

POT 4204: American Political Thought

Professor Dan O'Neill
Office: 218 Anderson
doneill@ufl.edu

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Tel. 273-2386
W: 10-12

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to introduce you to the central traditions in American political thinking, from the Puritans to present. The primary focus of the course is on discerning the nature and historical vicissitudes of the American experiment in self-government. However, the deeper goal of the class is to help you think critically about current political questions, and to help you become self-conscious about the positions you take with respect to them (whatever they may be) by reflecting upon the past.

TEXTS:

Isaac Kramnick and Theodore J. Lowi, *American Political Thought*, 2nd edition (A Norton Anthology): New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2018. ISBN: 978-0393655902

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (Dover Thrift Editions), ISBN: 978-0486496368

Course Requirements:

This is a face-to-face lecture and discussion class. Attendance and participation are mandatory and will be graded (see below). In the event you cannot attend class in person for a legitimate reason (e.g., you are not medically cleared to come to campus), alternative assignments for attendance and participation will be provided and are required to fulfill this portion of your grade.

Assignments and Grading: Grades for the course will be determined by 5 components: 2 papers of 8-10 pages in length (25 points each); 1 final exam (25 points each); attendance (10 points) and active participation (15 points). Your participation grade can be achieved through substantial weekly discussion in class, or by submitting a 1 page response paper directly to me for each week you did not get a chance to speak meaningfully in class. These components will be aggregated into an overall letter grade at the end of the course, in keeping with current UF policies for assigning grade points, which you can access by following this [link to the university grades and grading policies](#).

The highest grade any late assignment can receive in the absence of a legitimate excuse is a “C+.” An example of a legitimate excuse would be an illness for which you have a signed

doctor’s note. Please be aware: A “C+” is not the lowest grade a late assignment can receive, it is the highest (i.e., it is the ceiling, not the floor). The final exam will be entirely essay based; questions will be distributed beforehand, on the last day of class. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Click here to read the university attendance policies; [Attendance Policies < University of Florida \(ufl.edu\)](#)

The course is out of 100 total points, and the Grading Scale is as follows: 93-100 (A); 90-92 (A-); 87-89 (B+); 83-86 (B); 80-82 (B-); 77-79 (C+); 73-76 (C); 70-72 (C-); 67-69 (D+); 63-66 (D); 60-62 (D-); 0-59 (E; failing)

Preparation: You should do the reading for a given session prior to coming to class on that day. If you are playing catch up on the reading, you will be in trouble in this course.

Policy on Academic Integrity: All students are required to abide by the University of Florida’s Academic Honesty Guidelines. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Among other things, this policy means that cheating on exams is totally unacceptable, as is plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of portraying as your own the words or ideas of other people, or their machine substitutes. Examples include submitting entire papers or portions of papers that you did not write (e.g., old papers written by other students, new papers written by other students, papers which you paid a “research” service to write for you, papers or portions of papers downloaded from the Internet), and the use of Artificial Intelligence methods instead of doing the work yourself. Copying verbatim or paraphrasing any substantial portion of text by another author---including of the non-human variety---without acknowledging the source via quotation and/or footnotes is plagiarism. Plagiarism is far easier to spot than you might think. Do not ruin your experience in this or any other class by engaging in academic dishonesty. **This should be made somewhat easier in the current class because all outside sources are strictly forbidden.**

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). **It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.**

Class Demeanor: Students are expected to arrive at class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion (including online conversations) should be held at a minimum, if at all. Phones should be turned off prior to class. Save Facebook, (F)Instagram, Snapchat, X (formerly known as Twitter), TikTok, etc., until your free time. While the Alligator is a very good student newspaper, please do not read it during class time. I will allow laptops for notetaking purposes, but if they become a source of entertainment during class time, they will be banned.

Course Evaluation Process: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in the Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#).

Materials and Supplies Fees: There are no additional fees for this course.

