

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 3054: AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT**  
**Summer 2009**

Instructor: Jason Robles

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9:30 – 11:00, or by appointment (Ketchum 5B)

Email: [jarobles@colorado.edu](mailto:jarobles@colorado.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course explores some of the major themes and figures in American political thought from the Colonial Period to the present. As an introduction to a continually evolving set of complex and often conflicting political theories, the aim of this course is threefold: first, we shall inquire into the origins and foundations of the tradition of American political discourse; second, we will use this foundation to examine both the continuities and discontinuities in American political and constitutional thought over the past three centuries; finally, we will conclude with a critical evaluation of our nation's most important founding document, the Constitution.

We will survey the origins and evolution of American political and constitutional thought across four broad historical time periods: the Founding (1620 – 1788); the Early Republic (1788 – 1865); the Post-Bellum/Reconstruction Period (1865 – 1913); and the Twentieth/Twenty-First Century (1913-Present). Although we will examine a significant number of major thinkers, our study will by no means be comprehensive; as a matter of course a fair number of voices (of varying degrees of significance) must be omitted. This unavoidable problem is simply a testament to the richness and complexity in the tradition of American political discourse. If nothing else, the need to focus on certain authors at the expense of other equally important figures only serves to reinforce the claim that American political thought is anything but monolithic and one-dimensional.

On one level, we seek to gain an understanding of the *history* of American political thought, that is, of the development of the unique ways in which people have theorized the individual's (and, in some cases, a particular group's) relation to politics and society in the United States. On another level, we will explore the ways in which each author transcends (or fails to transcend) time and place, or the ways in which each illuminates and helps us to approach problems of *contemporary* political significance. We will study the history of American political thought with an eye toward the debate over the Constitution—a debate that took shape long before the Convention of 1787 and continues to this day. Specifically, we are interested in engaging that debate in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the document and to determine whether the Constitution is in need of repair.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Belknap)

Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics\** (Vintage) [**\*Optional**]

Kramnick and Lowi, *American Political Thought* (Norton)

Levinson, *Our Undemocratic Constitution* (Oxford)

A copy of each text has been placed on reserve at Norlin Library.

## GRADING CRITERIA:

- **Class Participation (15%):** Each day lectures will be supplemented with discussion-based evaluations of the assigned texts. You will be graded on both the *quantity* and *quality* of your contributions to class discussions. In order to participate effectively, it is imperative that you complete the assigned readings *prior* to lecture.
- **Midterm (40%):** The midterm will consist in short answer and essay questions. The short answer portion of the exam will test your objective knowledge of the course material. The essay portion of the exam will require you to demonstrate your ability to engage and critically evaluate the texts.
- **Take-Home Final Exam (45%):** The final exam will consist in longer essay questions similar to those in the midterm. Instructions for the final exam will be given on the last day of class.

**COMMUNICATION:** The University of Colorado considers email an *official* form of communication. You are responsible for checking your *colorado.edu* account regularly to ensure receipt of important course information (e.g., schedule changes, review materials, etc.).

**RELIGIOUS AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** If you have conflicts with exams or attendance due to religious obligations *and/or* if you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me **NO LATER THAN JUNE 3**. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. The University's policies on disability accommodations can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

**CLASSROOM DECORUM:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. The University's policies on classroom decorum can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html>. **THE USE OF CELL PHONES DURING CLASS IS PROHIBITED.**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council. See <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode> for more information. **ANY AND ALL VIOLATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE WILL AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE FOR THE COURSE.**

**DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT:** Anyone who believes they have been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) or the Office of Judicial Affairs. More information can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>. The University's policy on Discrimination and Harassment can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html>.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

\*Except for Bailyn and Levinson (and where otherwise noted), selections are in the *Kramnick and Lowi* anthology.

### ***PART I—THE FOUNDING PERIOD (1620 – 1791)***

#### **A. Ideological Origins, Transplantation, and Self-Development (1620 – 1763)**

- 6/1            Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity"  
                ———, "Little Speech on Liberty"  
                Ward, "The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam"  
                Wise, "A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches"  
                Mayhew, "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance  
                to the Higher Powers"  
                *The Mayflower Compact*  
                Penn, "Preface to the First Frame of Government for Pennsylvania"
- 6/2            Bailyn, Ch. 1-2
- 6/3            Bailyn, Ch. 3

#### **B. Revolution (1763 – 1776)**

- 6/4            Otis, "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved"  
                Adams, S., "The Rights of the Colonists"  
                Adams, J., "Novanglus"  
                ———, "Thoughts on Government"  
                Jefferson, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America"  
                ———, "Declaration of Independence"

#### **C. Toward a More Perfect Union (1776 – 1788)**

- 6/5            *The Federalist*: #1, 10, 14\*, 48, 51 [\*Handout]  
                *The Anti-Federalist*: "Letters from the Federal Farmer" and "Essays of Brutus"  
                Jefferson, "Letter to James Madison" (December 20, 1787)

### ***PART II—THE EARLY REPUBLIC, EXPANSION, AND CIVIL WAR (1788 – 1865)***

#### **A. The Federalist and Jeffersonian Visions (1788 – 1826)**

- 6/8            Hamilton, "First Report on the Public Credit"  
                ———, "Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bank"  
                ———, "Report on Manufactures"  
                *Marbury v. Madison*  
                *McCullough v. Maryland*



