



## **POLS 383: AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT ONLINE**

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**In-Person and Virtual Office Hours:** T 11-12, TH 11-12 and by appointment

**Virtual Only Office Hours:** W 12-2 and by appointment

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course examines the philosophical underpinnings of American Government. From the first calls to revolution to the struggle for civil rights and beyond, the project of government in the United States has been informed, shaped, and justified by ideas. While many of these ideas have their roots in a larger philosophical tradition, others can be understood as uniquely American, produced as a result of our shared history. Over the semester, we will trace the history of American political thought by studying a selection of writings that have served as both sources and exemplars of American ideas about government.

Unit 1 will focus on the ideas that helped to shape the American founding, from the Puritans to the debates over ratifying the Constitution.

Unit 2 will turn to the dissident voices of those who have critiqued the foundation of the United States. Some of these critics reject aspects of the American ideal in favor of alternate visions, while others embrace the American beliefs in equality and freedom, arguing that these beliefs have not been extended to all citizens.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The goal of this class is to help you better understand the ideas that have shaped American political thought. This semester, you will:

- hone your own understandings of contemporary American government through an engagement with the history of American political thought.
- practice “analytical thinking” about politics. This requires you to provide reasons for what you believe and to consider counterarguments.
- develop abilities to interpret texts and use textual evidence to support your claims.
- develop your writing skills. Assignments stress focused analysis, strong understanding of the course material, and careful proofreading.

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

#### **Required Text**

Kramnick, Isaac and Theodore J. Lowi. 2019. American Political Thought, A Norton Anthology (Second Edition). New York, NY: W.W. Norton. ISBN: 978-0393655902

It is essential that you have the **correct edition** of the text. Additional readings will be available as PDF files in Western Online, and are designated (WO) in the course schedule.

## Technology

Because this course takes place in the Western Online environment, you are responsible for ensuring that you have access to the necessary technology to complete the course requirements. Log in to [westernonline.wiu.edu](http://westernonline.wiu.edu) and click “Brightspace Browser Check” to ensure system compatibility. Technical questions may be directed to the University Computer Support Services ([ucss@wiu.edu](mailto:ucss@wiu.edu) or 309-298-2704). Technical difficulties will **not** be accepted as an excuse for late, incomplete, or poorly done work. I encourage you to complete all work in advance to avoid last-minute technical problems. **All times listed are Central Time.**

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

### Grading

Final grades for the course will be assigned as follows:

A	512 points and above	C	400-422 points
A-	495-511 points	C-	385-401 points
B+	478-494 points	D+	368-384 points
B	455-477 points	D	345-367 points
B-	440-456 points	D-	330-346 points
C+	423-439 points	F	329 points and below

### Weekly Quizzes (140 points)

After completing the required reading assignment for each week, you are expected to take a weekly quiz by 11:59 PM on the **Friday** of that week. The weekly quiz will assess your understanding of the readings for the week and will consist of either 5 (2 points each) or 10 (1 point each) multiple-choice questions, for a total of 10 points. Though you may consult your notes and the readings, there is a strict time limit on the quizzes, which means you will not have time to look up all of the answers. No late quizzes will be administered and there will be no make-up quizzes available. You will earn zero points for any weekly quizzes you miss.

### Weekly Writing Assignments (210 points)

Written work for this course is highly valued and will be worth 210 points. By Monday of each week, I will post a reading guide with questions for that week that are meant to help focus your reading. **After you have taken your quiz for the week**, you will gain access to the weekly discussion board, which will include a choice of questions for the writing assignment. You are expected to choose a question and respond in **a minimum of 600 words** to one of the posted discussion questions no later than 11:59 PM on the **Sunday** of that week.

You will earn up to 15 points for each of your posts to the weekly discussion board, for a possible total of 210 points altogether. **No credit will be given to late posts.**

You should also write an introduction of yourself to post on the “Introductions” board no later than 11:59 PM on **Sunday, January 23**. Your introduction will be worth 5 extra credit points.

### Exams (200 points)—100 points each for Exam 1 and Exam 2

Over the course of the term, there will be two exams. Each exam will include 50 multiple-choice questions worth two points each (for a total of 100 points per exam). Both exams **must** be taken no later than 11:59 PM on the dates listed in the course schedule. Exam 2 will **not** be cumulative. There will be no quizzes or writing assignments due during exam weeks.

