

**CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES: CORE TEXTS (GOV 312P, UNIQUE #38865)**

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Fall 2021

Professor: Timothy Brennan

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Class Time: MWF, 9.00-10.00

Location: Garrison Hall 0.128

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10.00-11.00 (via my Zoom meeting room) and Fridays, 10.00-11.00 (in-person in MEZ 3.138 – Benjamin Gregg’s office)

Link for my Zoom meeting room: <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/3126459878> (this link can also be found through Canvas, under the Zoom tab)

## **I. Course Description**

This class is devoted to the underlying principles of American political life. We will proceed mainly through a close reading of primary sources. There will be units on: the American constitutional order; Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*; and slavery, civil rights, and race. The class carries a Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Flag: our final unit will explore the writings of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and other African-American authors. The class also carries an “Ethics” flag: we will consider the difficult practical questions faced by figures like Madison, Lincoln, Douglass, Washington, Du Bois, King, Malcolm, and others.

## **II. Required Texts**

Please make sure you purchase physical copies of the exact editions listed below. E-books or different editions are not acceptable substitutes.

1. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. Introduction by Charles Kesler, edited by Clinton Rossiter. Signet Classics. ISBN 0451528816.
2. Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. Trans. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226805360.
3. Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Penguin Publishing Group. ISBN 9780451529947.
4. Booker T. Washington. *Up From Slavery*. Dover Classics. ISBN 0486287386.
5. Course Packet.

## **III. Assignments**

Participation (10%)

Quizzes (10%)

First Exam (15%)

Analytical/Interpretive Essay (30%)

Final Exam (35%)

#### IV. Course Policies

**Books.** You are required to have a physical copy (rather than an e-book version) of every book. Used copies are fine, but *make sure you have the exact book editions listed above*. The most expensive of them should be available for around \$20 (new paperback) or under \$10 (used paperback). You are also required to have the relevant readings with you in class. If you choose not to purchase the Course Packet, which will also be posted as a PDF on Canvas, you should print out copies of the relevant readings and bring them with you to class.

**Participation.** Your participation grade will reflect the consistency and quality of your contributions in class over the semester as a whole. You will need to be in class on time, and you should be prepared to discuss the readings in detail.

**Absences.** After two unexcused absences (including lateness), your participation grade will fall by one letter grade (10 points) for each additional unexcused absence. You will be excused from attendance if: you have flu- or Covid-like symptoms (notify me at least an hour before class); you have a documented illness or family emergency; or you have a religious holiday (notify me at least two weeks in advance). Classes will not be recorded, but if you have the flu or Covid and still feel well enough to attend online, you should email me as soon as possible and let me know so that I can open my Zoom meeting room and you can listen to what we cover. If you have no unexcused absences at the end of the semester, you will get a 5-point bonus for your participation grade.

**Quizzes.** Throughout the semester, there will be unannounced quizzes. These quizzes should not be very hard if you have done the reading, and they can be an easy way of boosting your grade. Any quizzes missed due to lateness or unexcused absence cannot be made up, but your lowest quiz grade will not be counted. Quizzes missed due to excused absence will not lower your grade.

**Exams.** The first exam will be done online, through Canvas, on Saturday, September 18 (time TBD). The date for the final exam, which will be done in-person, is Wednesday, December 15, 2.00-5.00. Information about the format of the exams will be sent out as the dates approach.

**Essays.** You will receive essay topics and guidelines approximately two weeks before the due date. The same late penalty (2 points per day) will apply to all students: in the interests of fairness, exceptions based on personal circumstances will not be considered. Failure to submit the essay two weeks after the due date will result in an F.

**Office Hours.** I will hold office hours both online (on Wednesday mornings) and in-person (on Friday mornings). If you'd like to talk to me outside class time but you are not free at the scheduled times, please either talk to me straight after class or send me an email with a couple of possible times to talk over Zoom. If you just have a brief question that could be answered in a sentence or two, feel free to email me any time.

**Electronic Devices.** The use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices is not permitted during class time.

**Grades.** Plus and minus grades will be used as follows: A (94-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-89); B (84-86); B- (80-83); C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D (60-69); F (below 60). Note that a grade of F for any portion of the course (participation, quizzes, essay, either exam) will result in an F for the course as a whole.

**Academic Integrity.** Academic dishonesty will be treated extremely seriously. Plagiarism will result in an F. The university's Honor Code, with information on the meaning of academic integrity, can be found online (<http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/>).

**Disabilities.** If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). You may refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations.

## **COURSE READING SCHEDULE**

The schedule below is subject to revisions, as dictated by the pace of our discussions.

Readings found in the course packet are marked "CP."

