

## American Political Theory

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PSC/HST/PHIL 300

Fall 2007  
PSCI 300  
TTH 9:05-10:20  
Hoover 207

Office Hours: TTH 10:30-11:30, or by appointment.

This course focuses on the development of American political theory from the Puritans to the Civil War. 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. Four tests will be given for this course (15% 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 11 (1%), a thesis statement, a full bibliography, and a summary of two important essays or book chapters related to your topic (1%), a detailed two-three page outline of the paper on October 29 (3% of grade), and the final paper on December 4 (30% of grade). 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

28. Introduction: What is American Political Theory? Sources of American Political

Theory. Paper topics.

30. No class, begin researching paper.

September

4. 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) Griffin, pp. 1-13 (Hand out). Early Political Institutions.

6. Puritan Political Theory: Frohnen, 3-4, 11-22, 34-35.

11. Quaker Political Thought, 23-30; 64-65. Every student will read an assigned chapter of the Journal of John Woolman, [there are 12 chapters]  
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/WooJour.html>.

13. Dissenters, 42-47, 64, 66-68, 79-87.

18. Christianity + Locke = ?: Elisha Williams, "The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants," at: . Elisha Williams, "The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants," at:  
[http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com\\_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=816&chapter=69224&layout=html](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=816&chapter=69224&layout=html).

20. Test #1.

25. Defending the Charters: SKIM 91-97, review 15-20, Read 115-136.

27. Ibid., 140-156.

October

2. Christian and Lockean arguments against Independence. Read Frohnen 159-178; Skim Locke's Second Treatise, chapter 19.

4. Thomas Paine, Independence, and new constitutions 179-191, 157-58, 196-99.

[5.] Special Lecture, George Nash on the Conservative Tradition: required.

9. New constitutions: 205-224. SKIM: Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776; Massachusetts Constitution of 1780. These can be found in many places. Good places to go include: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/18th.htm> and <http://www.nhinet.org/ccs/docs/ma-1780.htm>.

11. A new nation?: 200-204, 225-230.

16. Test #2

18. A new nation! 231-243.

23. Federalists: 243-267.

25. No class. Work on paper.

30. Anti-Federalists: 268-280, 309-319.

November

1. James Wilson on natural law and natural rights: on-line or hand out.

6. The Bill of Rights, generally, and First Amendment, specifically: 327-331, 338-341, 348-354, 69-71.

8. Sherman essay?

13. Test #3

15. The New Nation Takes Shape: 366-377, 386-395.

20. Revival and Reform: Mark Hall, "Beyond Self-Interest"; Woman's Rights, Seneca Falls Declaration (1848)—any on-line version.

22. Thanksgiving

27. Jacksonian democracy and early Lincoln, TBA and 518-527

29. Slavery, Skim 582-588, read 589-592, 597-599, 646-664

December

4. John C. Calhoun, 565-578, 600-613, TBA?.

6. Lincoln, the Civil War, and beyond: 2<sup>nd</sup> inaugural, Gettysburg Address, Reconstruction Amendments, TBA .

14. 8:00 a.m. Final exam

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.