

W3115: American Political Thought

Columbia University

Fall 2015

Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:40-3:55 pm

603 Hamilton Hall

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Two features are often said to distinguish American from European political thought: an “exceptional” commitment to liberal, democratic, or republican political ideals and institutions, and a “peculiar” attachment to racist, nativist, and imperialist political practices. This course traces the interaction of these two contradictory tendencies through the writings of prominent American political thinkers from the Founding to the present day, considering how each has informed Americans’ contributions to fundamental questions in political philosophy, to the design of constitutions and political institutions, and to the conduct of foreign affairs. Along the way, we give in-depth consideration to the ideas that arose in the course of the American Revolution and the drafting of the U.S. Constitution, the Civil War, the Progressive Era, the Civil Rights Movement, the Women’s Rights Movement, and contemporary debates surrounding distributive justice.

Grades:

Grades for this course will be based on an in-class midterm exam (40%), a take-home final exam (45%), and participation in lectures and discussions (15%).

Books for Purchase:

Isaac Kramnick and Theodore J. Lowi, eds., *American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology* (W.W. Norton, 2009). [Hereafter K&L].

Terence Ball, ed., *Hamilton, Madison, and Jay: The Federalist, with Letters of “Brutus”* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). [Hereafter Ball].

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised Edition (Harvard University Press, 1999).

Books Recommended but not Required:

Bryan-Paul Frost and Jeffrey Sikkenga, eds., *History of American Political Thought* (Lexington Books, 2003).

Columbia College Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity:

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

For more information on academic integrity, please consult the Columbia University Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity, available here:

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/academicintegrity>.

Lecture Schedule

Wed 9/9: Intro – Exceptionalism and Peculiarity in American Political Thought

- No Readings

Mon 9/14: Ideas of Independence I: The English Constitution and the American Colonies

- James Otis, “The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved”, K&L 100-107.
- Jonathan Boucher, “On Civil Liberty, Passive Obedience, and Non-Resistance”, K&L 113-118.
- John Adams, “Novanglus”, K&L 119-124.
- Abigail Adams, “Letter to John Adams”, K&L 506-507.

Wed 9/16: Ideas of Independence II: The Age of Revolutions

- Thomas Paine, “Common Sense”, K&L 131-149.
- Thomas Jefferson, “Declaration of Independence”, K&L 151-154.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions”, K&L 529-533.
- Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” K&L 594-598.

Mon 9/21: The U.S. Constitution I: Union or Confederation

- The U.S. Constitution, K&L, 170-81.
- Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, “*The Federalist* Nos. 1, 3, 6-11, 14-15, 35”, Ball 1-4, 9-12, 19-52, 59-71, 157-162.
- Brutus, “Letters I, III”, Ball 437-447, 453-459.

Wed 9/23: The U.S. Constitution II: The Separation of Powers

- The U.S. Constitution, K&L, 170-81.
- Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, “*The Federalist* Nos. 47-49, 51, 54, 57, 62-63, 68-71”, Ball 234-248, 251-255, 264-268, 277-282, 299-312, 331-352.

Mon 9/28: The U.S. Constitution III: Judicial Review and the Bill of Rights

- Brutus, “Letters XI, XIV, XV”, Ball 501-6, 516-529.
- Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, “*The Federalist* Nos. 78, 84”. Ball 377-383, 416-426.
- Thomas Jefferson, “Letters on the Constitution”, K&L 244-248.
- James Madison, “Address on Amending the Constitution, K&L 274-281.
- “The Bill of Rights”, K&L 281-283.

Wed 9/30: Manifest Destiny

- Thomas Jefferson, “Third Annual Address”, available at: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/third-annual-message-to-congress/>
- Thomas Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia”, K&L 546-554.
- Thomas Jefferson, “Second Inaugural Address”, K&L 356-358.
- Chief Joseph, “An Indian’s View of Indian Affairs”, K&L 928-940.
- Chief Joseph, Crazy Horse, and Smohalla, “On Work and Property”, K&L 940-1.

Mon 10/5: American Freedom, American Slavery

- Orestes Brownson, “The Laboring Classes”, K&L 456-464.
- George Fitzhugh, “Sociology for the South”, K&L 624-36.
- James Henry Hammond, “Mud Sill Speech”, K&L 647-49.
- David Walker, “Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World”, 581-588.
- Frederick Douglass, “Lectures on Slavery”, K&L 591-4.
- William Ellery Channing, “Slavery”, K&L 563-72.
- John C. Calhoun, “A Disquisition on Government”, 607-23.

Wed 10/7: The Great Emancipator

- Abraham Lincoln, Speeches, K&L 649-60, 662-79, 683-5.
- Frederick Douglass, “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln”, available at: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/oration-in-memory-of-abraham-lincoln/>

Mon 10/12: Transcendentalism

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance”, K&L 471-76
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Politics”, K&L 476-84.
- Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government”, K&L 484-91.
- Walt Whitman, “Democratic Vistas”, K&L 497-505.