### **Class Dates**

## **UNIT 1: THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER**

Wednesday, August 25:

The Declaration of Independence (in *The Federalist Papers*, pp. 528-32)  
U.S. Constitution, Preamble (p. 542)  
Federalist 1 (pp. 27-31)

Friday, August 27:

Federalist 9-10, 14 (pp. 66-79, 94-100)

Monday, August 30:

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8 (pp. 546-48)  
Federalist 39, 46 (pp. 236-43, 290-97)

Wednesday, September 1:

Federalist 47-49, 51 (pp. 297-314, 317-22)

Friday, September 3:

U.S. Constitution, Article I (pp. 542-49)  
Federalist 52-53, 55, 57 (pp. 322-33, 338-43, 348-53)

Monday, September 6:

No class (Labor Day)

Wednesday, September 8:

Federalist 62-63 (pp. 374-88)

Friday, September 10:

U.S. Constitution, Article II (pp. 549-52)  
Federalist 68-73 (pp. 410-45)

Monday, September 13:

U.S. Constitution, Article III (pp. 552-53)  
Federalist 78 (pp. 463-71)

Wednesday, September 15:

U.S. Constitution, Articles IV-VII (pp. 554-56)  
Federalist 84 (first part), 85 (pp. 506-16 only, 520-27)  
James Madison, Speech to Congress (CP)  
U.S. Bill of Rights, Amendments I-X (pp. 558-60)

Friday, September 17:

Review and discussion

Saturday, September 18:

First exam, via Canvas (time TBD)

## **UNIT 2: DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA**

Monday, September 20:

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 3-15

Wednesday, September 22:

Tocqueville, pp. 27-44

Friday, September 24:

Tocqueville, pp. 45-55

Monday, September 27:

Tocqueville, pp. 143-46, 149-54, 187-92

Wednesday, September 29:

Tocqueville, pp. 220-35

Friday, October 1:

Tocqueville, pp. 235-48

Monday, October 4:

Tocqueville, pp. 278-88

Wednesday, October 6:

Tocqueville, pp. 399-400, 403-410

Friday, October 8:

Tocqueville, pp. 411-15, 433-39, 450-52, 469-72

Monday, October 11:

Tocqueville, pp. 479-84, 485-92, 500-506

Wednesday, October 13:

Tocqueville, pp. 506-14

Friday, October 15:

Tocqueville, pp. 517-21, 535-39, 587-88

Monday, October 18:

Tocqueville, pp. 643-45, 661-76

### UNIT 3: SLAVERY, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND RACE

Wednesday, October 20:

Benjamin Franklin, "Petition" (CP)  
Patrick Henry, Letter to Robert Pleasants (CP)  
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 326-348

Friday, October 22:

Frederick Douglass, *Life of Frederick Douglass*, Chapters 1-9

Monday, October 25:

Douglass, *Life of Frederick Douglass*, Chapters 10-11 and Appendix  
Douglass, "The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro" (CP)

Wednesday, October 27:

William Lloyd Garrison, "On the Constitution and the Union"  
Douglass, "The Constitution of the United States: Is It Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery?"  
(CP)

Friday, October 29:

John C. Calhoun, "Speech in the Senate on the Oregon Bill" (CP)  
Alexander Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech" (CP)

Monday, November 1:

Abraham Lincoln, "Peoria Speech" (CP)

Wednesday, November 3:

Lincoln, First Inaugural (CP)  
Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation (CP)  
Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" (CP)  
Lincoln, Second Inaugural (CP)

Friday, November 5:

Douglass, "Oration" (CP)  
W.E.B. Du Bois, "Abraham Lincoln" (CP)  
Du Bois, "Again, Lincoln" (CP)

Monday, November 8:

U.S. Constitution, Amendments XIII-XV (in *The Federalist Papers*, pp. 561-63)  
Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (CP)  
Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*, pp. 1-11

Wednesday, November 10:

Washington, *Up From Slavery*, pp. 11-30, 38-50

Friday, November 12:

No class

Monday, November 15:

Washington, *Up From Slavery*, pp. 51-85  
Washington, "Democracy and Education" (CP)

Wednesday, November 17:

Du Bois, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" (CP)  
Washington, *Up From Slavery*, pp. 105-115

Friday, November 19:

Du Bois, "Agitation" (CP)  
Du Bois, "An Open Letter to Warren Gamaliel Harding" (CP)  
Du Bois, "Of the Training of Black Men" (CP)

Monday, November 22:

Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (CP)  
Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" Speech (CP)

Wednesday, November 24:

No class (Thanksgiving holidays)

Friday, November 26:

No class (Thanksgiving holidays)

Monday, November 29:

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet" (CP)

Wednesday, December 1:

James Baldwin, "Encounter on the Seine: Black Meets Brown" (CP)

Ralph Ellison, "When Does a Black Join the Middle Class?" (CP)

Thomas Chatterton Williams, "Beyond Black History Month" (CP)

Friday, December 3:

Ta-Nehisi Coates and David Remnick, "Ta-Nehisi Coates Revisits the Case for Reparations" (CP)

Ibram X. Kendi, "The American Nightmare" (CP)

Glenn C. Loury, "Unspeakable Truths about Racial Inequality in America" (CP)

Walter Benn Michaels and Adolph Reed, "The Trouble with Disparity" (CP)

Monday, December 6:

Review and discussion

Wednesday, December 15:

Final exam (2.00pm-5.00pm)