



American Political Thought

Political Science 385, Fall 2021

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Meeting Time: 9:30-10:45, T&TH
Meeting Place: Morgan 308
Hours: TTH 11-12 in person (just drop by!), W 12-2
online (email for Zoom link) & by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the ideas that have driven the creation and development 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 work together to explore core ideas of American political thought by studying a selection of writings that have served as both sources and exemplars of American ideas about government.

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, providing reasons for what you believe and considering counterarguments.
- Develop abilities to interpret texts and use textual evidence to support your claims.
- Develop your writing skills.
- Practice your speaking and listening skills.

The format of this class includes lectures, class discussions, group work, and a Reacting to the Past game simulation. Lectures will provide you with background information as well as fleshed-out conceptual frameworks for understanding the ideas we will be studying. Discussions will allow us to interrogate these ideas in greater detail, enhancing our understanding. In-class group work will not only give those of you who are shy a chance to participate in a less intimidating setting, but will also allow you to work together in puzzling out some of the problems and questions left to us by American political thought. Finally, the game will invite you to early-twentieth-century Greenwich Village where we will explore ideas of gender, suffrage, labor, and social arrangements as you compete with your classmates to decide what issues are most pressing to American political life.

Prerequisites

You should have completed POLS 101, POLS 122, or have my permission to be enrolled in this course.

Required Reading

The following texts are required and are available at the student bookstore:

American Political Thought (2nd Edition, Kramnick and Lowi, editors, ISBN 9780393655902) - APT

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (Dover Thrift Edition, ISBN 9780486290737) - ABF

Greenwich Village, 1913: Suffrage, Labor, and the New Woman (Treacy, ISBN 9780393938906) - GV

Additional readings will be available on Western Online (WO). **You are required to bring your readings to class, which means that you will need to print the readings from Western Online.**

Reading Quizzes

Each day, a five-question quiz will be administered using Socrative online; you will need to have a phone, laptop, or tablet (charged up and ready to go!) to take the quiz. These quizzes will be open book and open note, meaning that you may use your text along with any notes that you have taken on the readings. However, quizzes will have a **3-minute** time limit, which means that there won't be time to look up all of the answers, so doing the assigned reading and taking notes to be ready for these quizzes is vital. After each quiz, we will flip a coin to determine whether or not the quiz will count; the average of all of these quizzes taken together will be worth 100 points. Your **two lowest** quiz grades will be **dropped** from the calculation of your quiz average. No make-up quizzes will be available.

Midterm and Final Exams

Two open book, open note 25-question multiple-choice exams will be administered, one mid-semester and one during the final exam period. The final will **not** be cumulative, and will cover only the material since the midterm exam. **No make-up exams will be given without prior permission; if permission is granted, make-up exams will be administered during the final exam period. No finals will be rescheduled except in accordance with university policy.**

Writing Assignments

There will be four 750-word writing assignments during four of the five units this semester. Questions, instructions, and a detailed checklist of requirements will be available prior to the due date. Assignments will be graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory, with assignments that complete **all of the requirements** on the provided checklist earning a designation of satisfactory. Unsatisfactory assignments may be revised to satisfy missing basic requirements at the cost of two lives or to satisfy other missing requirements at the cost of one life (see "Extra Lives," below).

Reacting to the Past Game

In the second half of the course, you will compete with and against your classmates in an elaborate game set in New York's Greenwich Village in 1913. This game pits suffrage activists against labor organizers for the support of Bohemians and other residents of the Village; considerable class time will be dedicated to preparing for and playing the game. As part of the game, each player will complete two writing assignments. The first assignment is a three-to-five-page speech or position paper and the second is a three-page role-specific contribution for possible inclusion in the game's magazine, *The Masses*. A detailed checklist of requirements will be provided for each of these assignments, which will be graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Assignments that complete **all of the requirements** on the checklist will earn a designation of satisfactory. Unsatisfactory assignments may be revised to satisfy missing basic requirements at the cost of two lives or to satisfy other missing requirements at the cost of one life (see "Extra Lives," below).

Attendance

Regular attendance is the **biggest** predictor of success in this course and will be taken daily. If you need to miss class for **any reason** during the first part of the course (August 24 through October 14) and would like to earn credit for that day's missed quiz, simply contact me via email **BEFORE THE END** of the class you will be missing (by **10:45 am**). If the quiz counted that day, I will send you a writing prompt on the topic discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to complete a 750-word assignment to make up for the missed quiz.

Attendance is especially important during game sessions and will count toward your grade during that time (October 19 through December 7). If you will be missing a game session for **any reason** and would like the absence to be excused, you must let me know **PRIOR TO** the session you will be missing. I will give you a writing prompt based on the missed day's material or activity and you will complete a 750-word assignment to make up that day's work.

Make-up assignments will be due to me via email before the next class period unless you ask (and I agree) to make alternate arrangements. Please note that if you do **not** alert me **before the end** of the class you are missing (during the first part of the course) or prior to the session you will be missing (during the game part of the course), this make-up option **will not be available**.

No matter why you miss class and whether or not you choose to notify me or do the make-up assignment, it is **your responsibility** to find out what you missed from me or one of your classmates.

