

**American Political Thought  
PSCI 3054-001  
9-9:50 MWF  
HLMS 141  
Fall 2019**

Instructor: Dr. Janet Donovan  
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**This syllabus is subject to amendment. Students will be notified if amendments are made.**

**Course description:** This course traces major themes in American Political Thought from the Colonial Period through the present, by reading and evaluating the works of key American political thinkers, and putting their ideas into historical and political perspective. In the course, we will use various means of understanding and evaluating these works, including lecture, discussions, a semester paper, reading quizzes and midterm and final exams.

Using the readings, we will trace the development and changes in core principles of American democracy over time, including liberty, equality of opportunity, property and religious ideals. We will also trace the importance of liberalism and conservatism as political philosophies for articulating these principles (please keep in mind that “liberalism” and “conservatism” are used in this course in their philosophical meanings, not their common meanings in politics today).

The readings and concepts explored in this course are difficult, and students will need to carefully complete the reading assignments before class, come to class on a regular basis and take good notes, and participate fully in discussions and online activities in order to be successful in the course. Students should expect to spend an average of 6 hours per week outside the classroom working on the course. There is an average of 60 pages of reading per class period, though this varies. It is recommended that students have taken the prerequisite PSCI 2004: Survey of Western Political Thought prior to this course. Students having trouble should make an effort early on to come to office hours and ask questions, and address ways of improving course performance. All students are welcome and encouraged to come to office hours.

The course text was chosen for its comprehensive selection of writings, speeches and documents that have influenced the development of American political thought, and indeed, the way Americans think. The text offers some context to these writings, but additional context will be provided in lecture as well.

This is a political theory course. This course is approved for the old arts and sciences core curriculum: United States context or ideals and values. This course may also be applicable to the new distributed core; please see your academic advisor for questions regarding whether this class fulfills your degree requirements.

**Course objectives:**

- 1) Learn about key ideas and concepts in American Political Thought by reading primary texts from influential thinkers
- 2) Trace core principles of American democracy over time—liberty, equality of opportunity, property, religious ideals

- 3) Examine the importance of the dominant political philosophy of liberalism, and the interplay of liberalism and conservatism, in defining and articulating these core principles
- 4) Critically examine the ways in which these core principles and political philosophies have shaped the development of our political system, and how Americans think.

#### Grading and scale:

Midterm exam	20	93-100	A
Reading quizzes & activities	15	90-92	A-
Paper	25	88-89	B+
Final Exam	25	83-87	B
Attendance	15	80-82	B-
Total	100	78-79	C+
		73-77	C
		70-72	C-
		60-69	D
		≤ 59	F

#### Required Text:

Isaac Kramnick and Theodore Lowi, eds. *American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Norton: New York. ISBN: 9780393655902

#### Course Requirements:

**Midterm exam:** All students must take the midterm exam in class on the date listed in the course schedule. The exam will consist of a combination of term identifications and essay questions. More information on the format of the exam will be given later in the semester, and a study guide will be provided. The exam is worth 20 points of the final grade and is required to receive a passing grade in the course. Make-up exams will be given only in cases of documented medical or family emergency, religious observances or university absences related to participation in university-sanctioned activities. If it is physically possible, the instructor must be notified in advance of such an emergency. All make-ups are at the instructor's discretion and would be in a different format than the original.

**Reading quizzes and activities:** We will have a combination of pop (unannounced) readings quizzes and class activities over the course of the semester. Students may receive a maximum of 15 points for these activities and quizzes. More information will be provided in class. There are no make-ups for reading quizzes and activities.

**Paper:** Each student will choose from a list of topics and complete a 5-6 page paper, double-spaced, in a standard font with 1" margins. The paper must include a bibliography, which does not count toward the page requirement. More information on the paper will be given later in the semester. The paper is worth 25 points of the final grade, and is required to receive a passing grade in the class. The paper must be submitted online by the date listed in the course schedule. Students are responsible for the electronic document being readable. Late papers will receive a 1 point deduction per day.

