

Dr. Segers
21:790:408

SEMINAR IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
CITIZENSHIP AND EQUALITY IN AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Fall 2018
Tues. eve

The United States was founded as a republic, to be governed by a patriotic, virtuous citizenry. But in 1776 and 1787, citizenship was restricted and political equality was circumscribed. Slaves, women, native peoples, and some religious minorities were excluded from citizenship or denied basic political rights such as the right to vote. Despite the emphasis of the Declaration of Independence on fundamental, inalienable rights, the country's founders rationalized the denial of rights to these groups. This course examines three examples of such denial of rights. First, we consider slavery and its legacy of racial segregation and violence---a fundamental flaw in the character of the new nation. We will read Frederick Douglass' narrative of his life as a slave in order to get a renewed sense of the cruelty and deprivation slaves faced. We shall also consider the anti-slavery reflections of the Framers and what they proposed as a solution to the dilemma of slavery. We shall see how later political leaders (presidents) such as Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson sought to mitigate the after-effects of slavery and end racial discrimination.

Second, the course considers the status of women in 1776 and the long struggle for political equality and the right to vote. In addition to the suffrage movement, we will review the struggle of Second Wave Feminists who in the last 50 years used legal cases to challenge sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Third, we shall consider religious minorities who were persecuted in American society (despite First Amendment rights to religious freedom): Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Jews, Quakers, Catholics, Muslims and Mennonites. Analyzing these cases may help us better understand how difficult it is to achieve political and social equality in the United States and, ultimately, what it means to be an American in the 21st century.

Finally, the course examines 19th and 20th century American thinking about nationalism and territorial expansion---all in the name of exporting democracy and spreading Western values throughout the world. In debates about American foreign policy, some Americans championed imperial expansion while others attacked imperialism as an un-American assault on the principles of liberty and government by consent. The course ends with consideration of the role of the United States in global politics today.

NEW COURSE FOR FALL 2018 SEMESTER.

Time: Tuesdays, 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

This upper level advanced course is open to juniors and seniors only.

It is writing intensive.

It will count towards the political theory requirement for political science majors.

The remainder of the course outline and schedule was taken from the syllabus appended below.

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AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT:
CITIZENSHIP AND EQUALITY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Fall 2018
Dr. Segers

Book Review Assignment: See the list of biographies (below) of American revolutionary leaders from the “Founding Generation” in the United States. Read the biography you have selected. Then write a book review summarizing major highlights of the individual’s life and work---including failures as well as accomplishments. How and why did this leader participate in the American Revolution, the 1787 Constitutional Convention, and/or the government of the new nation in the 1790s and early 1800s? What position did he or she take on critical issues such as slavery, the slave trade, and independence from Great Britain, What contribution did he or she make to the establishment and growth of the new republic? Finally, please evaluate the biographer. How well did the author describe and portray the subject of the biography? Would you recommend this book to others?

Biographies:

Joseph Ellis, **American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson.**

Ron Chernow, **Alexander Hamilton** (you might also look at the script of L. Miranda’s musical, the libretto is available in most libraries).

David McCullough, **John Adams.**

Joseph Ellis, **His Excellency George Washington.**

Walter Isaacson, **Benjamin Franklin.**

Jon Meacham, **American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House.**

Neal Riemer, **James Madison: Creating the American Constitution** (Wash.D.C., CQ Press, 1986).

Joseph J. Ellis, **Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adams.**

Annette Gordon-Reed, **several books on Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson.**

Lynne Withey, **Dearest Friend: A Life of Abigail Adams.**

Other biographical subjects include: Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, George Mason.

For models of book review, you might look at *The New York Times Book Review* which appears every Sunday. A good example is the Book Review for Sunday, September 16, 2018 which has several good reviews of books by Doris Kearns Goodwin and Jill Lepore. Another source of more scholarly reviews is *The New York Review of Books*, which is in our library. Reviews there tend to be longer than those in the NY Times. You may also look at scholarly journals such as *Perspectives on Politics* (a quarterly Political Science journal which is in our library, and probably also available online). Again, consult these for models or examples of reviewing.

Your typed review should be 8-to-10 pages long. It is due on **October 9, 2018**---grades on late papers will be lowered in fairness to those students who have met the deadline. Also, please be prepared to summarize your book review in oral presentation to the class on October 9th (about 10 minutes for each report). This will be an in-class Forum on the Revolutionary Generation of Political Leaders at the beginning of the USA---we can discuss and compare these leaders as well as their biographers.

Required Readings: Books available from Barnes & Noble Bookstore on Halsey Street.

Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (NY: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003). With introduction and notes by Robert O’Meally. Paperback.

Joseph J. Ellis, Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation. NY: Vintage Books, 2002. Paperback. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize.

Richard C. Sinopoli, ed., From Many, One: Readings in American Political and Social Thought. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1997. Paperback.

Gillian Thomas, Because of Sex: One Law, Ten Cases, and Fifty Years that Changed American Women’s Lives at Work. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2016. Available in hardback and e-book.

David T. Smith, Religious Persecution and Political Order in the United States. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Available in paperback.

A few short readings will be available online.

Requirements:

In-class Oral Report on the required Course Readings for one class. See below.

Midterm Exam (take-home).

Attendance and Class Participation.

Book Review of a Biography of an important figure of the Founding/Revolutionary generation.

