

POLS 230 - 01: American Political Thought

Fall 2018 Thursday 7:40 pm - 9:30 pm
Alaine Locke Hall 0118

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Office Hours: TBD, Annex III Room 228

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to American political thought. The course is arranged chronologically, recounting American debates over law, race and ethnicity, slavery, gender, property and labor, empire, resistance, reaction, and progress. While conventional American political thought courses privilege canonical texts like Madison, Hamilton, and Jay's *Federalist* and Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, this course does not teach these texts. It focuses instead on marginalized and neglected thinkers and readings, on the assumption that they can reveal something mainstream views cannot. The class thus prepares students for subsequent American politics and political theory courses and for adopting the study of values and intellectual traditions into their own research.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your course grade has two parts:

- 1) Paper(s), worth 65% of the total grade. All papers must be submitted by the last day of class, **November 29**. Students can choose one of two paper options:
 - A single article-length research paper of roughly 20 pages on a topic of the student's choice. The paper should engage a thinker, reading, or concept and the secondary scholarly sources on that topic. Students should submit a one-paragraph abstract and several sources on their topic by email to the instructor by **October 5**.
 - Three short response papers of roughly 6-8 pages each, each on a separate class topic or concept, e.g. on slavery and the Constitution or on conservatism. These for example can for example compare or contrast readings within a given topic, e.g. comparing different perspectives on the civil rights movement.
- 2) Participation, worth 35% of the total grade. Students are required to give two in-class presentations of roughly 10-15 minutes each on the reading of their choice. Presentations should 1) give an overview of the thinker's context, 2) summarize the main points of the reading, and 3) include question(s) to prompt discussion. If a student misses his or her assigned presentation date, he or she may reschedule, but will lose a third of a letter grade for each time rescheduled. Students should email the instructor their reading choice by **September 13**.

Students are expected to read and follow Howard University's [Academic Code of Student Conduct](#), including rules on cheating, plagiarism, etc. Plagiarized assignments, including papers, tests, and presentations, will receive a zero.

Late assignments decrease a third of a letter grade per day for up to seven days.

This syllabus may be revised at the instructor's discretion.

Course Schedule and Readings

All readings will be available on Blackboard as a course packet.

Note: Since this is a small class it will be taught more like an independent study. Please pick three of the remaining class meetings, and for each of these classes, email me one additional reading you would like to add, due by class 2 (Sept. 6). A PDF or link to the reading is fine. I'm glad to help with selection.