**Final exam:** All students must take the final exam at the assigned time listed in the course schedule. The final will consist of term identifications and essay questions. One essay question will be comprehensive; the rest of the exam will cover material since the midterm. More information on the format of the exam will be given later in the semester. The exam is worth 25 points of the final grade and is required to receive a passing grade in the course. Make-up finals will be given only in cases of documented medical or family emergency, religious observances or university absences related to

participation in university-sanctioned activities, or with documentation of a final exam time conflict in accordance with CU policy. Again, if it is physically possible, the instructor must be notified in advance of such an emergency. All make-ups are at the instructor's discretion and would be in a different format than the original. Please note that we will not use the entire final exam slot- the exam is scheduled to be completed in 1.5 hours.

**Attendance:** Students are required to attend class regularly for the entire class period. Only documented medical or family emergencies, religious observances or university absences related to participation in university-sanctioned activities will be excused. A ½ point will be deducted for each unexcused absence, which may include coming to class late or leaving early. If physically possible, the instructor must be notified in advance of an expected absence. Whether or not an absence is excused is at the discretion of the instructor. All students may miss two class periods without excuse or penalty. Attendance is valued at 15 points of the final grade.

#### Course policies:

**Course communications:** Email is the official mode of communication for the University of Colorado at Boulder. Students are required to regularly check their university-registered email (at least every 48 hours) for updates regarding the course. Students are responsible for receiving any messages sent by the instructor to the class email list, or individually to the student. Students are responsible for ensuring that any email sent by the student to the instructor or TA is received. In addition, students are responsible for checking the Canvas site for the course regularly.

**Contacting the Instructor:** Please feel free to contact me with questions about the course. The best ways to reach me are to come by office hours, or to email. You may also call my office phone, but that is a less efficient means of reaching me. I always answer email within 48 hours, so if you do not receive a reply, that means I did not get your email and you should try to contact me again. When addressing me, please address me in person or in email as Janet, Dr. Donovan or Professor Donovan.

**Course Etiquette:** Students are expected to come to class on time and stay the entire time. If it is necessary to come late or leave early, please let me know in advance. If your schedule does not permit you to be on time and in class on a regular basis, please take another course. Students are expected to be respectful of each other and of the instructor; lively debate is encouraged, but personal attacks are prohibited. These guidelines should be obvious, and they will help to make the course a more enjoyable experience for all. For more information on University requirements regarding classroom behavior please see <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code).

**Electronic Devices:** Electronic devices, including computers, tablets and mobile phones, are prohibited in class. The use of these devices causes serious disruption in class and affects the learning of other students. Computers, phones and other devices must be turned off and put away during class. Exceptions to this policy are at the instructor's discretion.

## SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

### ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the

academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

#### CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

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 race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

#### HONOR CODE

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

#### SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

#### RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, students must notify the instructor within the first two weeks of class if a religious observance requires missing a scheduled

exam, due date, or activity. To receive an excused absence, please notify the instructor at least one week in advance.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

An accessible, online link to the university policies is available here:

<https://www.colorado.edu/academicaffairs/policies-customs-guidelines/required-syllabus-statements>

**Reading Schedule:**

Readings are to be completed BEFORE class on the assigned day.

**Part I: Colonial Roots of American Political Thought, 1620-1760**

**Week 1: August 26, 28 & 30**

Mon: Introduction to course, pass out syllabus

Weds: Colonial roots of APT

Readings: p. xxv-29 (through Williams), 41-42 (Mather

Fri: Colonial roots of APT, group activity in class

Readings: p. 42-65

**Part II: The Founding, 1760-1791**

**Week 2: September 4 & 6**

Mon: Labor Day

Weds: Political theory of the Revolution

Readings: p. 67-118

Fri: The Constitution and its critics

Readings: p. 119-170 (through Madison Federalist #10)

**Week 3: September 9, 11 & 13**

Mon: The Constitution and its critics (cont.)

Readings: p. 170 (from Federalist #23)-214 (through Jefferson)

**Part III: Democracy and Union, 1791-1865**

Weds: The Constitution and its critics (cont.)

