

American Political Thought  
PSCI 3054-001  
9:30-10:45 Tues. & Thurs. HUMN 1B80  
Spring 2018  
Instructor: Dr. Janet Donovan  
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**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 political and historical 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, in addition to the time spent in the classroom. 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 most of the context will be provided in lecture. In this course, it is very important to both do the readings and attend lecture, because the material overlaps but does not duplicate.

This is a political theory course. This course is approved for arts and sciences core curriculum: United States context or ideals and values.

**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. In addition, we explore the influence of other philosophical traditions on 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	25	93-100	A
Reading quizzes	10	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. (2009). *American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology*. Norton: New York. ISBN-13: 978-0-393-92886-0

**Course Requirements:**

**Midterm exam:** All students must take the midterm exam in class on the scheduled date. 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 class period before the exam. The exam is worth 25 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:** We will have 5 reading quizzes over the course of the semester, worth 2 points each. These quizzes are unannounced pop quizzes in class, with the purpose of holding students accountable for completing the readings before class begins. One or more reading quizzes may be conducted via D2L. Make-ups for reading quizzes are only permitted in the case of documented medical or family emergency and are at the discretion of the instructor.

**Paper:** Each student will choose a topic with provided guidelines and complete a 6-8 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 electronically via D2L by 9pm on the due date. Students are responsible for the 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. 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. Students have one hour and 30 minutes to complete the final exam.

**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 2 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 @colorado.edu 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 is received. In addition, students are responsible for checking the D2L site for the course regularly, and for completing any assignments on D2L on time.

**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. Students may appeal this policy on an individual basis by coming to office hours and providing sufficient documentation of why an exception to the policy is necessary. Exceptions to this policy are at the instructor's discretion.

**Honor code:** 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. In this course, students will receive a 0 on any assignment in which the honor code is violated. In addition, all incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the

academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode>

**Students with disabilities:** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>.

**Religious observances:** Students with religious observances that conflict with course requirements will be accommodated whenever possible. In order to ensure such accommodation, students must notify the instructor within the first 2 weeks of the course to allow time to make such arrangements. For more information on the University policy, please see [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)

**Discrimination and harassment:** The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, pregnancy, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

#### 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: January 16 & 18

Tues: Introduction to course, pass out syllabus

Thurs: Colonial roots of APT

Readings: p. 1-23 (through Cotton), p. 43-53 (Mather)

##### Week 2: January 23 & 25

Tues: Colonial roots of APT (cont.), Colonial self-governance

Readings: p. 53 (begin with Franklin)-89

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

Thurs: Political theory of the Revolution

Readings: p. 91-154

##### Week 3: January 30 & February 1

Tues: The Constitution and its critics

Readings: p. 155-244 (through Federalist #84- skim Articles of Confederation and Constitution if familiar)

Thurs: The Constitution and its critics (cont.)

Readings: p. 244-283

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

#### Week 4: February 6 & 8

Tues: The Federalist and Jeffersonian visions

Readings: p. 285-319 (through Hamilton)

Thurs: The Federalist and Jeffersonian visions (cont.)

Readings: p. 323-358 (through Second Inaugural Address), p. 364-375 (through Jefferson)

#### Week 5: February 13 & 15

Tues: Jacksonian Democracy

Readings: p. 389-395 (through Adams), p. 407- 464 (begin with Wright)

Thurs: Individualism and Democracy

Readings: p. 465-497 (through Thoreau)

#### Week 6: February 20 & 22

Tues: Women in the Early Republic

Readings: p. 505-535, 572-577 (Angelina Grimke)

Thurs: Slavery and free labor

Readings: p. 536-572 (through Channing)

#### Week 7: February 27 & March 1

Tues: Slavery and free labor (cont.)

Readings: p. 581 (begin with Walker)-649 (through Hammond)

Thurs: Slavery and free labor (cont.)

Readings: p. 649 (begin with Lincoln)-686

#### Week 8: March 6 & 8

Tues: MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS on Tuesday, March 6

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

Thurs: Social Darwinism, the Intellectuals and Populism

Readings: p. 687-730 (through Sumner) 740-764 (through Bellamy)

#### Week 9: March 13 & 15

Tues: Social Darwinism, the Intellectuals and Populism (cont.)

Readings: p. 773-791 (through Donnelly), 796-815

Thurs: Voices of Dissent

Readings: p. 816-877 (through Gilman)

#### Week 10: March 20 & 22

Tues: Imperialism and Race

Readings: p. 893-941

Thurs: Imperialism and Race (cont.)

Readings: p. 942-987

**\*\*Spring Break- no class responsibilities 3/26-3/30\*\***

#### Week 11: April 3 & 5

Tues: The Progressive Era

Readings: p. 988-1007 (through Addams), 1017-1052 (through Dewey)

Thurs: The Progressive Era (cont.)

Readings: p. 1052-1113

**Part V: Leviathan and Liberalism, 1932-present**Week 12: April 10 & 12

Tues: The New Deal and its critics

Readings: p. 1115-1164 (through Dewey)

Thurs: The New Deal and its critics (cont.)

Readings: p. 1164-1210

Week 13: April 17 & 19

Tues: The Cold War

Readings: p. 1211-1263

Thurs: The 1960s: Social and cultural upheaval

Readings: p. 1264-1305 (through Savio)

**PAPERS DUE VIA D2L by 9pm**

Week 14: April 24 & 26

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

Readings: p. 1305-1369

Thurs: Contemporary discourse

Readings: p. 1370-1426 (through Friedman)

Week 15: May 1 & 3

Tues: Contemporary discourse (cont.)

Readings: p. 1426-1476

Thurs: Contemporary discourse (cont.), drawing conclusions about American Political Thought

Readings: p. 1476-1522

**FINAL EXAM, Monday, May 7, 4:30-6**