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 Monday, April 13. 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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early warning exam</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<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>
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</tbody>
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400 total points possible

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.

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides a reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361)825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room#116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361)825-5816.
Academic Advising.

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans will be prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit System. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood#203. For more information, please call (361)825-3466.

Grade Appeals Process

Students who feel they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of completing a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Course Outline

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

Wednesday, January 21
Class introduction,

Friday, January 23
Introduction to American Political Thought
   Abbott, Chapter 1.
   Dolbeare, Introduction.

Monday, January 26, Wednesday, January 28
The Puritan Foundations of the Colonial Era
   Abbott, Chapter 1.
   Dolbeare
   Winthrop, “The Little Speech”
   Wise, “Democracy is Founded in Scripture”

Friday, January 30, Monday, February 2, Wednesday, February 4
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 6, Monday, February 9, Wednesday, February 11
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 13, Early Warning Exam

Monday, February 16, Wednesday February 18, Friday, February 20
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 23, Wednesday, February 25
The Development of Faction and Division
Abbott, Chapter 4
Dolbeare
  “Letter to John Adams”
  Hamilton, “Report on Credit”
  “Report on Manufactures”

Friday, February 27, Monday, March 2, Wednesday, March 4
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 6, Mid Term Exam

Monday, March 9, Wednesday, March 11, Friday, March 13
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”

March 16-20, Spring Break

Monday, March 23, Wednesday, March 25, Friday, March 27, Monday, March 30
The Civil War
Abbott, pp. 152-169
Dolbeare
Calhoun, “A Disquisition on Government”
Lincoln, “First Inaugural Address”
“Second Inaugural Address”

Wednesday, 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”

Friday, April 3, Monday, April 6, Wednesday, 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”

Friday, April 10, Monday, April 13
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, Monday, April 13
Wednesday, April 15, Friday, April 17, Monday, April 20
The Cold War
   Abbott, Chapter 8
   Dolbeare
   Kennedy, “Inaugural Address”
   Reagan, “First Inaugural Address”

Wednesday, April 22, Friday, April 24
The War on Terror
   Abbott, Chapter 10
   Dolbeare

Monday, April 27, Wednesday, April 28, Friday, May 1, Monday, May 4
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”