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### **American Political Thought**

Government 113, Tues./Thurs., 10:30-11:45 AMD-252  
Spring 2004

Students in this course will examine liberal, conservative, and radical traditions of political thought in America. We will explore how Americans have thought about problems of liberty, equality, federalism, and group identity. In particular, we will examine how different strains of political thought in America have contributed to conceptions of American democracy. In addition to strengthening their understanding of various authors, texts, and traditions in American political thought, students who successfully complete this course will have improved their capacity to analyze, discuss, and write about politics and political theory.

#### **Texts**

In addition to a *Course Reader* (selections marked with an asterisk in schedule below), the following books have been ordered:

- James Madison, et al., *The Federalist Papers* (Bantam/Random House)
- Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Hackett)
- Frederick Douglass, *On Slavery and the Civil War: Selections from His Writings* (Dover)
- John C. Calhoun, *Disquisition on Government* (Hackett)
- Abraham Lincoln, *Great Speeches* (Dover)
- William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe To Each Other* (Caxton Press)
- W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Signet)
- Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (University of Illinois Press)

#### **Requirements and Grading**

It is essential that you attend every class on time, and that you come to class having already completed (and thought carefully about) all the assigned reading. Grades will be based on the following assignments:

Two 5-page papers (20% each). The course readings are divided into five sections, and students may choose to write their papers on any two of the five sections. I will distribute a list of possible essay questions for each section, as well as writing tips and grading criteria. Papers must be handed in on one of the following days: Feb. 19, Mar. 11, Apr. 1, Apr. 29, and/or May 13. Late papers not accompanied by a legitimate and documented excuse will be penalized one-third of a grade for each day they are late.

Oral presentation or one additional 5-page paper (20%). Presentations should be about 10 minutes long, followed by time for questions. They should respond to one of the essay questions for the relevant section of the course, but they may not address the same topic as one of your papers. Presentations should not merely summarize the reading, but should use the reading to present an argument about the question. Presentations must be accompanied by a typed outline, submitted on the day of the presentation. Grades will be based on both the outline and the presentation. Presentations may be made on any day of the course, but students who would like to give a presentation should let me know in writing by February 5 which date they would prefer for their presentation.

In-class final exam (20%). The final exam will consist of 10 short-answer questions. Prior to the exam, I will solicit suggestions for questions from the class. We will review the possible questions in class and then decide (by consensus or majority vote) which questions to put on the exam. I may veto questions and add my own questions to fulfill the purposes of the course, but you will have all the questions in advance.

Six Reading Quizzes (10%). We can only have productive discussions if everyone has done the reading, and although I don't very much like quizzes, students have often told me that nothing gets them to read like the prospect of a quiz. So on six randomly selected occasions during the semester, students will be asked to answer 5 true/false questions on the reading assigned for that day. If you have done the reading (even just most of the reading), the quizzes will be very easy. Students who are absent will receive zero points for that quiz, but in calculating your grades I will drop your lowest quiz score. Each of the remaining quizzes will be worth 2% of your grade.

Attendance (10%). I will take attendance on randomly selected days throughout the semester. You may miss one class without penalty. After that, your attendance grade will be the percentage of days you were recorded present on the days I took attendance.

There will be no extra-credit assignments.

### **Additional Matters**

Your feedback on the course schedule, classroom discussions, and any other aspect of the course is always welcome. If you are having trouble with any aspect of the course, or if you would just like to talk over the material, I encourage you to come to my office hours or make an appointment to see me.

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to the CSUS Office of Services to Students with Disabilities (SSWD), Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

Finally, it should go without saying that all the work you turn in for this class must be your own. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me or consult the University Policy Manual at: <http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMP14150.htm>. I also encourage students to read the University's Academic Dishonesty Procedures, available at <http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UJA00150.htm>. Plagiarizing and cheating will result in significant sanctions, possibly including a failing grade for the course and appropriate administrative measures.

### **Schedule**

#### INTRODUCTION: AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT AND THE PURITAN LEGACY

Jan. 27	Course Introduction and Overview
	In-class writing assignment: "My History of America"
Jan. 29	* John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity"

## I. REVOLUTION, CONSTITUTION, AND DEMOCRACY

- Feb. 3                   \* Patrick Henry, "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death"  
                          \* Thomas Paine, Selections from *Common Sense*  
                          \* Declaration of Independence
- Feb. 5                   *The Federalist*, nos. 1-2, 9-10, 14-16
- Feb. 10                  *The Federalist*, nos. 31, 35, 37, 39, 51-53, 55, 57-58  
Feb. 12                  *The Federalist*, nos. 70, 78, 84
- Feb. 17                  \* Patrick Henry, Speeches before the Virginia Ratifying Convention  
                          \* "Letters from the Federal Farmer"  
                          \* "Brutus," Essays I, IV, XVI
- Feb. 19                  \* Thomas Jefferson, selected letters  
                          Papers Due.

## II. INDIVIDUALISM, COMMERCIALISM, AND EMANCIPATION

- Feb. 24                  Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part I, Intro (pp. 1-15), chap.  
                          3-4 (pp. 34-44);
- Feb. 26                  Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part II, chap. 6-10 (pp. 87-  
                          168)
- Mar. 2                   Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Part II, chap. 1-13 (pp. 201-  
                          233), Part IV, chap. 1-8 (pp. 297-319).
- Mar. 4                   \* Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance"
- Mar. 9                   Frederick Douglass, *On Slavery and the Civil War: Selections from His*  
                          *Writings*, pp. 30-65.
- Mar. 11                  \* Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions"  
                          Papers Due.

## III. SLAVERY, CIVIL WAR, AND RECONSTRUCTION

- Mar. 16                  John C. Calhoun, *Disquisition on Government*, pp. 3-58.
- Mar. 18                  John C. Calhoun, *Discourse on the Constitution*, pp. 85-104.
- Mar. 23                  Abraham Lincoln, *Great Speeches*, pp. 1-8, 24-75.
- Mar. 25                  Abraham Lincoln, *Great Speeches*, pp. 98-113.
- Mar. 30                  Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other*, Intro. chap. I-IV  
Apr. 1                   Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other*, V-VI, XI.  
                          Papers Due.

---- Spring Break -----

## IV. POPULISM, PROGRESSIVISM, AND THE NEW DEAL

- Apr. 13                  W.E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, chap. 1-4, 6.

- Apr. 15 W.E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, chap. 8-10.
- Apr. 20 Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Intro., chap. 1  
Apr. 22 Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 4-6.
- Apr. 27 \* John Dewey, "Philosophy and Democracy," "Science and Free Culture"  
Apr. 29 \* John Dewey, remaining essays in course reader.  
Papers Due.

#### V. CIVIL RIGHTS, GROUP IDENTITY, AND CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

- May 4 \* Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail"  
May 6 \* Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"  
\* Stokely Carmichael, "What We Want"  
\* Martin Luther King, Jr., "Black Power Defined"
- May 11 \* Students for a Democratic Society, "Port Huron Statement"  
\* Allan Bloom, "The Democratization of the University"  
May 13 \* Michael Walzer, "What It Means to Be an American"  
Papers Due.
- May 20 10:15 AM – 12:15 AM  
FINAL EXAM