

“If Europe has the merit of discovering this great mechanical principle of government [representation], by the simple agency of which the will of the largest political body may be concentrated, and its force directed to any object, which the public good requires; America can claim the merit of making the discovery the basis of unmixed and extensive republics.... Hearken not to the unnatural voice, which tells you that the people of America, knit together as they are by so many chords of affection, can no longer live together as members of the same family; can no longer continue the mutual guardians of their mutual happiness; can no longer be fellow citizens of one great, respectable, and flourishing empire.”

—James Madison, *The Federalist*. No. 14

Political Science 7980
Seminar in American Political Thought
Fall 2017

As American politics seems increasingly characterized by street brawls and electronic insult, the aim of this course is to recover the understanding of representative democracy as it appeared in the deliberate project of building a stable government anchored in people’s opinions that could secure their interests while enhancing their liberty—and then in the project of reforming that government and rebuilding it when the greatest injustice in the original arrangement could no longer be endured. In short, our aim is to reclaim the political science upon which American government was built and then to assess its contribution to political science today.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:30 pm;
Thursdays, 10:00-11:30 am; and by appointment

Books available for purchase:

- Charles Hyneman & Donald Lutz, *American Political Writing During the Founding Era*, 2 vols. (Liberty Fund) [9780865970410]
- Adrienne Koch, ed., *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 Reported by James Madison* (Norton) [9780393304053]
- Bernard Bailyn, ed., *The Debate on the Constitution*, 2 vols. (Library of America) [9780940450424/9780940450646]
- Harry V. Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (Chicago) [9780226391182]
- W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (Free Press) [9780684856575]
- Jeremy Waldron, *The Dignity of Legislation* (Cambridge) [9780521658836]
- Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., *Taming the Prince: The Ambivalence of Modern Executive Power* (Free Press) [9780029199800]
- Dennis Hale, *The Jury in America* (Kansas) [9780700622009]

Course requirements:

- Attendance at all class sessions and participation in discussions [absence penalized]
- Five 500-word papers on the assigned reading, due before class (& read aloud), as follows: 9/5 or 12; 9/20 or 26; 10/3 or 10; 10/17 or 24; and 8/29 or 10/31 or 11/ 7 or 11/14 [40%]
- Presentation of research (11/15, 11/22, or 11/29) [10%]
- Research paper, 18-20 pages, on an approved topic (topic due 11/7; paper due 12/8) [50%]

Grading scale: A+ (98%-100%), A (93%-97%), A- (90%-92%)
B+ (88%-90%), B (83%-87%), B- (80%-82%), etc.

SYLLABUS:

Tues., 8/22 Introduction

I. The Design of Representative Government

Tues., 8/29 Hyneman & Lutz, *American Political Writing* (vol. 1):
 Stephen Hopkins, "The Rights of the Colonies Examined" (1764) [6]
 Richard Bland, "An Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies" (1766) [8]
 A Son of Liberty [Silas Downer], "A Discourse at the Dedication of the Tree of Liberty" (1768) [11]
 Daniel Shute, Election Sermon (1768) [12]
 John Tucker, Election Sermon (1771) [14]
 Massachusettensis [Daniel Leonard], "To All Nations of Men" (1773) [18]
 Anonymous, "The Alarm, or, an Address to the People of Pennsylvania" (1776) [27]
 A Native of this Colony [Carter Braxton], "An Address to the convention of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia..." (1776) [28]
 Demophilus [George Bryan?], "The Genuine Principles of the Ancient Saxon, or English Constitution (1776) [29]
 John Adams, "Thoughts on Government" (1776) [32]
 [Theophilus Parsons], "The Essex Result" (1778) [36]
 Philodemus [Thomas Tudor Tucker], "Conciliatory Hints..." (1784) [40]

Tues., 9/5 *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*, May 14-July 16, pp.1-302

Tues., 9/12 *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*, July 17- September 17, pp. 302-659

Wed., 9/20? Bailyn, ed., *Debate on the Constitution*, excerpts from vol. 1

Tues., 9/26 *Debate on the Constitution*, excerpts from vol. 2

II. The Crisis of Representative Government

Tues., 10/3 Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, ch. 1-8

Tues., 10/10 *Crisis of the House Divided*, ch. 9-20

Tues., 10/17 DuBois, *Black Reconstruction*, ch. 1-9

Tues., 10/24 *Black Reconstruction*, ch. 10-17

III. Modern Analysis of the Branches

Tues., 10/31 Waldron, *The Dignity of Legislation*

Fri., 11/4 PAPER TOPIC DUE

Tues., 11/7 Mansfield, *Taming the Prince*

Tues., 11/14 Hale, *The Jury in America*

IV. Workshop: Presentation of Research

Tues., 11/21 Presenting:

Tues., 11/28 Presenting:

Thurs., 12/7 **PAPERS DUE**