

Constitutional Principles: Core Texts and Ideas
GOV 312P Unique # 38655
Fall 2012

MWF 12:00-12:50
Location: Mezes 1.306

Democracy in America

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Office Hours: TBA

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-4

This course fulfills the second half of the legislative requirement for Government.

Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is the most famous book ever written on American politics, hands down. The wide-ranging insights of this classic work speak not only to American political life and culture, but also to race, class, the family, friendship, and the state of the American soul. We will read as much of the two-volume work as possible, focusing particular attention on its main themes, such as the American love of equality, the importance of local government, the perils of American materialism, and the dangers of tyranny of the majority. We will discuss Tocqueville's observations on American religion, ambition, intellectual life, family life, and the relations between the sexes. We will consider such questions as: What is unique about American democracy? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What can the world learn from American democracy, and what can legislators and citizens do to ensure that it remains healthy and vibrant? What were Tocqueville's broader concerns about the future of America? In the last third of the course, we will examine the ways in which Tocqueville's predictions have and have not been borne out. Now over a century and a quarter old, Tocqueville's analysis remains surprisingly accurate and surprisingly relevant.

Required Texts:

1. COURSE READER, available at Jenn's Copying and Binding, 2518 Guadalupe St., at the corner of Guadalupe and Dean Keeton, tel. 482-0779.
2. *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville, Volumes I and II, Vintage Classics edition. Edited by Phillips Bradley, with a new introduction by Daniel J. Boorstin.

Editions of *Democracy in America* abound. Try, if at all possible, to get the Vintage Classics edition. It has the preferred translation and, in the case of Volume I, it numbers the chapters differently from most editions. (Most editions divide Volume I into Parts.) Where it differs from other editions, I have listed the alternate chapter numbers in parentheses in the reading assignments. If you do decide to work from a different edition, it is your responsibility to make sure that you read the right assignment.

Grading and Requirements:

<u>Option 1 (No paper):</u>	<u>Option 2 (With paper):</u>
Midterm Exam: 40%	Midterm Exam: 20%
Pop Quizzes: 10%	Pop Quizzes: 10%
Final Exam: 50%	Final Exam: 30%
	Paper: 40%

Class participation will be taken into account in the following way: those who actively engage in discussions during lecture will be given credit in the case of marginal grades.

Exams: The mid-term will be an in-class examination comprised of an essay and short answer questions. The final exam will be cumulative. It will consist of an essay section, a short answer section, and some quote identifications. For both exams, I will announce in advance a list of themes from which the essay questions will be drawn.

The **optional paper** will be assigned in the second half of the term. I will distribute a list of possible questions. The task of the paper will be to analyze and/or evaluate the readings in the course. Papers must be between 4-6 double-spaced, typed pages, in 12-point font. Papers that do not meet these specifications will not be accepted. You must *not* use secondary sources for this paper. Plagiarism will result in an automatic F. Since this paper is optional, late papers will not be accepted. Papers may not be submitted by email. They must be submitted in hard copy form.

If you choose to submit a paper, your grade will be calculated according to “Option 2” described above; the grade you receive on the paper will be counted toward your final grade.

Unannounced pop quizzes: These quizzes will be multiple choice. They will be designed to reward you for doing the reading. You will be expected to bring a #2 pencil to each class. Makeup quizzes will not be given. However, I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

Attendance: I will take attendance frequently, either by passing around an attendance sheet or by taking roll, either at the beginning or at the end of class. On the days on which there is a quiz, attendance will be registered by handing in the quiz. Absences will be excused with a doctor’s note only. **Students with 4 or more unexcused absences will be docked a letter grade for the course.** *Example: the grade of a student with a B+ average who has four or more unexcused absences will be a C+.*

You will be expected to bring the relevant volume(s) of *Democracy in America* to every class.

Supplemental Instruction: This course offers an optional Supplemental Instruction (SI) discussion section in conjunction with the Sanger Learning Center and Career Center. The TA for the course, **Kanishka Marasinghe**, will offer **optional weekly discussion sections, twice a week for one hour**, on a day and time to be

announced shortly after the start of the course. The same material will be covered in both sessions. The section will cover course material as well as other skills that are vital for college success, such as how to organize information, test prep and test-taking skills, and critical thinking and writing skills. There is a consistent and strong correlation between grades and SI attendance in this and/or other classes and you are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. These discussion sections are a great way to get additional help with challenging material, discuss the ideas and themes of the course, and to get to know your TA.