Grading

To pass this course with a **D**, students must achieve the following:

- either a reading quiz average of 70% or above or a combined score of 32 or above on the midterm and final exams.
- satisfactory completion of **three** writing assignments
 - American Ideas
 - Game Position Paper
 - American Ideas Revisited
- an individual total of at least 10 “Player Influence Points” in the game.
- attendance at no fewer than eleven game sessions (no more than two unexcused game absences).

To level up to a **C**, students must achieve the following:

- a reading quiz average of 70% or above.
- a combined score of 32 or above on the midterm and final exams.
- satisfactory completion of **three** required and **one** optional writing assignment.
 - Required*
 - American Ideas
 - Game Position Paper
 - American Ideas Revisited
 - Optional*
 - Early American Thought
 - Democracy, Individualism, & Conscience
 - *The Masses* Contribution
- an individual total of at least 15 “Player Influence Points” in the game.
- attendance at no fewer than twelve game sessions (no more than one unexcused game absence).

To level up to a **B**, students must achieve the following:

- a reading quiz average of 80% or above.
- a combined score of 37 or above on the midterm and final exams.
- satisfactory completion of **four** required and **one** optional writing assignment.
 - Required*
 - American Ideas
 - Game Position Paper
 - *The Masses* Contribution
 - American Ideas Revisited
 - Optional*
 - Early American Thought
 - Democracy, Individualism, & Conscience
- an individual total of at least 20 “Player Influence Points” in the game.
- attendance at all thirteen game sessions (no unexcused game absences).

To level up to an **A**, students must achieve the following:

- a reading quiz average of 90% or above.
- a combined score of 42 or above on the midterm and final exams.
- satisfactory completion of all six writing assignments.
 - American Ideas
 - Early American Thought
 - Democracy, Individualism, & Conscience
 - Game Position Paper
 - *The Masses* Contribution
 - American Ideas Revisited
- an individual total of at least 25 “Player Influence Points” in the game.
- attendance at all thirteen game sessions (no unexcused game absences).

Students who do not complete the requirements for any of the grade categories above will earn an **F**.

Plus and minus grades will be determined based on the quality of writing exhibited in assignments as follows: + for highly developed (skillful, clear writing with zero or very few errors), no + or - for developed (mostly clear writing with some errors), - for undeveloped (writing with a distracting number of errors).

Extra Lives

Each of you starts the semester with four extra lives. One life may be traded for each of the following:

- a 72-hour extension on an assignment. See me in person or email me **before** 72 hours have passed from the original date/time the assignment was due.
- the opportunity to revise an unsatisfactory assignment that meets the basic criteria. Students will have seven days from the day assignment grades are released to revise. Meet with me (in person or on Zoom) before the seven days is up.

Two lives may be traded for the following:

- the opportunity to revise an unsatisfactory assignment that does not meet the **basic criteria**.

At the end of the semester, remaining extra lives will be translated into points that will be added to students' quiz averages and/or exam score totals, wherever they are most needed:

4 lives = 8 points

3 lives = 6 points

2 life = 4 points

1 life = 2 points

Lateness, COVID, & Other Standards of Classroom Behavior

When class begins, the door will be closed and locked. Each of you will receive one "Get Into Class Late" card at the beginning of the semester (attached); to be allowed late entry, hold your card up to the window and I will open the door for you and take your card. If you do not have a card in your possession, you will not be admitted into class late. If you do not use, lose, sell, or give away your card by the end of the semester **and** have not missed more than two quizzes, your card can be redeemed for five extra credit points being added to your final quiz average or exam score total, wherever the points are most needed. Remaining "Get Into Class Late" cards will be collected on the last day of class and must be submitted to earn the extra points.

Members of this class are expected to adhere to all current university COVID-19 protocols, which are available at http://www.wiu.edu/policies/covid_safety.php and on the course's Western Online page. WIU's COVID policy requires that faculty for all face-to-face classes maintain a seating chart and take attendance to facilitate contact tracing. Students are required to sit in their designated seats during all face-to-face class sessions. Non-compliance with any university COVID-19 policy may be considered disruptive student behavior and disciplinary action will follow general process outlined in disruptive student behavior procedures (<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/disrupst.php>) and/or other applicable enforcement measures applicable to the Code of Student Conduct.

Finally, please show respect for me and your classmates by avoiding the following: leaving class early, taking frequent or daily trips to the restroom, holding conversations with your neighbors when someone else (me or a classmate) is talking, sleeping during class, and using tobacco during class. Students who habitually engage in these or other disruptive behaviors will receive one kind and gentle email warning and, if the behavior continues, a second public and potentially embarrassing in-class warning. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave.

Cellular Phones, Laptops, & Tablets

You will need a phone, laptop, or tablet with you in class to take our daily quizzes, but these devices should be put away after quizzes are complete. At the beginning of the semester, there will be a bank of five extra credit points available. Each time I see a phone, laptop, or tablet after quizzes are complete, I will deduct one point from this bank. At the end of the semester, the number of points left in the bank will be added to each student's final quiz average or exam score total, wherever they are most needed.

