic honesty: As members of the academic community, we each have a responsibility to uphold rigorous standards of integrity. Every student is thus expected to abide by Notre Dame's Undergraduate Academic Code of Honor. Among other things, that means that all of the work you do (whether on exams or in the essays) is your own and solely your own, and that when you obtain any ideas or information from other sources, you provide full citation to those sources. Students should be thoroughly familiar with the Code of Honor, located at <http://honorcode.nd.edu>. If you have any questions about the Code of Honor or academic honesty, please contact me.

(3) Be a good class citizen: Good citizenship in the classroom calls for everyone to devote their full attention to the lectures and ensuing discussion. That means silencing your cell phones, no texting, and no surfing the web. I understand that many students use their laptops or tablets for taking notes, but many also use them to tweet, snapchat, surf the web, etc. This is both sort of rude and distracting to other students. If you are using a laptop or tablet, you must sit in the first two rows of the room and you are only to use it for note-taking and review of course materials

(4) Inclusiveness: “The University of Notre Dame is committed to social justice. I share that commitment and strive to maintain a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. In this class we will not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, economic class, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration” (Statement borrowed from the Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning).

(5) Respect: We do not know what anyone else’s experience is or has been, listen and be kind.

(6) Be prepared: Read the material and be prepared to discuss beyond the surface-level meaning. Before class, begin analyzing the material in context.

(7) Privacy Statement: Course materials (videos, assignments, readings, etc.) are for use in this course only. You may not upload them to external sites, share with another person, or post them for public commentary without my written permission.

We may record class meetings to support remote students. These recordings will be available for review upon request. The University strictly prohibits anyone from duplicating, downloading, or sharing live class recordings with anyone outside of this course, for any reason.

If you need to join the class remotely via Zoom, please check surroundings first and use headphones to maintain the privacy of the course.

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Readings (before Class)
WEEK 1		
	Course Introduction and Colonial Thought	1. Course Syllabus 2. John Winthrop, “Christian Charitie: A Model Hereof” and “Little Speech on Liberty” 3. Transcript of the Trial of Anne Hutchinson 4. John Locke, “Essays on the Law of Nature” and “Two Treatises of Government” excerpts
WEEK 2		

	The Colonies and Independence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From RR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Samuel Adams, "A State of the Rights of the Colonists" b. Slave Petitions for Freedom (1773) c. Thomas Paine, "Common Sense" d. Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" e. Abigail Adams, "Letter to John Adams" f. Thomas Jefferson, "Declaration of Independence" 2. Thomas Paine, "The Crisis" 3. The Articles of Confederation (1776)
WEEK 3		
	The Constitutional Debate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thomas Jefferson, "An Act for Establishing Religious Freedom" (1786) (RR) 2. Patrick Henry, "Speech at the Second Virginia Convention" (RR) 3. "Petition from Shays' Rebellion" (RR) 4. Bill of Rights (RR) 5. George Washington, "Farewell Address"
WEEK 4		
	Gender Inequity before the Civil War	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From RR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sarah Grimké, "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes" b. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Seneca Falls Convention, Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions c. Sojourner Truth, "Ar'n't I A Woman?" d. Harriet Jacobs, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" e. National Women Suffrage Association, Declaration of the Rights of Women f. 19th Amendment to the US Constitution
WEEK 5		
	Abolitionism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From RR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Angelina Grimké, "An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South" b. Nat Turner, "Confession" c. Maria W. Stewart, "Productions"

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. William Lloyd Garrison, <i>The Liberator</i> Opening Editorial e. John Brown, “Last Speech to the Jury” <p>2. Video: Frederick Douglass’ Descendants Deliver His ‘Fourth of July’ Speech, NPR. https://www.npr.org/2020/07/03/884832594/video-frederick-douglass-descendants-read-his-fourth-of-july-speech</p>
WEEK 6		
	Civil War and Reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abraham Lincoln, “First Inaugural Address” 2. Video: Abraham Lincoln, “Gettysburg Address” 3. Jefferson Davis, “First Inaugural Address” 4. From RR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address” b. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “A Red Record” c. 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the US Constitution 5. Plessy v. Ferguson, Justice Brown’s Majority Opinion and Justice Harlan’s Dissent 6. Herbert Croly, <i>The Promise of American Life</i>, chapter 7
WEEK 7		
	Populism, Anarchism, and Socialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From RR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Working Men’s Party, Declaration of Independence b. National Labor Union, Statement of Principles c. Colored National Labor Union, Statement of Principles d. Henry George, <i>The Crime of Poverty</i> e. Chinese Equal Rights League, Appeal f. Pullman Workers, Statement to the American Railway Union g. William Jennings Bryan, Cross of Gold h. Upton Sinclair, <i>The Jungle</i> (excerpt) i. Emma Goldman, <i>Anarchism: What it Really Stands For</i> j. Eugene Debs, Address to the Jury k. Norman Thomas, <i>Why I Am a Socialist</i> 2. Jane Addams, “Why the Ward Boss Rules”