- 6/9 Jefferson, "A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom"  
 ———, "Notes on the State of Virginia"  
 ———, "Letter to James Madison" (March 15, 1789) [Handout]  
 ———, "Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bank"  
 ———, "Letter to Elbridge Gerry" (January 26, 1799)  
 ———, "First Inaugural Address"  
 ———, "Letter to the Danbury Baptist Association" (January 1, 1802)  
 ———, "Second Inaugural Address"  
 ———, "Letter to John Adams" (October 28, 1813)  
 ———, "Letter to Samuel Kercheval" (July 12, 1816)

#### **B. The Jacksonian Vision and American Individualism (1824 – 1859)**

- 6/10 Clay, "Speech on the Tariff"  
 Adams, J.Q., "First Inaugural Address"  
 Jackson, "First Annual Message to Congress"  
 ———, "Veto of Maysville Road Bill"  
 ———, "Bank Veto Message"  
 Emerson, "Self-Reliance"  
 Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government"

#### **C. Slavery, Lincoln, and the "Second Founding" (1848 – 1865)**

- 6/11 Douglass, "Lectures on Slavery"  
 ———, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"  
 Calhoun, "A Disquisition on Government"  
 Lincoln, "Speech at Peoria, IL on the Kansas-Nebraska Act" (October 16, 1854)  
 ———, "Speech on the Dred Scott Decision" (June 26, 1857)  
*Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (Excerpts from Fourth and Seventh) [Handout]
- 6/12 Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address" (March 4, 1861)  
 ———, "Address to Congress" (July 4, 1861)  
 ———, "Reply to Horace Greeley" (August 22, 1862) [Handout]  
 ———, "Gettysburg Address" (November 19, 1863)  
 ———, "Second Inaugural Address" (March 4, 1865)

### **PART III—THE GILDED AGE AND AMERICAN INDUSTRIALISM (1865 – 1913)**

#### **A. Social Darwinism and Populism (1865 – 1896)**

- 6/15 Sumner, "What Social Classes Owe to Each Other"  
 ———, "The Absurd Effort to Make the World Over"  
 ———, "Consolidation of Wealth"  
 Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth"  
 Lloyd, "Wealth Against Commonwealth"  
*National People's Party Platform*  
 Bryan, "The 'Cross of Gold' Speech"

## **B. The Progressive Era (1890 – 1913)**

- 6/16 Ryan, “A Living Wage”  
Veblen, “The Theory of the Leisure Class”  
James, “Pragmatism: A New Name for Old Ways of Thinking”  
Dewey, “The Public and its Problems”
- 6/17 Holmes, Jr., “Dissent in *Lochner v. New York*”  
———, “Natural Law”  
Roosevelt, T. “New Nationalism”  
Brandeis, “The Living Law”  
Wilson, “The New Freedom”
- 6/18 **MIDTERM**

## **PART IV—MASS SOCIETY AND MODERN LIBERALISM (1913 – PRESENT)**

### **A. The New Deal and its Critics (1922 – 1945)**

- 6/19 Hoover, “American Individualism”  
———, “Rugged Individualism”  
———, “The Challenge to Liberty”  
———, “The Fifth Freedom”  
Beard, “The Myth of Rugged American Individualism”
- 6/22 Dewey, “Liberalism and Social Action”  
Roosevelt, F.D., “Speech at Oglethorpe University”  
———, “Commonwealth Club Speech”  
———, “First Inaugural Address”  
———, “The Four Freedoms”  
———, “A Second Bill of Rights”

### **B. The Cold War, Civil Rights, and the Limits of Dissent (1945 – PRESENT)**

- 6/23 Mills, “Power Elite”  
———, “Letter to the New Left”  
Bell, “The End of Ideology”  
*Adamson v. California* [Handout]  
*Dennis v. United States* [Handout]
- 6/24 *Brown v. Board of Education* [Handout]  
Arendt, “Reflections on Little Rock” [Handout]  
King, “The Power of Non-Violence”  
———, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”  
———, “I Have a Dream” (“Lincoln Memorial Address”)  
Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”

6/25      *Abington Township, Pennsylvania v. Schempp* [Handout]  
            *Griswold v. Connecticut* [Handout]  
            *Miranda v. Arizona* [Handout]  
            *Katz v. United States* [Handout] [\*Optional]  
            *Brandenburg v. Ohio* [Handout]  
            *United States v. Lopez* [Handout]  
            *Hamdi et al v. Rumsfeld* [Handout]

**PART V—DEBATING THE CONSTITUTION: CHALLENGES TO THE REPUBLIC**

**A. An “Old and Venerable Fabrick” or a Defective Constitution?**

6/26      Marshall, “The Constitution’s Bicentennial: Commemorating the Wrong Document?”  
            Levinson, Ch. 1

**B. Defects of the United States Constitution: Articles I & II**

6/29      Levinson, Ch. 2

6/30      Levinson, Ch. 3

**C. “All Men Are Created Equal...”**

7/1      Levinson, Ch. 4 - 5

**D. “Supplying the Defects...”**

7/2      Levinson, Ch. 6 – 7, and Afterword

**\*\*\* TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE FRIDAY JULY 3 BY 5:00 PM \*\*\***