Email

During the workday (8 am to 5 pm), 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, please 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 (POLS 383 or American Political Thought) in your subject heading.

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.

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 occurred. The complete Title IX policy is available at:

<http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

Student Rights and Responsibilities and Academic Integrity

You are required to familiarize yourself with the university's Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy, which is available at the following URL:

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

Pay special attention to the Academic Integrity Policy. I take academic integrity seriously, and all violations of this policy will be punished in accordance with the guidelines it describes; **assignments submitted containing any plagiarism will be marked unsatisfactory and will be ineligible for revision.**

Calendar

Readings should be done by the date next to which they are listed. **BRING READINGS TO CLASS!**

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments, Etc.
Part I: American Ideas			
TH Aug 26	Core American Ideas, Part I	POLS 383 Course Syllabus	"American Ideas Brainstorm" Due in WO by 9:15 am
T Aug 31	Core American Ideas, Part II	Kramnick & Lowi, pp. xxv-xxxix (in text, also available in WO)	
TH Sep 2	Core American Ideas, Part III	Smith (WO)	"American Ideas Assignment" Due in WO by 11:59 pm Sunday, Sept 5
Part II: Early American Thought			
T Sep 7	Puritan Roots, Part I	Winthrop, pp. 11-19	
TH Sep 9	Puritan Roots, Part II	Wise, pp. 21-31	
T Sep 14	Benjamin Franklin: An American Original	Autobiography, pp. 1-31	
TH Sep 16	Franklin: Continued	Autobiography, pp. 32-53	
T Sep 21	Franklin: Virtue, Industry, and Individualism	Autobiography, pp. 55-72	
TH Sep 23	Revolutionary Ideas	Adams, pp. 77-82 Paine, pp. 95-112 Declaration, pp. 115-118	
T Sep 28	In Favor of Ratifying the Constitution	Madison, pp. 164-170 and 174-188	
TH Sep 30	Against Ratifying the Constitution	Pennsylvania Minority (WO) Lee, pp. 214-222 Henry, pp. 232-240	"Early American Thought" Assignment Due in WO by 11:59 pm Sunday, Oct 3
Part III: Democracy, Individualism, & Conscience			
T Oct 5	The Vibrancy of American Public Life	Tocqueville, pp. 27-36, 58-71, & 269-287 (WO)	

TH Oct 7	The Complications of Individualism & Equality	Tocqueville, pp. 583-589, 595-609, & 636-648 (WO)	
T Oct 12	Democracy, Self-Reliance, & Democratic Dissent	Emerson, pp. 396-409 Thoreau, pp. 409-422	
TH Oct 14	In-Class Exam #1		“Democracy, Individualism & Conscience” Assignment Due in WO by 11:59 pm Sunday, Oct 17
Part IV: Dissident Voices & Reacting to the Past			
T Oct 19	Game Session 1: Women’s Rights and Suffrage	Historical Background, pp. 16-30 Cady Stanton, pp. 101-103 “The Constant,” p. 104	
TH Oct 21	Game Session 2: Labor and Labor Movements	Historical Background, pp. 31-50 Marx, pp. 153-161	
T Oct 26	Game Session 3: The Spirit of the New	Historical Background, pp. 51-67 Hapgood, pp. 210-215 Bourne, pp. 220-221 Lippmann, pp. 222-225	
TH Oct 28	GET READY! Understanding the Game	The Game, pp. 68-84	Individual Roles Distributed
T Nov 2	GO! Polly’s & Faction Meetings	Review The Game, pp. 68-84 Individual Role Sheet	
TH Nov 4	Game Session 4: The Suffrage Cause	Cady Stanton, pp. 104-112 Childe Dorr, pp. 112-117 Tarbell, pp. 120-128	Suffrage Faction Speeches Delivered
T Oct 9	Game Session 5: Labor Has Its Day	Addams, pp. 168-172 Haywood, pp. 180-184 <i>Socialist Party Platform</i> , pp. 185-187	Labor Faction Speeches Delivered
TH Nov 11	Game Session 6: The Feminist Mass Meeting	Perkins Gilman, pp. 194-199 Clews Parsons, pp. 199-204 Dell, pp. 216-219	Bohemians and Villagers Position Papers & Suffrage and Labor Written Speeches Due
T Nov 16	Game Session 7: Mabel Dodge’s Evening	Mabel’s Choice, TBA	Contributions to <i>The Masses</i> Due
TH Nov 18	Game Session 8: Thus Speak <i>The Masses</i> and Vote	Session 8 Instructions, pp. 91-92	
T Nov 23	Thanksgiving Break – No Class		
TH Nov 25			
T Nov 30	Game Session 9: 1917—Facing the Future	<i>The Quill</i> (handout distributed 11/18)	
TH Dec 2	Game Session 10A: Debriefing the Game		
Part V: Core American Ideas Revisited			
T Dec 7	Game Session 10B: The Game and Core American Ideas		
TH Dec 9	Core American Ideas Revisited	Your Own “American Ideas” Assignment from the Beginning of the Semester	“American Ideas Revisited” Assignment Due by 11:59 pm Sun Dec 12
TH Dec 16	Final In-Class Exam 8-9:50 am		