8/23	<p>Introduction: America's Three Intellectual Traditions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hartz, Louis. <i>The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution</i>. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1955. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch.1 2. Rodgers, Daniel T. "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept." <i>The Journal of American History</i> 79, no. 1 (June 1, 1992): 11–38. https://doi.org/10.2307/2078466. 3. Smith, Rogers M. "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America." <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 87, no. 3 (1993): 549–66. https://doi.org/10.2307/2938735. <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Foner, Eric. 1984. "Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?" <i>History Workshop</i>, no. 17 (April): 57–80. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does Hartz mean by liberalism and why is it dominant in America? - According to Rodgers, how have historians described republicanism? How does this respond to Hartz' liberalism? - According to Smith, why is liberalism or republicanism alone inadequate to explain America's intellectual traditions? What is the third tradition Smith describes?
8/30	No class: instructor at APSA
9/6	<p>The Revolution, Freedom, and Race</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Declaration of Independence 2. Jefferson, Thomas. <i>Thomas Jefferson : Writings</i>, edited by Merrill D. Peterson. New York, N.Y: Library of America. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. "Notes on the State of Virginia, Query 14." 3. Jefferson, Thomas. <i>The Papers of Thomas Jefferson</i>, vol. 22, 6 August 1791–31 December 1791, ed. Charles T. Cullen. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To Thomas Jefferson from Benjamin Banneker, 19 August 1791 b. From Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Banneker, 30 August 1791 4. Fields, Barbara Jeanne. 1990. "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America." <i>New Left Review</i>, I, , no. 181: 95–118. 5. Allen, Danielle. 2014. <i>Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality</i>. W. W. Norton & Company. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch. 6 <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Bailyn, Bernard. 1967. <i>The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution</i>. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 7. Ablavsky, Gregory. 2011. "Making Indians 'White': The Judicial Abolition of Native Slavery in Revolutionary Virginia and Its Racial Legacy." <i>University of Pennsylvania Law Review</i> 159 (5): 1457–1531. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the Declaration address race? Slavery?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - According to Jefferson, what distinguishes the races in Virginia? - What is Banneker’s response to Jefferson? - Fields is an historian – according to Fields, how did race come to be defined in Virginia?
9/13	<p>The Constitution as Counter-Revolution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frank, Jason A. 2010. <i>Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America</i>. Duke University Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch.2 2. The US Constitution 3. Ketcham, Ralph Louis, and United States. 1986. <i>The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates</i>. New York: Penguin. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Address by the Pennsylvania Minority b. Amendments Proposed by the Massachusetts and Virginia Ratifying Conventions 4. Wolin, Sheldon. 1990. <i>The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution</i>. Johns Hopkins University Press <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch. 5-8 <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Beard, Charles Austin. 1921. <i>An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States</i>. Macmillan. 6. Wood, Gordon S. 1972. <i>The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787</i>. Norton. 7. Miller, Joshua. 1999. <i>The Rise and Fall of Democracy in Early America, 1630-1789: The Legacy for Contemporary Politics</i>. Penn State Press. 8. Kramer, Larry D. 2004. <i>The People Themselves: Popular Constitutionalism and Judicial Review</i>. Oxford University Press. 9. Turner, Jack. 2015. “The Constitution of Radical Democracy.” <i>Polity</i> 47 (4): 558–65. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the Revolution and through the 1780s, ordinary citizens formed mobs and crowds to exert power over elites – how does this kind of politics differ from that practiced under the Constitution? - As you read the federal Constitution, think about how the document centralizes power to create stability - What were the Antifederalists’ objections to the proposed Constitution? Their remedies to the document’s flaws? - According to Wolin, why was ratification of the Constitution a conservative shift in American politics?
9/20	<p>Communism, Transcendentalism, and Indian Removal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Owen, Robert. 1840. “Manifesto,” in McCarthy, Timothy Patrick, and John Campbell McMillian. <i>The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition</i>. The New Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Selections 2. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 2008. <i>Political Writings</i>, edited by Kenneth Sacks. New York: Cambridge University Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Self-Reliance.” b. “Letter to Van Buren.” 3. Nabokov, Peter, ed. 1999. <i>Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-2000</i>. New York: Penguin.