You may consult the readings and your notes while taking the exams. However, the exams will have a time limit of 75 minutes, which means that it will be impossible to look up every answer; you should study for the exams just as you would for exams in a traditional course environment. **You should NOT work with another student in taking the exam.**

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Guidelines for Class Communication**

This course is delivered completely online. As such, all communications will be primarily done via email and by posting to the discussion board. I can be reached by email at e-taylor@wiu.edu. During the workday, I usually respond to email within hours, but it does take me longer in the evenings and on weekends, when I try to spend time away from screens. For this reason, you should just assume that a) if you email me in the evening, you will hear back from me the next day and b) if you email me over the weekend, you will hear back from me on Monday. It will help me get back to you more quickly when you include the number or name of the course (POL3 383 or American Political Thought) in your subject heading.

For real-time questions or assistance, students are invited to meet with me a) in person in Morgan 424 during my physical office hours (Tuesday/Thursday 11 to noon), b) via Zoom during any of my office hours (Tuesday/Thursday 11 to noon and Wednesday noon to 2 pm), or c) by appointment. If you would like to meet in person, just stop by; if you would like to meet via Zoom, please send me an email and I will reply with a Zoom link. Finally, if you would like to make an appointment for an in-person or Zoom meeting outside my regularly scheduled hours, please reach out via email.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities & Academic Integrity**

You are required to familiarize yourself with the university's Student Rights and Responsibilities and Academic Integrity Policies, which are available at the following URLs:

<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students>    <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

It is your responsibility to strictly follow these policies. Any and all violations of these policies will be punished according to the guidelines they describe.

### **Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact Disability Resources at 309-298-1884, sdsc@wiu.edu or in 125 Memorial Hall. Please notify me as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

### **Sex Discrimination and Sexual Assault or Misconduct**

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at:

[http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php).

If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator, no matter when or where the incident took place. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Most readings from Isaac Kramnick and Theodore Lowi's **American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology**. Other readings on Western Online, designated (WO).

### Unit 1: Colonial Roots & The American Founding

Week	Topic	Reading Assignments
1 (1/18 - 1/23)	What is American Political Thought?	Introduction, Toward an American Political Thought, pp. xxv-xxxix
2 (1/24 - 1/30)	Puritan Beginnings	Colonial Roots, pp. 2-5 Winthrop, pp. 11-19 Wise & Mayhew, pp. 21-41
3 (1/31 - 2/6)	American Virtue	Colonial Roots, pp. 5-9 Benjamin Franklin, pp. 42-61
4 (2/7 - 2/13)	Revolutionary Ideas	The Founding, pp. 68-75 Adams, pp. 77-82 Paine, pp. 95-112 Declaration, pp. 115-118
5 (2/14 - 2/20)	In Favor of the Constitution	Hamilton & Madison, pp. 155-188
6 (2/11 - 2/27)	Against the Constitution	Lee, Yates, & Henry, pp. 214-240 Pennsylvania Minority (WO)
7 (2/28 - 3/6)	Equality & Freedom	Tocqueville (WO) pp. 27-36, 58-71, 269-287, 583-589, 595-609, 636-648
8 (3/7 - 3/13)	<b>Exam 1</b>	

### Unit 2: Dissident Voices

Week	Topic	Reading Assignments
9 (3/14 - 3/20)	SPRING BREAK	
10 (3/21 - 3/27)	Democracy & Self-Reliance	Emerson, Thoreau, & Whitman, pp. 396-430
11 (3/28 - 4/3)	Anarchism, Socialism, & Labor	Tucker, pp. 715-716 Goldman, Debs, & Gompers, pp. 724-749
12 (4/4 - 4/10)	Native Americans in the U.S.	Roosevelt, pp. 795-798 Chief Joseph et al., pp. 833-847
13 (4/11 - 4/17)	Race in America, Part I	Rush & Paine, pp. 453-462 Washington, Du Bois, & Garvey pp. 852-882
14 (4/18 - 4/24)	Race in America, Part II	King, pp. 1133-1145 Malcolm X & Carmichael, pp. 1147-1158 Obama, pp. 1387-1397
15 (4/25 - 5/1)	Women in America, Part I	Adams, Constantia, Grimke, Beecher, & Stanton pp. 431-452 Anthony, pp. 764-766 Addams, pp. 772-776
16 (5/2 - 5/8)	Women in America, Part II	Friedan, NOW, & Redstockings, pp. 1158-1168 hooks, pp. 1264-1271 Crenshaw, pp. 1302-1318
17 (5/9 - 5/13)	<b>Exam 2</b>	