Readings: p. 214-242

Fri: The Federalist and Jeffersonian visions

Readings: p. 243-295 (through Jefferson)

**Week 4: September 16, 18 & 20**

Mon: The Federalist and Jeffersonian visions

Readings: p. 295-340

Weds: Jacksonian Democracy

Readings: p. 341-395

Fri: Individualism and Democracy

Readings: p. 396-430

**Week 5: September 23, 25 & 27**

Mon: Women in the Early Republic

Readings: p. 431-452

Weds: Women in the Early Republic (cont.), Slavery and free labor

Fri: Slavery and free labor

Readings: p. 453-489 (through Channing)

**Week 6: September 30, October 2 & 4**

Mon: Slavery and free labor

Readings: p. 489 (from Grimke)-561 (through Hammond)  
 Weds: Slavery and free labor (cont.)  
 Readings: p. 561-596

#### **Part IV: Capitalism, Individualism and Reform, 1865-1932**

Fri: Social Darwinism, the Intellectuals and Populism  
 Readings: p. 597-646 (through George)

##### Week 7: October 7, 9 & 11

Mon: Social Darwinism, the Intellectuals and Populism (cont.)  
 Readings: p. 646 (from Bellamy)-695 (through Weaver)  
 Weds: Social Darwinism, the Intellectuals and Populism (cont.)  
 Readings: p. 695 (from Watson)-714  
 Fri: Voices of Dissent  
 Readings: p. 715-780

##### Week 8: October 14, 16 & 18

Mon: Catch up and review  
 Weds: **MIDTERM EXAM in class**  
 Fri: Imperialism and Race  
 Readings: p. 781-814 (through Sumner)

##### Week 9: October 21, 23 & 25

Mon: Imperialism and Race  
 Readings: p. 814 (from Twain)-847 (through Smohalla)  
 Weds: Imperialism and Race  
 Readings: p. 847 (from *Plessy v. Ferguson*)-889  
 Fri: The Progressive Era  
 Readings: p. 890-949 (through Holmes)

##### Week 10: October 28, 30 & November 1

Mon: The Progressive Era (cont.)  
 Readings: p. 949-995  
 Weds: The Progressive Era (cont.)  
 Fri: Online Activity: Understand the New Deal divide in American Political Thought (no class meeting)

##### Week 11: November 4, 6 & 8

Mon: Online Activity: Semester Paper Topics and Research (no class meeting)  
 Weds: The New Deal and its Critics  
 Readings: p. 998-1013  
 Fri: The New Deal and its Critics  
 Readings: p. 1015-1059 (through Roosevelt)

#### **Part V: Leviathan and Liberalism, 1932-present**

##### Week 12: November 11, 13 & 15

Mon: The New Deal and its critics  
 Readings: p. 1059-1073  
 Weds: The Cold War  
 Readings: p.1074-1114  
 Fri: The 1960s: Social and cultural upheaval  
 Readings: 1115-1176

Week 13: November 18, 20 & 22

Mon: The 1960s: Social and cultural upheaval (cont.)

Weds: Contemporary Discourse

Readings: p. 1177-1207 (through Nozick)

Fri: Contemporary Discourse

Readings: p. 1207-1264 (through Reagan)- **PAPER DUE on Canvas**

**Fall break and Thanksgiving, no class meetings 11/25-11/29**Week 14:

Mon: Contemporary discourse

Readings: p. 1264 (from hooks)-p. 1323 (through Hay)

Weds: Contemporary discourse (cont.)

Readings: p. 1323 (from Robertson)-1366 (through Etzioni)

Fri: Contemporary discourse (cont.)

Readings: p. 1366 (from Brown)-1485 (through *Obergefell v. Hodges*)

Week 15: April 29 & May 1

Mon: Contemporary discourse (cont.)

Readings: p. 1485-1544

Weds: Drawing conclusions about American Political Thought

Fri: No class, reading day

**FINAL EXAM, Wednesday, December 18, 1:30-3pm**