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Policy Regarding in Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class

lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without the permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Lecture, Reading, and Discussion Schedule:

August 22: Syllabus Walkthrough and Introduction: The Multiple Traditions of American Political Thought

August 27, 29: Puritanism: The Shining City, the American Jeremiad, and the Protestant Ethic

Reading: John Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity* (1630), *Little Speech on Liberty* (1639); Roger Williams, *The Bloudy Tenant of Persecution* (1644); John Wise, *A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches* (1717); Jonathan Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers* (1750); Cotton Mather, *A Christian and His Calling* (1701); Benjamin Franklin, *The Way of Wealth* (1758), *The Art of Virtue* (1784), *Information to Those Who Would Remove to America* (1784); *The Mayflower Compact* (1620); William Penn, *Preface to the First Frame of Government for Pennsylvania* (1682): **pp. 11-65**

September 3, 5: From Revolution to Constitution

Reading: Samuel Adams, *The Rights of the Colonists* (1772); Jonathan Boucher, *On Civil Liberty, Passive Obedience, and Non-Resistance* (1774); John Adams, *Thoughts on Government* (1776); Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776); *The American Crisis, I* (1776); Thomas Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence* (1776); *The Articles of Confederation* (1778); Alexander Hamilton, *Letter to James Duane* (1780); *The Constitution of the United States* (1787); John Adams, *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (1787): **pp. 77-155**

September 10, 12: *The Federalist Papers*

Reading: *Federalist Papers* Nos. 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 23, 33, 35, 39, 48, 51, 54, 55, 57, 60, 62, 63, 70, 71, 72, 73, 78, 84

September 17, 19: From the Antifederalists to the Federalist and Jeffersonian Visions of America

Reading: Thomas Jefferson, *Letters on the Constitution* (1787, 1789); Richard Henry Lee, *Letters from the Federal Farmer* (1787); Robert Yates, *Essays of Brutus* (1787- 1788); Patrick Henry, *Debate in the Virginia Ratifying Convention* (1788); *The Bill of Rights* (1791); Alexander Hamilton, *First Report on the Public Credit* (1790), *Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bank* (1791), *Report on Manufactures* (1791); George Washington, *Farewell Address* (1796); John Marshall, *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), *McCulloch vs. Maryland* (1819); Various pieces by Thomas Jefferson (1777- 1819); James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, *Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions* (1798); **pp. 210-242, 255-340 (First Paper Topics Handed Out on Thursday, September 19)**

September 24, 26: Jacksonian Democracy and American Individualism

Reading: John R. Cooke and Abel P. Upshur, *Debate in the Virginia Constitutional Convention* (1829-1830); Andrew Jackson, *First Annual Message to Congress* (1829), *Bank Veto Message* (1832), *Farewell Address* (1837); Daniel Webster, *Speech on Jackson's Veto of the United States Bank Bill* (1832); Roger B. Taney, *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge* (1837); George Bancroft, *The Office of the People in Art, Government, and Religion* (1835); Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance* (1840), *Politics* (1849); Henry David Thoreau, *Resistance to Civil Government* (1849), *Life Without Principle* (1863); Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas* (1871): **pp. 344-386, 396-430**

October 1, 3: Feminism and Abolitionism in the Early Republic

Reading: Abigail Adams, *Letter to John Adams* (1776); Judith Sargent Stevens Murray (Constantia), *On the Equality of the Sexes* (1790); Angelina Grimké, *Letter to Catherine E. Beecher* (1837); Catherine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841); Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions* (1848), *Address to the New York State Legislature* (1860): **pp. 431-452**

Benjamin Rush, *An Address...Upon Slave Keeping* (1773); Thomas Paine, *African Slavery in America* (1775); Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1784); William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator* (1831), *Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society* (1833); William Ellery Channing, *Slavery* (1835); Angelina Grimké, *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* (1836); David Walker, *Appeal...to the Colored Citizens of the World...* (1829); Frederick Douglass, *Lectures on Slavery* (1850), *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?* (1852), **pp. 453-510 (1st Paper due at Beginning of Class on Tuesday, October 1)**

October 8, 10: Slavery and the Civil War

Reading: John C. Calhoun, *Speeches on Slavery* (1837, 1839), *A Disquisition on Government* (1848); George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South; or, the Failure of Free Society* (1854), *Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters* (1857); Roger B. Taney, *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857); James Henry Hammond, “Mud Sill” *Speech* (1858); **pp. 513--561**

Various Speeches by Abraham Lincoln (1854-1865): **pp. 561-596**

October 15, 17: Gilded Age Capitalism, Social Darwinism, and American Radicalism

Reading: William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1884); *The Challenge of Facts* (1895); Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth* (1889); Orestes Brownson, *The Laboring Classes* (1840); Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (1879); Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1889); Henry Demarest Lloyd, *Wealth Against Commonwealth* (1894); Lester Ward, *Sociocracy* (1893), *Plutocracy and Paternalism* (1895); Emma Goldman, *Anarchism: What It Really Stands For* (1907); Eugene V. Debs, *Speech to the Jury* (1918): **pp. 386-395, 613-683, 724-743**