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>.

Notification of a need for disability accommodations must be given to the professor at least 14 days prior to a paper due date or exam.

Notice regarding accommodations for religious holidays: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Emergency Evacuation Policy: In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Academic Honesty: In all of your work for this course, you are expected to know and to adhere to University of Texas policies regarding academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course.

Here is a link to the academic honor code: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/cho1/index.html>.

Course Schedule:

Note: This course schedule is approximate. Since this is a brand new course, it is especially approximate. I will announce the official reading assignment for the next class at the beginning of each class. So be sure to listen carefully at the beginning of each lecture. If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out the precise reading assignment for the next class.

Unless otherwise noted, all readings outside of *Democracy in America* are to be found in the Course Reader.

August 29	Intro
August 31	Introduction to <i>Democracy in America</i> , Vol. I (pp. 3-16), Author's Preface to the Twelfth Edition (pp. xix-xxi)
Sept. 5	Vol. I Chapter 3, Vol. II, Book 2, Chapter 1
Sept. 7	John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" and "On Liberty"
Sept. 10	Vol. I, Chapter 2
Sept. 12	Vol. I, Chapter 5 A-F, H, L
Sept. 14	Brutus I, Centinel I
Sept. 17	<i>Federalist Papers</i> 10 and 51
Sept. 19	Vol. I Chapter 8 A-E, M, N, T, V
Sept. 21	Vol. I Chapters 9-10, 12 (I.2.1-2, 4)
Sept. 24	Vol. I, Chapter 13 (I.2.5), selections, <i>Federalist Papers</i> 62 & 73
Sept. 26	Vol. I, Chapter 15 (I.2.7)
Sept. 28	Vol. I, Chapter 17 (I.2.9)
Oct. 1	Chapters 17 and 18, first half (I.2.10)
Oct. 3	Chapter 18 (I.2.10), con't.
Oct. 5	Review
Oct. 8	Exam I
Oct. 10	Vol. II, Part 1, 1-4, 8
Oct. 12	Vol. II, Part 1, 7, 9-11
Oct. 15	Vol. II, Part 1, 15-16

Oct. 17	Vol. II, Part 2, 1-4; Melville, “Poor Man’s Pudding, Rich Man’s Crumbs”
Oct. 19	Vol. II, Part 2, 5-9
Oct. 22	Vol. II. Part 2, 10-14; optional paper assigned
Oct. 24	Vol. II, Part 2, 15-18
Oct. 26	Vol. II, Part 2, 19-20, Vol. II. Part 3, 1
Oct. 29	Writing
Oct. 31	Vol. II, Part 3, 5, 8-10
Nov. 2	Vol. II, Part 3, 11-13
Nov. 5	Vol. II, Part 3, 18-19; optional paper due
Nov. 7	Vol. II, Part 4, 1-2, 6-8
Nov. 9	Tocqueville Review

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, UPDATED AND RECONSIDERED

Nov. 12	Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , Chapter 1
Nov. 14	Elizabeth Cady Stanton, <i>Declaration of Sentiments</i> ; Speech at Seneca Falls, 1848
Nov. 16	Theodore Roosevelt, “Citizenship in a Republic”
Nov. 19	Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone”; Stephen Marche, “Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?” (Both to be circulated)
Nov. 21	Martin Luther King, Letter from a Birmingham Jail
Nov. 26	Barack Obama, Speech on Race
Nov. 28	Solzhenitsyn, “A World Split Apart”
Nov. 30	Tom Wolfe, “Two Young Men who Went West;” Greg Smith, “Why I am Leaving Goldman Sachs”
Dec. 3	Charlotte Allen, “The New Dating Game”
Dec. 5	Tom Wolfe, “Sorry, But your Soul Just Died”
Dec. 7	Review

Final Exam: Friday, December 14, 2:00-5:00 pm.