American Political Theory

Professor Mark David Hall                                          Fall 2010
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PSC/HST/PHIL 370                                                   Ross 208

Office Hours: MF 2:00-4:00, W 2:00-3:00, TTH 1:30-4:00, or by appointment

This course focuses on the development of American political theory from the Puritans to
the twentieth century. We will read some of the best works on politics written by Americans.
Each author addresses many of the perennial problems of political theory. We will look at their
theoretical conclusions and see how their ideas have had an impact on the political and social
development of America.

Because this course is designed as a seminar, regular attendance and preparation are
required. Student performance in these areas will be reflected by a 5% participation grade.
Three tests will be given for this course (20% each).

Each student will write a 15-17 page research paper on a topic approved by me. Papers
must be typed, double-spaced, properly documented, and must argue a thesis. Students should
meet with me about a topic and turn in a written topic and list of specific primary and secondary
on September 13, a thesis statement, a full bibliography, and a summary of two important essays
or book chapters related to your topic on September 29 (2% of grade), a detailed two-three page
outline of the paper on October 25 (3%), and the final paper on December 3 (30%). All written
work must be turned in by hand and on paper (no e-mail submissions). Assignments are due at
the beginning of class. Late papers will be penalized 3 points every 24-hour period they are late
(excluding weekends).

If your topic bears any relation to work you have done or are doing for another class, you
must clearly explain the connection to me in your proposal. Plagiarism will result in an
automatic “F” for the paper and, if egregious enough, the course. If you have any questions
about what constitutes plagiarism, please let me know. Before you write your paper, I strongly
encourage you to buy, read, and carefully consider William Strunk and E.B. White, The
Elements of Style.

Required books:

Bruce Frohnen, ed. The American Republic: Primary Sources. All assignments are from this
book unless otherwise noted.

Reading Assignments

August

Paper topics.
September

1. Broad Interpretive Approaches: John Locke, Two Treatises on Government, Book II, chapters 2 and 7, [http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&Itemid=28](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&Itemid=28) [you need to navigate from this link to the book. The online library is a great resource, take some time and explore it.]

Mark David Hall, Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos. [Please note: this is two days worth of reading assignments because we do not have class on Friday.]

3. No class.


8. No class, serve day.


17. Nathan O. Hatch, “The Origins of Civil Millennialism in America,” William and Mary Quarterly, 1974 [This article is on JSTOR—find it, print it, and read it.]


24. No class, work on paper.

27. No class, work on paper.


October


4. Catch up and review.

6. TEST #1

8. No class, Fall break.


15. **No class, work on paper.**


25. James Wilson, natural law, and natural rights:


November


5. Catch up and review.

8. **Test #2.**


12. **No Class, work on paper**

15. Early Lincoln, 518-27.

17. Slavery, 582-592, 690-701.


26. **Thanksgiving.**
29. Lincoln and the Civil War, handout.

December

1. Reconstruction, handout.

3. Early twentieth century, handout.

6. Contemporary thought?, handout.

8. Presentation of student papers.

10. Presentation of student papers.

15. Final exam, 10:00.

I retain the right to change any aspect of this syllabus. If I do I will give students plenty of advanced warning. Unless I clearly and unambiguously change something, you should follow this syllabus religiously.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides all students with free writing consultation, general tutoring, and learning enhancement strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). Students can make an appointment with the ARC Writing Center for guidance and feedback on written projects. ARC consultants can also provide basic tutoring for many general education and other courses. Go to www.georgefox.edu/arc/ for information about consultants’ areas of study, how to schedule an appointment, and helpful learning tools. Call Rick Muthiah, Director of the Academic Resource Center, at x2314 if you have questions. If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services office early in the term so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to Disability Services. For more information, contact Rick Muthiah, Director of Disability Services (x2314 or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu), or go to ds.georgefox.edu.