This will also be an oral report to the class, which is a seminar. See below.

Term Paper (approx. 15 pages) and Oral Presentation on an important Supreme Court case on religion and politics or church-state relations. Later in the semester, I will provide a list of cases from which you can choose. The paper will be due near the end of the semester.

In-Class Report on Course Readings for one seminar meeting.

Each class member is responsible for an oral report on the required readings for one class session. This will involve distributing a one-page “brief” that will serve as the basis for class discussion; copies should be made for all class members. This brief should be written in complete sentences (thus not an elliptical outline) and should contain:

- (1) The key affirmations made by the author(s) under consideration.
- (2) The report should summarize the author’s argument and show how it relates to the particular course topic and required readings.
- (3) Compose three or four substantive questions about the readings or raised by the readings that the presenter thinks the class should discuss.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tues. Sept.4

Introduction and Course Overview

What is political theory? And how and why do we study it?

Are there any distinctive characteristics of American political thought?

Is there an American ideology? How has American political thought and practice been influenced by liberalism and republicanism? How define contested terms such as citizenship and equality?

- Sept. 11 **The Colonial Experience and the Legacy of the Puritans**
 Sinopoli, Part V – Roger Williams, John Winthrop, James Madison, Red Jacket, and Thomas Jefferson. pp. 323 – 345.
Film: “The Supreme Court’s Holy Battles” (PBS).
- Sept. 18 **The Revolution**
 The Political Theory of the American Revolution
 What kind of revolution was this?
 Declaration of Independence (Sinopoli, pp. 27-31, or any American Government textbook.
 Ellis, Founding Brothers, Preface, “The Revolutionary Generation.”
 The Loyalist critique of the break with Britain.
- Sept. 25 **The Constitution: Founding a New Nation**
 Articles of Confederation (available in Kramnick & Lowi, American Pol. Thought).
 Constitution of the United States (1787), Sinopoli, Appendix, pp. 421-438.
 Publius, The Federalist Papers, No. 1, 10, 45, 48, 51. Sinopoli, Part I.
 Brutus & Cato, Anti-Federalist Critiques, Sinopoli, Part I.
- October 2 **Slavery and the Slave Trade**
 Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.
 Ellis, Founding Brothers, chap. 3, “The Silence,” pp. 81-119.
 Jill Lepore, “President Tom’s Cabin: Jefferson, Hemings, & a disclaimed lineage,” *The New Yorker*, September 22, 2008. Online at:
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/09/22/president-toms-cabin>
Film: “Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North.”
- October 9 **The Civil War**
 Abolition and the Failure of Political Solutions: Sinopoli, Part I, John Calhoun and Abraham Lincoln, pp.73-85; and Part IV, Benjamin Rush, H.D. Thoreau, George Fitzhugh, Abraham Lincoln, and Frederick Douglass, “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln” (1876), pp. 241-277. Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural Address” and the “Gettysburg Address” are included (bonus points for anyone who can memorize and recite the approx. 200 words of the Gettysburg Address).
Film: Excerpts from Ken Burns documentary on “The Civil War.”
- October 16 **Reconstruction, Segregation, Desegregation, Civil Rights**
 Sinopoli, Part IV, W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X.
Film: “Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges & Universities.”
- October 23 **Intolerance & Discrimination Against Religious Minorities**
 David Smith, Religious Persecution and Political Order in the United States, Chapters 1-6.
Film: “The Mormons” (excerpts). PBS documentary.

- October 30 **Rights of Religious Believers in the United States**
 The United States is a country constitutionally committed to religious liberty and Church-state separation. How is this “American Experiment” working? Smith, Religious Persecution & Pol. Order in the U.S.,” chs 7-10. Sinopoli, Part V, “Religion & Politics: Pluralism and Common Bonds,” pp. 346-386. Includes De Tocqueville, several legal cases, John F. Kennedy’s “Remarks on Church & State” (1960), and an address by Ralph Reed.
- Nov. 6 **Contemporary Church-State Cases and Concerns**
 Evangelical Christians voted in large numbers (80%) for Donald Trump and the Trump administration has provided evangelical leaders with easy access to the White House. Lines separating church and state are becoming increasingly murky. Some evangelicals are worried that such a close relationship between a political leader and their religious group will undermine their credibility in future elections. This class will review policy changes by the Trump administration in response to evangelical lobbying. Michael Gerson, article on Evangelicals & Pres. Trump, *The Atlantic*, April 2018.
- Nov. 13 **Gender and Politics: Citizenship, Equality, and Difference**
 Women in the Early Republic.
 The Suffrage Movement and Political Equality. Why did it take so long? What is the state of women’s political participation today?
 Reading: Sinopoli, Part II, pp. 101 to 149. Authors include Abigail Adams, Judith Sargent Murray, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, and Emma Goldman.
- Nov. 20 **No Class.** Rutgers follows Thursday schedule on this Tuesday.
- Nov. 27 **Gender, Law, and Public Policy**
 Gillian Thomas, Because of Sex: One Law, Ten Cases, and Fifty Years That Changed American Women’s Lives at Work. Read Introduction and first 5 cases. Film: Stanton and Anthony: Not for Ourselves Alone.” Reports.
- Dec. 4 **Thomas, Because of Sex**, continued. Student Reports on legal cases.
- Dec. 11 **Last Class:** Student Reports. Review & Summation of course.