October 22, 24: Manifest Destiny, Gender, and Race

Reading: James Harvey Slater and James Zachariah George, *Speeches on Chinese Immigration* (1882); Josiah Strong, *Our Country* (1885); Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West* (1889-1896); Henry Cabot Lodge, *Speech on a Literacy Test for Immigrants* (1896); Albert J. Beveridge, *The March of the Flag* (1898); *Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League* (1899); William Apress, *Eulogy on King Philip* (1836); Chief Joseph, *An Indian’s View of Indian Affairs* (1879); Chief Joseph, Crazy Horse, and Smohalla, *On Work and Property*: **pp. 781-809, 819-847**

Victoria Woodhull, *On Constitutional Equality* (1871), *The Principles of Social Freedom* (1871); Susan B. Anthony, *Speech About her Indictment* (1873); Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics* (1898); Jane Addams, *If Men Were Seeking the Franchise* (1913): **pp. 755-776**

Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments (1865, 1868, 1870), Henry Brown and John Marshall Harlan in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896); Booker T. Washington, *Atlanta Exposition Address* (1895); W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), *The Talented Tenth* (1903); Marcus Garvey, *The True Solution of the Negro Problem* (1922); Hiram K. Evans, *The Klan’s Fight for Americanism* (1926); **pp. 817-819, 847-886 (Second Paper Topics Handed out on Thursday, October 24)**

October 29, 31: The Progressives

Reading: Lincoln Steffens, *The Shame of the Cities* (1904); Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906); Monsignor John Ryan, *A Living Wage* (1906); Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (1909); Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1909); Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899); Charles A. Beard, *The Economic Basis of Politics* (1922); William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Old Ways of Thinking* (1907); John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (1910), *The Public and Its Problems* (1927); Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., *Dissent in Lochner v. New York* (1905), *Natural Law* (1918); Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909); Theodore Roosevelt, *New Nationalism* (1910); Louis D. Brandeis, *The Living Law* (1915); Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom* (1913): **pp. 890-995**

November 5, 7: The New Deal and Its Critics

Reading: Herbert Hoover, *Rugged Individualism* (1928); *The Fifth Freedom* (1941); Charles Beard, *The Myth of Rugged American Individualism* (1931); John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935); Various Speeches by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1932-1944); R.G. Tugwell, *The Principles of Planning and the Institution of Laissez Faire* (1932); Henry A. Wallace, *New Frontiers* (1934); Walter Lippmann, *Planning in an Economy of Abundance* (1937): **pp. 998-1073 (2nd Paper Due at Beginning of Class on November 5)**

November 12, 14: The 1960s-1990s: Transformation and Resistance

Reading: C. Wright Mills, *Letter to the New Left* (1960); Students For A Democratic Society (SDS), *The Port Huron Statement* (1962): **pp. 1115-1119, 1121-1133**

Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Power of Nonviolence* (1957), *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (1963); *I Have a Dream* (1963); Malcolm X, *The Ballot or the Bullet* (1964): **pp. 1133-1145, 1147-1153**

NOW, *Bill of Rights* (1967); *Redstockings Manifesto* (1969); Cherríe Moraga, *La Güera*; bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984): **pp. 1250-1258, 1264-1271**

Harry Hay, *What Gay Consciousness Brings, and Has Brought, to the Hetero Left!* (1991): **pp. 1318-1323**

Milton Friedman and Rose D. Friedman, *Free to Choose* (1980); Ronald Reagan, *First Inaugural Address* (1981); Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987); Pat Robertson, *A Portrait of America* (1993): **pp. 1219-1234, 1258-1264, 1276-1287, 1323-1330**

November 19, 21: Imagining America (2000-2024)

Reading: Barack Obama, *Speech on Race* (2008); *Newdow v. Rio Linda Union School District* (2010); *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015); Publius Decius Mus, *The Flight 93 Election* (2016), The Movement for Black Lives, *Platform* (2016), Donald J. Trump, *Inaugural Address* (2017): pp. 1387-1406, 1458-1495, 1507-1518

Coda: Langston Hughes, *Let America Be America Again* (1938): pp. 887-889

November 26, 28: NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING BREAK)**December 3: Conclusion**

Final Exam Questions Handed Out

FINAL EXAMINATION: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11 (7:30-9:30 A.M.)