American Political Thought

Course Description

American political thought is as diverse as the many peoples who have settled there. Debates over ideas have influenced actions in virtually every important area affecting us as citizens: the economy (capitalism v. socialism); religion (Enlightenment rationalism v. religious devotion); foreign policy (isolationism v. globalism). The current debate over health care goes back to the framing of the Republic with arguments often reflecting the ideas of Jefferson and Hamilton. In POLS 4361, we will examine the impact of American political theory on American political culture. We will do this by examining the thoughts and ideas that have influenced American politics in an historical context.

Course Objectives

Students should expect that they will obtain from the study of American political theory: (1) an appreciation of the trends in American political thought; (2) an understanding of how theory and history intersect; (3) the ability to read carefully and critically, asking questions of the authors, not simply accepting their writings as “truth”; (4) improved communication skills (oral and written) to be measured through exams, papers and in-class participation.

Course Requirements and Grading

Grades in this class will be assessed in several ways designed to measure understanding of the material and communications skills, both written and verbal. Written requirements consist of three exams, a series of pop quizzes and a paper on a research topic. Verbal skills will be measured by class participation.

Exams - There will be three exams: an early warning exam early in the term, a mid-semester exam and a final. All of the exams will be primarily essay but I may also include some terms for identification purposes.

Quizzes - For this class to work on a meaningful level, students must do the assigned readings prior to class. Quizzes are a way to encourage that behavior and reward students who follow the rules. There will be nine quizzes over the semester, involving three questions worth two points each. So, there are 54 overall points available; however, recognizing that students may be absent (there are no makeups on the quizzes) or have neglected their reading, only 40 points will be applied to the final grade.
**Research paper**—Students will write a 8-10 page paper on an individual who has made a significant contribution to American political thought. You are expected to become “experts” on this person, focusing on the particular political thought with which he/she is associated. You must use at least five substantive references outside of your texts. You must use academic articles and books, with appropriate citations which can be checked by me. I will provide students with a list of suggested individuals early in the semester. All papers are due in class on Friday, April 12. **Late papers (for whatever reason) will receive a 10 point per day penalty.**

**Grades** in this class will be assigned on the basis of points accumulated from the preceding assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early warning exam</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
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The grading scale for this class is as follows:

- 400-360 A
- 359-319 B
- 318-278 C
- 277-237 D
- 236>>> F

**Required Texts**

Required means required!! You must have access to these books from the beginning of the semester in order to do well in the course.


Course Policies

*Make-up policy*- Students are expected to complete assignments on-time. In rare cases, with documented circumstances, students will be allowed to make up exams. However, they must contact me within one week of returning to class in order to schedule a make-up. As previously stated, there are no make-ups on quizzes.

*Extra Credit*- There is no extra credit in this class.

*Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage*- Turn off all cell phones before class begins. Do not text message or play with phones during class. Students may use laptops to take notes.

*Academic Integrity/Plagiarism*- University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in the act of academic misconduct on the assignment or test will result in a failing grade and may be reported to university officials.

Dropping a Class

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation will NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 1 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

*Notice to Students with Disabilities*. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

*Academic Advising*. The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with and Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.
Grade Appeal Process. As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined on the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complain about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/universityrules/index.html. For assistance or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Course Outline

This outline is subject to change over the course of the semester.

Wednesday, January 23
Class introduction,

Friday, January 25
Introduction to American Political Thought
   Abbott, Chapter 1.
   Dolbeare, Introduction.

Monday, January 28, Wednesday, January 30
The Puritan Foundations of the Colonial Era
   Abbott, Chapter 1.
   Dolbeare
         Winthrop, “The Little Speech”
         Wise, “Democracy is Founded in Scripture”

Friday, February 1, Monday, February 4, Wednesday, February 6
Revolution and its Reasons
   Abbott, Chapter 2
   Dolbeare
         Adams, “Rights of the Colonists”
         Paine, “Common Sense”
            “The American Crisis”
            “Rights of Man”
         Jefferson, “The Declaration of Independence”
Friday, February 8, Monday, February 11, Wednesday, February 13
The Founding of the Republic
Abbott, Chapter 3
Dolbeare
“The Articles of Confederation”
Adams, “A Defense of the Constitution”
“Correspondence with Abigail Adams”
The Constitution

Friday, February 15, Early Warning Exam

Monday, February 18, Wednesday February 20, Friday, February 22
Battles over Ratification of the Constitution: The Federalists
Dolbeare
Madison, “Federalist No. 10”
“Federalist No. 58”
“Federalist No. 51”
Hamilton, “Federalist No. 23”

Battles over the Ratification of the Constitution: The Anti-Federalists
Dolbeare
“Dissent of the Pennsylvania Minority”
Lee, “Letters from the Federal Farmer”

Monday, February 25, Wednesday, February 27
The Development of Faction and Division
Abbott, Chapter 4
Dolbeare
“Letter to John Adams”
Hamilton, “Report on Credit”
“Report on Manufactures”

Friday, March 1, Monday, March 4, Wednesday, March 6
Democracy and the Citizens
Dolbeare
Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience”
Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions”
Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”
Lincoln, “Speech on the Dred Scott Decision”

Friday, March 8, Film on Frederick Douglass

March 11-15, Spring Break
Monday, March 18, Wednesday, March 20, Friday, March 22
Slavery in America
Abbott, pp. 139-152.
Dolbeare
  Fitzhugh, “Cannibals All!”
  Douglass, “Speech at the Anti-Slavery Association”
  Douglass, “The Various Phases of Anti-Slavery”

Monday, March 25, Mid Term Exam

Wednesday, March 27, Monday, March 29
The Civil War
Abbott, pp. 152-169
Dolbeare
  Calhoun, “A Disquisition on Government”
  Lincoln, “First Inaugural Address”
  “Second Inaugural Address”

Monday, April 1
Civil Rights and Liberties-Post Civil War
Dolbeare
  Anthony, “Statement at the Close of her Trial”
  “Debates at Meetings of Equal Rights Association”

Wednesday, April 3, Friday, April 5, Monday, April 8
Industrialization
Abbott, Chapter 6
Dolbeare
  Sumner, “What Social Classes Owe to Each Other”
  Bellamy, “Looking Backward”
  Lloyd, “Revolution: The Evolution of Socialism”
  Debs, “Revolutionary Unionism”
  Goldman, “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For”

Wednesday, April 10, Friday, April 12
The Depression and the Development of the Modern Liberal State
Abbott, Chapter 7
Dolbeare
  Roosevelt, “The Commonwealth Club Address”
    “Campaign Address”
    “An Economic Bill of Rights”
Research papers due, Friday, April 12

Monday, April 15, Wednesday, April 17
The Cold War
Abbott, Chapter 8
Dolbeare
   Kennedy, “Inaugural Address”
   Reagan, “First Inaugural Address”

Friday, April 19, Monday, April 22
The War on Terror
Abbott, Chapter 10
Dolbeare

Wednesday, April 24, Friday, April 26, Monday, April 29, Wednesday, May 1
Discrimination
Abbott, Chapter 9
Dolbeare
   De Bois, “Souls of Black Folks”
   King, “Letter from the Birmingham Jail”
   Friedan, “Our Revolution is Unique”
   Loury, “Achieving the Dream”
   California Proposition 209
   Obama, “Speech on Race: A More Perfect Union”

Friday, May 3, Monday, May 6
A New Era?
Dolbeare
   “The Right Choice? The Conservative Case for Barack Obama”
   Obama, “Keynote Address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention”
      “Victory Speech”
      “Inaugural Address”

Final Exam, Monday, May 13 at 8 a.m.