American Political Thought

Course Description

A survey of the major developments in American political thought from the Colonial period to the present, followed by an analysis of important recent theoretical developments in American political thought.

Learning Outcomes

- The central question to this class is what does it mean to be an American? Students will learn to consider and answer the possible answers to this question.

- Students will learn and articulate the ideas of the major thinkers in American Political Thought, examining how they addressed the political issues of their times and the important political questions we still ask today.

- Students will apply these theories as answers to questions raised by the world in which we live.

- Students will be able to articulate principles of American political thought and modern liberal philosophic principles.

- Students will improve communication skills (oral and written) to be measured through exams, papers, and in-class discussions.

Major Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance/ Participation</th>
<th>10%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Page Papers (4 Total)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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This course consists of a careful reading of important texts in American Political Thought. The number of pages to be read is kept small, so that you will be able to read – and reread – each text thoroughly. Though class will have lecture, discussion is a necessary element. Discussion will
help to clarify important matters for both you and your classmates. It is crucial both that you
attend classes and that you read the assigned texts carefully before each class.

Our goal will be not just to learn about these theories, but to use them to learn about ourselves.
For this reason, there will be a premium on written work that should help students develop skills
of interpretation, critical thinking, and communication.

Notes:

This course attempts to acquaint you with the history of American Political Thought. To that
end, we will examine several views of various moral and political problems including: the
tension between equality and liberty; the tension between the individual and the common good;
the necessity of virtue and education in a liberal regime; the crisis of slavery, segregation, and
civil rights; the role of government in American life; the principle of self-government and its
implications for American politics; the philosophic roots of modern conservatism, progressivism,
and the New Left; What are the principles of American political thought?; the influence of both
modern liberal philosophers and the Christian intellectual tradition; the tension between
individual liberty and economic security; and, above all, what does it mean to be an American?

As part and parcel of this project, we will learn how to read a text with care, and how to make,
analyze, and criticize an argument.

Students are required to write 4 total papers throughout the semester (one-page in length, double-
space, 12-point font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, and one-sided document). Students
will choose 1 reading from class (or a reading in Kramnick that is not assigned) and write a one-
page paper describing the argument of that reading. These papers are due by 11:59pm the night
before class. Lectures will incorporate these papers. Thus, it is imperative they be submitted on
time. No late papers will be accepted. Students can only submit one paper per week. Papers
should be submitted to turnitin in Blackboard. These papers will neither be a research paper (here
is what I found) nor an opinion piece (this is what I feel). More directions to follow.

Assignment extensions and make-up exams cannot be granted except in the most extenuating
circumstances (proper documentation required). Requests for such extensions must be made in
writing at least 48 hours before the due date.

There is no extra credit for this class.

Late papers/exams will NOT be accepted.

Students are required to submit written assignments for this class to Turnitin, a web-based
plagiarism detection service. Before submitting your paper to Turnitin, please remove your title
page and other personal information. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the paper is
properly uploaded to Turnitin.

Because of the benefits to everyone involved, your class participation can be used to improve
your grade Participation grades are based on your contribution to classroom discussion. Since
this class only meets once a week, attendance is mandatory. Students will only have two excused
absences.
I expect that everyone will maintain a classroom conducive to learning. Therefore, your behavior in the classroom should not interfere with other students' opportunity to learn, or the instructor’s ability to conduct class. Students who are disruptive will be asked to leave class.

Cheating:

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a “0” for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the university administration which may impose further sanction.

To log into Blackboard for the course go to the following: iol.tamucc.edu After logging into your Island Online account click on our class (POLS 3361.001) on the right-hand side of the screen.

Required Readings


Some additional readings, to be determined over the course of the semester may be assigned and posted on Blackboard. You will be notified when posted.

Format

The class will be structured around instructor led lectures and class participation. The book will reinforce my lectures and students should read the corresponding chapters. Students should participate in class as they are comfortable and able.

Class Schedule:

Section I: Origins of American Political Thought

Week 1: Introduction to American Political Thought

Week 2: Puritan Roots
Week 3: Liberalism

John Locke Selected Readings: Second Treatise Chapters 2, 3, 5, 8, 10 (Blackboard)

Section II: The Founding

Week 4: Revolution and Constitution

Week 5: Defense and Critique of the Constitution

Section III: Jacksonian America

Week 6: Tocqueville

Week 7: Tocqueville
3/3: Democracy in America (Mansfield): Volume I, Part 2, Chapters 3-7; Volume I, Part 2, Chapter 9; Volume II, Part 2, Chapter 2; Volume II, Part 3, Chapters 8-9

*Updated

3/5: Midterm Exam (Online/ Take-home; submit via turnitin in Blackboard)

Week 9: Spring Break
3/10-3/12: No Class

Section IV: Slavery, Secession, and the Civil War

Week 10: Slavery and Free Labor
3/17-3/19: “The Liberator,” “What are the Colored People Doing for Themselves,” “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July,” “Uncle Tom’s Cabin, or Among the
Lowly,” “Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions,” “Speech on the Importance of Domestic Slavery,” “Sociology for the South; or, the Failure of Free Society,” “Cannibals All! Or, Slaves Without Masters” (Kramnick)

Week 11: Civil War and Lincoln

Section V: Industrialization, Progressivism, and the Failure of Reconstruction

Week 12: Race and Social Darwinism

Week 13: Progressivism

Section VI: 1932 to the Present

Week 14: The New Deal and Its Critics

Week 15: The New Left

Week 16: Modern Conservative Movement
Final Exam: TBD

***The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule or material due to instructional needs throughout the semester.

**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 are 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**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has 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. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf).

**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 for 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 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 an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in an automatic zero and reported to university administration.
Classroom/professional behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Statement of Civility (can be in place of classroom/professional behavior)

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Statement of Academic Continuity*

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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 10th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.