
POLITICAL SCIENCE 409C/609C

AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Dr. John Marini

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This course will provide an overview of American political, social, and economic thought from the colonial period to the present. It will also examine the impact those theories have had on the political practice as well as the intellectual life of the American regime. The course will focus primarily on the important periods of crisis, deliberation, war, and social and political upheaval. These decisive historical events include the following: the revolutionary and founding period; the controversy concerning the Constitution; the crisis of slavery and the Civil War; the progressive era; the creation and development of the rational, or administrative, state; and the problems posed by modern liberalism and conservatism.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Kenneth M. Dolbeare, Michael Cummings, eds. *American Political Thought*
- Hamilton, Madison, Jay, *The Federalist Papers*

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*
- Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*
- Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*
- Robert A. Dahl, *Preface to Democratic Theory*
- Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
- John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*
- Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*
- Richard Rodriques, *Hunger for Memory*
- Walter Lippman, *The Public Philosophy*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There will be one essay exam, a review essay, and a comprehensive final exam during the semester, as well as a term paper. In determining the course grade, the midterm essays will represent 30% of the grade, the final will represent 25% of the grade, and the term paper will constitute 25% of the grade. The remaining 20% of the grade will be determined by performance in assignments--some written--not made in advance, and classroom participation. Each student is expected to complete all the reading assignments before the class meeting. Grades in this course will be awarded using the plus/minus grading system. Student (and faculty) conduct shall conform to the standards of conduct as referenced in the University of Nevada, Reno 2008-2009 General Catalog and the Student Handbook. The University of Nevada does not tolerate sexual harassment or harassment of any kind. Disability related needs will be accommodated. Cheating in any form or manner may result in an "F" grade.

Each student is expected to complete all the reading assignments before the class meeting. In addition, each student will be expected to attend and participate in class discussion. Graduate students will be asked to make an oral presentation on one or more of the essays assigned. The graduate student discussion leaders will be expected to have prepared comments on the assigned topics. All students are encouraged to make active contributions to discussions in the class. Each student will complete a term paper assignment, which may require outside reading, or further elaboration of assigned readings. The topic for the term paper assignment will be made by the instructor. Undergraduate term papers will be 4-6 pages in length. Graduate students taking the course will be required to write a substantially larger paper, 12-15 pages in length. In the preparation of the paper, all students should carefully define the issues to be treated, pose the problem in a concise manner, present the argument and evidence, the analysis, and the theoretical implications of the analysis, in a clear and readable manner. The term paper must be turned in by Wednesday, December 8, 2009.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK:

ASSIGNMENT:

August 25: Introduction: Discussion of course content, class requirements, and overview of subject.
Dolbeare & Cummings; Introduction, Readings 1-3.

September 1: Colonial Thought: A City Upon a Hill: Dolbeare and Cummings; Readings 4-5.
Recommended, Tocqueville, Author's Introduction, Chs. 1-5.

September 8: The Revolutionary Period: Declaration of Independence, Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 6-8. Recommended, Paine, *Rights of Man*.

September 15: The Constitutional Period: Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings 9-11; *Federalist Papers*, #1,7,9,10,14,15,23,25

September 22: Opposition to a National Government and a national economy; Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 12-13.

September 29: Framing a Government: *Federalists Papers*, #37,39,47-51,57,70,78,85.

October 6: The Democratic Period: Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 14-17. Recommended, Tocqueville, chs. 6-15.

October 13: Crisis of the Civil War: Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 18-21.

Recommended, Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of a Slave*

October 20: American thought in the Gilded Age: Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 22-26.
Recommended, Bellamy, *Looking Backward*; and James G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*

October 27: Socialism, Anarchism, & Revolution, Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 27-32.

November 3: Progressivism and the Rise of the Positive State: Industrialization and Discontent: Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 33-38.

November 10: Civil Rights and Social Revolution: Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 39-43.
Recommended, Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*.

November 17: Liberalism, Conservatism, and Multi-cultural Diversity: Reflections on the state of American democracy: Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 44-54.

November 24: In search of a new Public Philosophy: Dolbeare & Cummings; Readings, 55-63.

Recommended, Walter Lippman, *The Public Philosophy*.

December 1: A New Era in Politics? Dolbeare & Cummings, Readings, 64-71.

December 8: Concluding Lecture: Recommended: Tocqueville, Vol. 2, Book, 4.

FINAL EXAM: DECEMBER 10, 2009; 4:30-6:30 P.M.
