American Political Thought

AS 191.XXX – Summer 2017 (Term II)
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 3:00–5:30PM
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Course Description
This course offers an introduction to American Political Thought. American Political Thought can be understood as an ongoing – and contentious – conversation about the meaning of and relationship between liberalism, democracy, race, gender, pluralism, and the rule of law in the United States. The course explores these issues in three units. The first unit, "America at the Founding," examines the principles, concepts, and debates that shaped the American system of federal government during and after the Revolutionary War. The second unit, "Democratizing America," investigates various 19th century debates over the meaning of democratic citizenship in light of the country's history of slavery, the exclusion of women from public life, and the rise of a modern industrial economy. The third unit, "American Political Thought in the 20th Century," examines the intellectual foundations of some of the country's most recent and influential political and philosophical movements: pragmatism, neo-conservatism, neo-liberalism, and radical democratic pluralism.

Texts to Purchase
Please purchase **hard-copy versions** of the **editions/translations listed below.** The books are all available online and on 24 hour reserve at the library. Do not use Kindle or E-book versions (see Electronic Devices policy below). All other readings will be posted on Blackboard or E-Reserves.

1. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense.* (Dover Thrift) ISBN: 978-0486296029
2. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. (Harper) ISBN: 978-0061127922
3. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*. (Yale) ISBN: 978-0300195828

Course Requirements
Participation (40%)
Presentations (2) (20%)
Analytical Essays (3) (15%)
Final Exam (25%)

Class Participation – This is a discussion-based seminar course, and class participation constitutes the largest part of the final grade (40%). Students should come to each class meeting having read the day's assignments carefully and thoughtfully, and they should be prepared to engage in discussion with others. Regular student participation is essential, and evaluation will be based on the frequency and quality of participation.

In order to facilitate discussion, students must come to each class prepared to share two short discussion questions. Questions should focus on a concept or issue in the day's reading that the

student finds puzzling or provocative. A good discussion question stimulates conversation among the class as a whole.

> Absences – Because the course depends crucially on active student participation, absences will be penalized heavily. Three (3) points will be deducted from the student's final grade (out of 100) for each unexcused absence. If an emergency arises, students **must** e-mail the instructor **prior** to the start of class.

Presentations – Each student will make two (2) fifteen minute in-class presentations that comprise 20% of the final grade. Presentations should summarize the day's readings and pose questions for class discussion. At the end of the presentation, the student will lead class discussion for twenty to thirty minutes.

Analytical Essays – Three (3) 500 word analytical essays comprise 15% of the final grade. A successful essay accomplishes three tasks in a short space: (1) it describes the main issue (or *question*) raised by a reading; (2) it identifies the author's argument (or *answer* to that question); and (3) it explains the significance of that argument (why it is important). The purpose of this assignment is to practice identifying, describing, and explaining the core theoretical argument of a text, *not* to evaluate an author's views or advance an original thesis. We will begin the first two essays together in class on 7/6 and 7/13, and students will submit their completed essays in hard copy form at the beginning of the following Monday's class meeting. The third essay can be written on any remaining reading. No e-mailed or late assignments will be accepted.

Final Exam – There will be a final exam on the last day of class that evaluates the student's ability to synthesize and discuss the main texts and issues covered in the course. The format of the exam will be discussed in class. The final exam will comprise 25% of the final grade.

Course Policies

Electronic Devices – In order to facilitate a focused and engaged class discussion, no electronic devices (laptops, tablets, E-readers, phones, etc.) are allowed in lecture or discussion section. Students should bring all readings to class in hard-copy form.

Plagiarism – Your work must be your own. All direct quotes must appear in quotation marks, and all quotes and paraphrases require author and page number citations. Remember that citations are often required even when you do not quote a work directly. Please consult the instructor if you have any questions. Any instances of plagiarism will be taken seriously appropriately.

Accessibility – Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

* = Reading on Blackboard

INTRODUCTION

July 3 — Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (Ch. 1)*
Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America."*
Frank, "Constituent Moments"*

UNIT 1: AMERICA AT THE FOUNDING

American Independence and its Critics

July 5 — Paine, *Common Sense*

July 6 — Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence"*
Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"*
Adams, "Remember the Ladies"*

Federalism and the Republican Form of Government

July 10 — Publius, *The Federalist* (Nos. 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 15, 35)*

July 12 — Publius, *The Federalist* (Nos. 39, 51, 54, 55, 84)*
Brutus, "To the Citizens of the State of New York"*

UNIT 2: DEMOCRATIZING AMERICA

The New American Democracy

July 13 — Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Author's Intro; Vol. 1, Part I, Chs. 2, 3; Vol.1, Part II, Chs. 1, 9)

July 17 — Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Vol. 1, Part II, Ch. 10; Volume II, Part II)

Democratic Individualism

July 19 — Emerson "Self-Reliance"*
Emerson, "Politics"*
Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"*
Stanton, "Address Delivered at Seneca Falls"*

Reconstruction and Democratic Leadership

July 20 — DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Forethought–Ch. 6)

UNIT 3: AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The Pragmatist Tradition
July 24 Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chs. 4–5)*

The Birth of Neo-conservatism
July 26 Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Introduction–Ch. 1)*

The Birth of Neo-liberalism
July 27 Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Intro, Chs. 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, Concl.)*

Civil Rights and its Aftermath: African American Political Thought
July 31 King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"*
Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"*
West, *Race Matters* (Introduction, Ch. 8)*

Pluralism and Radical Democracy
August 2 Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy"*
Connolly, *Pluralism* (Introduction and Ch. 1)*

AUGUST 3 – FINAL EXAM