

**GOV 312P: Constitutional Principles: Core Texts – Honors**  
**Unique # 38750**  
**MWF 2-3, MEZ 2.124**

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This class is a study of the basic principles of American political life: Democracy, equality, and liberty. Through a close reading of core texts of 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. The class has three basic units. In the first, we will explore the philosophic foundations of the American system of government by reading John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*. In the second, we will turn to the debate over the ratification of the Constitution, examining in detail the arguments made in its favor by the Federalists and those made against it by the Anti-Federalists, in order to see concretely how our political principles were put into practice, and to come to a better appreciation of the deep disagreements about the nature and purposes of our political system that were present even at the time of the Founding.

The last and longest unit is a study of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which is perhaps the most penetrating analysis of democracy ever written. Basing his claims on careful observation of American society, Tocqueville presents a new interpretation of what democracy is and what its virtues and vices are. He further raises the basic question of how – and whether – a democratic society can remain healthy and politically free in the long term. In reading his work, we will focus on such key issues as the relationship between freedom and equality, the meaning of justice in a democracy, the moral character of American citizens, the threat of a decline in civic involvement, the problems of race and slavery, and the role and character of religion in liberal society. We will supplement our study of Tocqueville with other readings that clarify, expand, and criticize his claims. These include Mill's *On Liberty*, certain great speeches of American political tradition by figures like Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and FDR, and some especially thoughtful pieces of contemporary scholarship.

**CLASS POLICY**

This is a *discussion intensive* class. 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. If you are caught texting during class, you will be credited with *two* unexcused absences. 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 Arthur Goldhammer. Library of America. ISBN 1931082545.
7. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*. Dover Thrift. ISBN 0486421309.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE CALCULATION

**60% - Three Papers (20% each):** You will write 3 3-5 page (1500 word) papers on topics to be assigned in class. Papers will be due at the beginning of class on February 8, March 8, and April 12. 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 on the quality 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. By rewriting, you can bring your grade up by as much as one full letter grade. You must turn in the original marked copy of your paper with the rewrite, or it will not be graded.

**20% - Final Exam:** There will be a cumulative final given on Saturday, May 11, from 2-5 PM. I will distribute study questions in advance.

**10% - Quizzes and Paper Reviews:** There will be short pop quizzes on the reading at the beginning of many of our classes. These will be easy if you have done the reading. If you miss class, you will be allowed to make up the quiz *only if* your absence is excused.

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 at class meetings after papers are due. Each paper review will have the same value as a quiz.

**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. Trust me: I can tell the difference.

**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%.** Having more than 8 unexcused absences classes will result in automatic failure of the course. I will excuse absences if you have a serious reason for missing class, such as illness or a religious observance – but you need to consult with me as soon as possible.

**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 single paragraph responses that show that you have attended and listened to the lecture. Your emails must have the subject heading, "GOV312 Extra Credit." I will announce the lectures in class. You can attend at most two of these for extra credit during the semester. Each will add 5 points to your quiz grade, where each quiz counts for 10 points.

**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: 94-100; A-: 90-94; 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 that include multiple readings, I recommend doing them in the order listed below.

We will assume a basic familiarity with the provisions of the US Constitution, as well as the Articles of Confederation. You may wish to review them before the first class on the Founding Debate. They can be found as the appendix to our edition of the *Federalist Papers*.

January 14: Introduction

January 16: Aristotle, Excerpts (CP)

January 18: Locke, Second Treatise: 1-4

January 21: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No class

January 23: Locke, Second Treatise: 5

January 25: Locke, Second Treatise: 6-8

January 28: Locke, Second Treatise, 9-14

January 30: Locke, Second Treatise, 19

February 1: Federalist 1 & 39; Patrick Henry 5.16.1-2 (AF)

February 4: Federalist 2-5, 6-8, 11-12, 14

February 6: Melancton Smith Speech, June 21, 1788; Brutus I; Federal Farmer II, III (2.24-27 only) (all in AF); Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Quet 19 (CP)

February 8: Continued (**Paper due**)

February 11: Federalist 23-25, 41; Brutus VII (2.83-90 **only**), IX, X (AF); Federal Farmer XVIII (CP), Philadelphiensis III (CP)

February 13: Agrippa VIII (AF); Pennsylvania Farmer (CP); Patrick Henry 5.16.2 and 23 (AF); Federalist Papers 17, 27, 39 (read from 239 top – “But it was not sufficient...” – to end)

February 15: Federalist 9-10

February 18: Federalist 35-37, 39 (beginning to 239 top)

February 20: Federalist 47-48, 51; George Mason’s “Objections” (CP)

February 22: Cato V (CP), Federal Farmer VII (AF), Brutus III (2.9.42-44 only); Brutus IV (2.9.45-48 only) (AF); Federalist 52-53, 55 (last paragraph only), 62

February 25: Centinel I (AF), Maryland Farmer V (begin at 5.1.74) (AF)

February 27: Cato IV (CP); Henry 5.16.6-7, 5.16.11 (AF), Federalist 67-69

March 1: Federalist 71-77

March 4: Federal Farmer XV (CP); Brutus, XI, XIV, and XV (AF); Federalist 78

March 6: Virginia Declaration of Rights, Brutus II, Wilson Speech (CP); Federalist 84

March 8: Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 1 (**Paper due**)

March 11-16: **Spring Break**

March 18: Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 3 and 4

March 20: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Introduction

March 22: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I.1.3, II.2.1

March 25: *Democracy in America*, I.1.2; John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (CP)

March 27: *Democracy in America*, I.2.1, I.2.7

March 29: GOOD FRIDAY – No class

April 1: *Democracy in America*, I.1.5

April 3: *Democracy in America*, II.2.1-2, 4-5, 7-8

April 5: *Democracy in America*, I.2.9

April 8: *Democracy in America*, II.1.5, II.2.9-13, 15, 17

April 10: Hecla, *Christianity and American Democracy*

April 12: Continued (**Paper due**)

April 15: Continued

April 17: *Democracy in America*, I.2.10

April 19: Readings on Slavery: Lincoln, "A House Divided;" Frederick Douglass, "The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro" (CP)

April 22: Continued

April 24: *Democracy in America*, II.4.1-3, 6-7

April 26: The New Deal – Roosevelt, Commonwealth Club Address (CP)

April 29: Reich, "The New Property," Hecla, "The Future of Social Policy-Making" (handout, to be emailed)

May 1: Lincoln Readings (CP)

May 3: **LAST CLASS:** *Democracy in America*, II.4.8

**FINAL EXAM:** Saturday, May 11, 2:00-5:00 pm

## **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.