	<p>a. Ch. 8, "Exiles in Their Own Land"</p> <p>4. Apess, William "Eulogy on King Philip," in <i>On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess</i>. University of Massachusetts Press, 1992</p> <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 2002. <i>Emerson's Antislavery Writings</i>. Edited by Len Gougeon and Joel Myerson. New Haven: Yale University Press. 6. Levine, Alan M., and Daniel S. Malachuk, eds. 2011. <i>A Political Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson</i>. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 7. Mariotti, Shannon L.. 2010. <i>Thoreau's Democratic Withdrawal: Alienation, Participation, and Modernity</i>. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 8. Kirkpatrick, Jennet. 2017. <i>The Virtues of Exit: On Resistance and Quitting Politics</i>. UNC Press Books. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does Owen address property and inequality? - What are Emerson's concerns with conformity? With Indian removal? - How does Apess engage the broader American political tradition?
9/27	<p>Violent and Nonviolent Abolitionism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grimke, Sarah 1837. "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Woman" in <i>On Slavery and Abolitionism: Essays and Letters</i>. Penguin. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Selections 2. Grimke, Angelina. 1837."An Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States" in <i>On Slavery and Abolitionism: Essays and Letters</i>. Penguin. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Selections 3. Townsend, Hannah and Mary Townsend. 1847. "The Anti-Slavery Alphabet." In Basker, James G., ed. 2012. <i>American Antislavery Writings: Colonial Beginnings to Emancipation</i>. New York: Library of America. 4. Garnet, Henry Highland. 1843. "An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America." In Basker, James G., ed. 2012. <i>American Antislavery Writings: Colonial Beginnings to Emancipation</i>. New York: Library of America. <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Walker, D., 1995. <i>Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World</i>. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 6. Hartman, Saidiya V. 1997. <i>Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America</i>. New York: Oxford University Press. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For the Grimke sisters, how do slavery and gender intersect? How does Northerners' economic complicity in slavery figure into their writings? What methods of resistant do they advocate? - What sort of resistance does Garnett advocate? How does this differ from the Grimkes' perspective?
10/4	<p>Slavery and the Constitution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Garrison, William Lloyd. <i>The Liberator</i> Vol. 24, Issue 27, July 7, 1854, p.106 2. Douglass, Frederick. "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" In Basker, James G., ed. 2012. <i>American Antislavery Writings: Colonial Beginnings to Emancipation</i>. New York: Library of America.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Thoreau, Henry David. 1996. <i>Thoreau: Political Writings</i>. New York: Cambridge University Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Slavery in Massachusetts” b. “A Plea for Captain John Brown” 4. Brown, John. 1859. “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States” 5. Lincoln, Abraham. 1854. “Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois.” <i>Speeches and Writings</i>. New York: Library of America. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Selections <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Finkelman, Paul. 2018. <i>Supreme Injustice: Slavery in the Nation’s Highest Court</i>. Harvard University Press. 7. Gooding-Williams, Robert. 2010. <i>In the Shadow of Du Bois</i>. Harvard University Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch.5 <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why does Garrison claim the Constitution is illegitimate? How does this compare to Douglass’ perspective? - How does Thoreau respond to the recapture of fugitive slaves? - How does John Brown’s constitution compare to the US Constitution?
10/11	<p>Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and Victorian Black Race Discourse</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, “Meeting of the American Equal Rights Association, May 12-14, 1869.” 2. Washington, Booker T. 1995. <i>Up from Slavery</i>. New York: Dover Publications. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch.14 “The Atlanta Exposition Address” 3. Reed, Adolph L. 1997. <i>W. E. B. Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line</i>. Oxford University Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch.7 4. Du Bois, W.E.B. <i>Du Bois : Writings</i>. New York: Library of America. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Conservation of the Races” b. “The Talented Tenth” c. “The Negro College” 5. Wells-Barnett, Ida B. 1895. “A Red Record.” In McCarthy, Timothy Patrick, and John Campbell McMillian. <i>The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition</i>. The New Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Selections <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Du Bois, W.E.B. 1987. “The Souls of Black Folks.” In <i>Du Bois : Writings</i>. New York: Library of America. 7. Gooding-Williams, Robert. 2010. <i>In the Shadow of Du Bois</i>. Harvard University Press. 8. Gilroy, Paul. 1993. <i>The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness</i>. Harvard University Press. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what senses are Du Bois’ and Washington’s ideas of racial uplift similar? Different? - What is the role of elites in Du Bois’ project of black uplift? Of education? How do his ideas of race science fit in? - How does Wells’ project compare to Du Bois’ or Washington’s?

10/18	<p>Progressivism, Pragmatism, and Female Suffrage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meyer, D. H. 1975. "American Intellectuals and the Victorian Crisis of Faith." <i>American Quarterly</i> 27 (5): 585–603. 2. James, William. 1981. <i>Pragmatism</i>. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch. 1-2 3. Sumner, William Graham. In Cummings, Michael S., ed. 2014. <i>American Political Thought</i>. SAGE Publications. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. "What the Social Classes Owe Each Other." b. "The Conquest of the United States by Spain" 4. Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. "The Solitude of Self: Speech to the House Judiciary Committee." February 18, 1892 <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Menand, Louis. 2002. <i>The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America</i>. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 6. Rodgers, Daniel T. 1998. <i>Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age</i>. Harvard University Press. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did Darwinism affect social thought in the late 19th and early 20th centuries? How does this affect your interpretation of James or Sumner? - How does William James define pragmatism? - How do Stanton's aims compare to the Grimkes'?
10/25	<p>Labor, the New Deal, and Mass Opinion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dewey, John. 1927. <i>The Public and Its Problems</i>. Swallow Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch.1, 4-5 2. Debs, Eugene V. 1918. In McCarthy, Timothy Patrick, and John Campbell McMillian. <i>The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition</i>. The New Press. 3. Long, Huey. 1925. "Share Our Wealth." In McCarthy, Timothy Patrick, and John Campbell McMillian. <i>The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition</i>. The New Press. 4. Roosevelt, Franklin D. "The Four Freedoms: State of the Union Address." January 6, 1941 <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Rogers, Melvin. 2012. <i>The Undiscovered Dewey: Religion, Morality, and the Ethos of Democracy</i>. Columbia University Press. 6. Bohman, James. 1999. "Democracy as Inquiry, Inquiry as Democratic: Pragmatism, Social Science, and the Cognitive Division of Labor." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 43 (2): 590–607. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do the platforms of Debs, Long, and FDR compare to previous progressives? - According to Dewey, what is the public? How does the public make decisions? Are these decisions well-informed?