Wed 10/14: American Imperialism/American Anti-Imperialism

- Josiah Strong, “Our Country”, K&L 901-7.
- Albert J. Beveridge, “The March of the Flag”, K&L 915-919.
- “Platform of the Anti-Imperialist League”, K&L 919-921.
- William Graham Sumner, “The Conquest of the United States by Spain”, K&L 921-26.
- José Martí, “Our America”, available at: http://writing.upenn.edu/library/Marti_Jose_Our-America.html

Mon 10/19: Midterm Review

Wed 10/21: Midterm Exam – In Class

Mon 10/26: Socialism and Social Darwinism

- William Graham Sumner, “What Social Classes Owe Each Other”, K&L 703-718.
- William Graham Sumner, “The Challenge of Facts” K&L 724-727.
- Andrew Carnegie, “The Gospel of Wealth”, K&L 730-737.
- Henry George, “Progress and Poverty, K&L 740-747.
- Eugene Debs, “Unionism and Socialism” K&L 834-840.
- Lester Ward, “Sociocracy”, K&L 773-779.

Wed 10/28: Pragmatism and Progressivism

- William James, “Pragmatism: A New Name for Old Ways of Thinking” K&L 1024-1030.
- John Dewey, “The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy”, K&L 1030-1036.
- John Dewey, “The Public and its Problems”, K&L 1036-1052.
- Herbert Croly, “The Promise of American Life”, K&L 1065-1086.

Mon 11/2: No Lecture – Columbia University Holiday

Wed 11/4: Progressivism and Internationalism

- Woodrow Wilson, “The New Freedom”, K&L 1102-1113.
- Woodrow Wilson, “War Message to Congress” available at: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/war-message-to-congress/>
- Woodrow Wilson, “Fourteen Points Message”, available at: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/fourteen-points/>

Mon 11/9: Progressive Women

- Victoria Woodhull, “On Constitutional Equality”, K&L 861-865.
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Women and Economics”, K&L 872-877.
- Jane Addams, “If Men Were Seeking the Franchise”, K&L 877-882.
- Jane Addams, “The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets”, K&L 1002-1007.
- Emma Goldman, “Anarchism: What it Really Stands For”, K&L 819-828.

Wed 11/11: The Long Civil Rights Movement I: Accommodation, Uplift, or Exodus?

- Booker T. Washington, “Atlanta Exposition Address”, K&L
- W.E.B. DuBois, “The Souls of Black Folk”, K&L
- W.E.B. DuBois, “The Talented Tenth”, K&L
- W.E.B. DuBois, “The Immediate Program of the American Negro”, K&L
- Marcus Garvey, “The True Solution of the Negro Problem”, K&L

Mon 11/16: The Long Civil Rights Movement II: Equality and Non-Violence

- Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Power of Nonviolence”, K&L 1305-1308.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, K&L 1308-1317.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream”, K&L 1317-1321.
- Bayard Rustin, “From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement”, K&L 1328-1339.

Wed 11/18: The Long Civil Rights Movement III: Black Nationalism

- Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”, K&L 1322-1328.
- Malcolm X, Speeches at the Oxford Union, available with video here: <http://weblog.liberatormagazine.com/2010/12/malcolm-x-ascended-extremism-in-defense.html>
- Stokely Carmichael, “Toward Black Liberation”, K&L 1339-1343.

Mon 11/23: Conservatism (Guest Lecture by Aaron Zubia)

- Reinhold Niebuhr, “The Children of Light and Children of Darkness” K&L 1211-1217.
- William F. Buckley, Jr., “God and Man at Yale”, K&L 1228-1231.
- Walter Lippmann, “The Public Philosophy”, K&L 1240-1246.
- Barry Goldwater, “The Conscience of A Conservative”, K&L 1256-1263.
- Allan Bloom, “The Closing of the American Mind”, 1438-1449.

Wed 11/25: Feminism

- Betty Friedan, “The Feminine Mystique”, K&L 1344-1349.
- Kate Millett, “Sexual Politics”, K&L 1362-1369.
- Phyllis Schlafly, “The Power of the Positive Woman”, K&L 1406-1411.
- bell hooks, “Feminist Theory from Margin to Center”, K&L 1426-1433.

Mon 11/30: A Theory of Justice I

- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, ch I, §§ 1-4, ch 3, §§ 20-29.

Wed 12/2: A Theory of Justice II

- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, ch 2, §§ 11-17.
- John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 3. (Summer 1985), pp. 223-251 (available on JSTOR).

Mon 12/7: Rawls's Critics

- Robert Nozick, "Anarchy, State, and Utopia", K&L 1391-1405.
- Michael Sandel, "The Public Philosophy of Contemporary Liberalism", K&L 1477-1494.
- Charles W. Mills, "Rawls on Race/Race in Rawls", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Spring 2009), pp. 161–184 (available on Wiley Online Library)

Wed 12/9: Exceptionalism and Peculiarity in Contemporary America

- Readings TBA

Mon 12/14: Final Exam Review