

Political Science 365
4 credits, no pre- or co-requisites
Winter 2009
Tues. & Thurs., 12-1:50
113 Gilkey

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American Political Thought

This course covers American political thought from the Revolutionary Era to the present, with a special emphasis on issues related to slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and their aftermaths. We begin by discussing the lead-up to the Declaration of Independence, and the ideas that shaped how the colonists thought about their situation and that resulted from their attempts to justify their actions. We then move to the Constitution, examining the ideas and other factors that influenced its final form, and the arguments for its ratification. We will spend (roughly) the second half of the term examining how the ideals of the revolution and the Constitution intersected with issues of race at certain moments of our history: the Civil War, the post-Reconstruction consolidation of Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, and today. The course satisfies the upper-division political theory requirement for political science majors.

The focus on race and race-related issues is occasioned by a confluence of events and milestones this term. On January 20 the country's first African-American president will be inaugurated. Not only this, but Barack Obama often invokes two American political actors and thinkers concerned with racial issues, Lincoln and Martin Luther King--both of whom we will read this term. Furthermore, Lincoln's two-hundredth birthday will occur this term (Feb. 12). This seems a good time to ask, as we will throughout the course, the following questions: What have been the ideals, principles, and values that have animated the American political system since its inception? How have these intersected with race? What role does race play in American society today—and what role ought it play?

The aims of the course are essentially two. First, the student should become familiar with the material in the course. S/He should be able to discuss the issues, positions and arguments that we cover, both verbally and in writing, in an informed way. Second, the course will also emphasize the development of skills in critical reading, thinking, and effective communication. These are skills that are central to a liberal arts education, and will be essential to the student's future success, whatever his or her chosen profession or field.

Requirements:

Students will write three or four short papers, and take a final exam. If you write four papers, the grade on the lowest will be dropped. The three papers that are counted and the exam are each worth 25% of your final grade. The papers will be about 1000 words each, and will not require any research beyond the class readings. Students will write papers on the first unit of the course, and on at least two other units. Papers are due in the political science department office, 307 Gilkey Hall, by 4pm on the dates indicated on the schedule, below. More specific paper guidelines and topics will be distributed about a week before each paper is due. Late papers will not be accepted.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Students with accommodations approved through SSD are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through SSD should contact SSD immediately at 737-4098.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct:

Students are expected to abide by all OSU regulations regarding student conduct, especially those pertaining to academic honesty. You must properly cite any sources used in writing your papers (including internet sources) and work alone and without notes on the examination. Violations of academic honesty will result in failing the course, and will be reported to the proper university authorities for further action. For a description of Oregon State's policies on student conduct and academic honesty, see the website at: <http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/index.htm>.

Electronic Devices in the Classroom:

All electronic devices are prohibited from the class. During class students are expected to turn off and put away all electronic devices including computers, cellphones, ipods, pagers, etc. The only exception that will be made is in cases where students provide documentation from the SSD office that s/he requires the use of a computer for note-taking.

Readings:

The following books are required for the course, and are available at the OSU bookstore. However, some of the works we will read are available online.

The Political Writings of John Adams, ed. Peck (Hackett)

The Portable Thomas Jefferson, ed. Peterson (Penguin)

Common Sense, Rights of Man, and other essential Writings of Thomas Paine (Signet)

The Federalist Papers, ed. Rossiter (Mentor)

The Portable Abraham Lincoln, ed. Delbanco (Penguin)

The Souls of Black Folk, W.E.B. Du Bois (Penguin)

Why We Can't Wait, Martin Luther King, Jr. (Signet)

Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race, K. Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann (Princeton)

Schedule:

This schedule is tentative, and subject to change. In particular, additional readings may be assigned. Changes will be announced in class, and it is the student's responsibility to keep abreast of any such changes.

1. Jan. 6: Course introduction.

I. Revolution

2. Jan. 8: The Stamp Act and Its Aftermath. Read Adams, "Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law" and "Instructions of the Town of Braintree to Their Representative."

3. Jan. 13: Rejecting Parliament, Accepting the Crown. Read Adams, "Novanglus and Massachusettensis," pp. 31-52 (Letters 3 and 4); and Jefferson, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America."

4. Jan. 15: Independence. Read Paine, *Common Sense*; and Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence*.

5. Jan. 20: Inauguration Day. Readings TBA.

6. Jan. 22: Jefferson on Race and Slavery. Read Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Queries XIV and XVIII; and letters to Benjamin Banneker, Aug. 30, 1791; Henri Gregoire, Feb. 25, 1809; Edward Coles, Aug. 25, 1814.

Jan. 26: Paper on Unit I due (required).

II. Constitution

7. Jan. 27: The Influences on the Constitution. Read Adams, "Thoughts on Government" and *The Constitution of Massachusetts of 1780*; Jefferson, *Draft Constitution for Virginia*, and *A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom*; and *The Constitution*.

8. Jan. 29: The Constitution and Republicanism. Read Federalist numbers 9, 10, 39, and 40.

9. Feb. 3: Separation of Powers. Read Federalist numbers 46-51.

10. Feb. 5: The Constitution, Race and Slavery. Read Federalist numbers 42 and 54.

Feb. 9: Paper on Unit II due.

III. From the Civil War to Jim Crow

11. Feb. 10: The Coming of War: Read Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," the First Inaugural Address, and Address on Colonization to a Committee of Colored Men, Washington, D.C., Aug. 14, 1862.

12. Feb. 12: War and Its Aftermath: Read Lincoln, Final Emancipation Proclamation, Address at Gettysburg, and the Second Inaugural Address.

13. Feb. 17: What Went Wrong? Read Du Bois, the Forethought and essays 1-3.

14. Feb. 19: The Path Forward. Read Du Bois, essays 4-6.

Feb. 23: Paper on Unit III due.

IV. Race in the Civil Rights and Post-Civil Rights Eras

15. Feb. 24: Non-Violence and Desegregation: Read King, Introduction and chapters 1, 2, and 5.

16. Feb. 26: After Desegregation? Read King, chapters 7 and 8.

17. March 3: Are there Any Races? Read Appiah, Part 1.

18. March 5: Is Racial Identity Bad? Read Appiah, Part 2.

19. March 10: Race and Public Policy. Read Gutmann, Parts 1-3.

20. March 12: Race and Representation. Read Gutmann, Parts 4 and 5.

March 13: Paper on Unit IV due.

March 16, 9:30-11:30am: Final Exam.