11/1	<p>Black Internationalism and Local Democracy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vitalis, Robert. 2015. <i>White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations</i>. Cornell University Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduction, Ch. 3-6, 9 2. Bunche, Ralph J. 1936. <i>A World View of Race</i>. Washington: Associates in Negro Folk Education. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch. 1, 3 3. Ransby, Barbara. 2005. <i>Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision</i>. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Intro., Ch.9 4. Baker, Ella. "Address at the Hattiesburg Freedom Day Rally." January 21, 1964 <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Payne, Charles M. 1997. <i>I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle</i>. University of California Press. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do Baker and Bunche differ in their aims?
Date TBD	<p>Black Power and Liberation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. King, Martin Luther. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." In McCarthy, Timothy Patrick, and John Campbell McMillian. <i>The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition</i>. The New Press. 2. X., Malcolm. "The Ballot or the Bullet." In McCarthy, Timothy Patrick, and John Campbell McMillian. <i>The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition</i>. The New Press. 3. Carmichael, Stokely. "What We Want." In McCarthy, Timothy Patrick, and John Campbell McMillian. <i>The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition</i>. The New Press. 4. Carmichael, Stokely. "Black Power Speech at University of California, Berkeley." October 29, 1966. 5. Davis, Angela. "Political Prisons, Prisoners, and Black Liberation." In McCarthy, Timothy Patrick, and John Campbell McMillian. <i>The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition</i>. The New Press. <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Joseph, Peniel E. 2016. <i>Stokely: A Life</i>. Civitas Books. 7. Baldwin, James. 2013. <i>No Name in the Street</i>. Vintage Books. 8. Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do Stokely and Malcolm X represent a departure from Baker's organizing model? - How does King discuss time and progress? - How are Stokely and King's portrayals of white liberals or moderates similar or different?
11/15	<p>Conservatism: Libertarians and Segregationists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MacLean, Nancy. 2017. <i>Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America</i>. Penguin. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch. 3-6

	<p>b. Note: libertarian and conservative pundits and scholars have since critiqued the rigor of MacLean’s research. See the Washington Post recap</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. McGirr, Lisa. 2002. <i>Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right</i>. Princeton University Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch. 3-4 3. Goldwater, Barry. 2011. <i>The Conscience of a Conservative</i>. LG Classics. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ch.1-4 4. Goldwater, Barry. 1964. “Senate Speech on 1964 Civil Rights Bill.” <i>The New York Times</i>, June 19, 1964, sec. Archives. 5. Hayek, F. A. 2011. <i>The Constitution of Liberty: The Definitive Edition</i>. University of Chicago Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Postscript: Why I Am Not a Conservative <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Lassiter, Matthew D. 2006. <i>The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South</i>. Princeton University Press. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why, according to Goldwater, does a commitment to states’ rights require resisting the 1964 Civil Rights Act? - According to McGirr, how did conservatives recover after Goldwater’s loss in the 1964 presidential election? - What is the relationship between segregation and free market ideology according to MacLean?
11/22	No class: Thanksgiving Break
11/29	<p>Conservatism: Contemporary White Nationalism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robin, Corey. 2017. <i>The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Donald Trump</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Part III 2. Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2017. “The First White President.” <i>The Atlantic</i>, October 2017. 3. Williams, Thomas Chatterton. 2018. “Opinion How Ta-Nehisi Coates Gives Whiteness Power.” <i>The New York Times</i>, January 20, 2018, sec. Opinion. 4. Reed, Adolph. “What Are the Drums Saying, Booker? The Current Crisis of the Black Intellectual,” <i>The Village Voice</i>, April 11, 1995: 31-36. <p>Reading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does Robin describe the mindset of contemporary conservatives? - Reed argues some black public intellectuals are performing for a white audience. Williams argues that Coates specifically is writing for whites, and also takes race as a “fixed” or immutable category. Do you buy Reed’s and Williams’ critiques?