		3. Franklin Roosevelt, “Second Bill of Rights” and “Four Freedoms”
WEEK 8		
	Nationalism, Democracy, and Imperialism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Henry Cabot Lodge, “Speech on a Literacy Test for Immigrants” 2. Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League 3. Theodore Roosevelt, “The New Nationalism” 4. Jane Addams, “Americanization” 5. Woodrow Wilson, “The New Freedom” 6. Mark Twain, Excepts on anti-imperialism
WEEK 9		
	Tensions of Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From RR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Booker T. Washington, “Atlantic Exposition Address” b. W.E.B. Du Bois, <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> c. Black Elk, <i>Black Elk Speaks</i> 2. Examine sculptures by Mary Edmonia Lewis (Wildfire), especially <i>The Death of Cleopatra</i>, <i>Hagar</i>, and <i>Forever Free (Morning of Liberty)</i> 3. Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution 4. Jane Addams, “If Men Were Seeking the Franchise” 5. Emma Goldman, “Woman Suffrage” 6. Anna Howard Shaw, “The Fundamental Principle of a Republic”
WEEK 10		
	From Civil Rights to Black Power	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jo Ann Robinson, “The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Made It” 2. Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Power of Nonviolence” 3. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail” 4. Video: John Lewis’ Speech at March on Washington 5. James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook” 6. From RR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” b. Stokely Carmichael, “What We Want” c. The Black Panther Party, “What We Want, What We Believe” d. Angela Y. Davis, “Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation” e. The National Black Political Convention, “The Gary Declaration”

WEEK 11		
	Women's Liberation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From RR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Betty Friedan, <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> b. National Organization for Women (NOW) Statement of Purpose c. Kate Millett, "Sexual Politics: A Manifesto for Revolution" d. Susan Brownmiller, "The Enemy Within" e. Frances M. Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" f. The Combahee River Collective Statement
WEEK 12		
	Counterculture and Post-Civil Rights Discourse	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From RR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students for a Democratic Society, "Post Huron Statement" b. Herbert Marcuse, <i>One Dimensional Man</i> excerpt c. Mario Savio, "Berkeley Fall: The Berkeley Student Rebellion of 1964" d. Rachel Carson, <i>Silent Spring</i> excerpt e. George P. Marsh, "Man and Nature" f. César Chávez, "Letter from Delano" 2. Ayn Rand, "The Virtue of Selfishness" 3. Irving Kristol, "Capitalism, Socialism, Nihilism" 4. Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural Address 5. Milton Friedman and Rose S. Friedman, "Free to Choose" 6. Phyllis Schlafly, "The Power of the Positive Woman"
WEEK 13		
	From Post-Civil Rights to the Conservative Rise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thurgood Marshall, "The Constitution's Bicentennial: Commemorating the Wrong Document?" 2. bell hooks, <i>Feminism is for Everybody</i> 3. From RR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. ACT UP, Post-Action Position Statement on its "Stop the Church" b. Roni Krouzman, "WTO: The Battle in Seattle" 4. Pat Robertson, "A Portrait of America" 5. Russell Kirk, "Ten Conservative Principles" 6. Wolfowitz, "U.S. Strategy" 7. George W. Bush, "National Security Strategy"

WEEK 14

Identity in the
Obama and Post-
Obama Eras

1. Barack Obama, “Speech on Race”
2. Video: Donald Trump, Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speech
3. Donald Trump, Inaugural Address
4. Video: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speech
5. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Presidential Election Concession Speech
6. Black Lives Matter website pages
7. Women’s March on Washington, “Mission & Vision”
8. No DAPL, “All Eyes Are on Standing Rock”
9. Select readings on January 6th Insurrection

****FINAL PAPERS DUE—EXAM WEEK****