

GOV 312P: CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES: CORE TEXTS [#37220]
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
FALL 2024

Instructor: Tom Samuels

Email: tomsamuels@utexas.edu (please use this email and not Canvas)

Class Time: MWF 10:00-11:00

Class Location: PAR 303

Office Location: MEZ 3.216

Office Hours: Office hours are tentatively scheduled for Wednesdays, 12:30-3:30 in my office. However, I will adjust to accommodate your schedules and my own schedule. I will make a weekly Canvas announcement that will include my office hour times for the following week. I am also always available by appointment – just send me an email.

Course Description:

This class will focus on the fundamental principles of American political life such as individual rights, equality, and liberty. We often unconsciously take these principles for granted without investigating what they mean, what their effects are, and what the arguments are for and against them. Yet whether we think about these principles or not, they deeply shape us in everything from what we love and fear to what we admire and detest. By investigating the theoretical underpinning of American political life and reading many of the most important texts, we can gain greater self-knowledge and become better informed citizens.

This class carries an “Ethics” flag. Ethics courses are designed to equip you with skills that are necessary for making ethical decisions in your adult and professional life. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of the issues raised in class to involve ethical questions. We will discuss what type of life and moral outlook American democracy encourages. We will also discuss difficult decisions of political compromise faced by political leaders.

In addition, this class carries a “Cultural Diversity in the US” flag. In our unit on race, we will explore African American political thought by reading Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, WEB Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and others. We will discuss how they understood American principles given the inconsistency between those principles and American slavery.

Required Texts:

Please make sure that you purchase physical copies of the exact editions listed below – make sure the ISBN numbers match. Since no internet-connected devices are allowed in class, you will need to bring in physical copies of the readings. In addition, in your essays, you will need to cite to the same page numbers that are in these editions.

1. Publius (Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay). The Federalist

- Papers. (Signet: 2003) [ISBN: 9780451528810]
2. Locke, Second Treatise on Government. Edited by CB Macpherson (Hackett: 1980) [ISBN: 9780915144860]
 3. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America. Translated by Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. (Chicago: 2000) [ISBN: 9780226805368]
 4. Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. (Signet Classics) [ISBN 9780451529947]
 5. Booker T. Washington. Up From Slavery. (Dover Classics) [ISBN: 9780486287386]
 6. W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (Dover Classics) [ISBN: 9780486280417]
 7. Course Packet. (**I will announce when the packet is available for purchase.**)

Assignments:

Attendance & Participation (20%)
Reading Quizzes (10%)
Midterm (15%)
Response Paper (5%) (C/I)
Essay Draft (5%) (C/I)
Final Essay (20%)
Final Exam (25%)

(C/I = complete/incomplete)

You will receive at least two weeks' notice before due dates.

Assignment Descriptions:

Attendance & Participation. Participation is vital to the success of the class. Please come to every meeting having done the readings and prepared to offer your thoughts and interpretations of them. You do not automatically receive a perfect grade if your attendance is perfect. I encourage you to talk in class with your ideas and questions, but if speaking in class is not your thing, *all forms of participation count and can earn you a very good participation grade. For example, coming to office hours and emailing me with questions count too.*

Quality, not quantity, is what matters. Making a few sincere, insightful comments is better than speaking a lot only for the sake of saying something. In addition, please listen as intensely to your classmates as you do to me and respond to their arguments and questions. Furthermore, the point is not to have all the answers; asking insightful questions is often more important.

Three unexcused absences are permitted without penalty, and each unexcused absence after the first three will count against your grade.

Reading Quizzes. Quizzes will be given randomly to assess that you're up to date on the

readings. There can be a quiz to begin any class, up to three times per week. The lowest 10% of your quizzes will be dropped at the end of the semester. You may not make up a quiz. If you miss a quiz, it will count as a 0, unless it was missed due to an excused absence or during one of your three permitted unexcused absences.

Midterm. The midterm exam will be in-person during class time. Information on what you will need to know will be provided during the semester. It will take place near the middle of the semester, with at least two weeks' notice.

Response Paper. You will each write one response papers of 250-500 words. Early in the semester, you will sign up for the classes you will write for. I will provide further details during the semester. *The assignments will be graded on a complete/incomplete (C/I) basis, but exceptional papers can earn half a percentage point added to your grade average at the end of the semester.*

Essay Draft and Revision. The essay draft will be 3-5 pages and graded on a complete/incomplete basis. *Exceptional first drafts can earn half a percentage point added to your grade average at the end of the semester.* After you turn the draft in, we will meet to discuss your writing, and I will give you feedback. Following that meeting, you will have time to revise and expand the essay. This final essay should be 7-10 pages. This process is meant to help you think deeply about a question over a long period of time and learn how to incorporate feedback. A late penalty will apply to all students – 5% off the final score for each day of lateness. You will get at least two weeks' notice before due dates. The final essay will be due a week or two before Thanksgiving break.

Essays must include citations to the required editions of the books.

Exam. The final exam will be in-person and will consist of a mix of essay questions. The date will be announced here: <https://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/242/finals>

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. You are also required to have the relevant readings with you in class. *You must consistently bring the required physical copies of the readings to class to be counted as present.*

Unexcused Absences. Three unexcused absences are permitted without penalty. *Each unexcused absence after the first three will begin to lower your participation and attendance grade.*

Excused Absences. You will be excused from attendance for things like flu- or Covid-like symptoms, a documented illness, a family emergency, or a religious holiday. Please give me reasonable notice before your absence. If you miss a quiz because of an excused absence, I will not include that quiz in calculating your final grade.

Office Hours. I will hold 3 hours of office hours every week. *There will be a weekly Canvas announcement that will include the office hours for the following week.* If you would like to talk to me outside class but you are not free at the scheduled times, please talk to me after class or send me an email and we can arrange an alternative time. You may also email me with questions.

Electronic Devices. The use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices is not permitted during class time. Note-taking devices without access to messaging, email, etc. such as Remarkable are allowed.

Class Recordings. The class will not be recorded, and you may not make recordings of the class.

Grades. We will use the plus/minus grading system for this class. To calculate your final grade, essay and other letter-graded assignments will be translated into number grades as follows:

A: 97; A-: 91; B+: 88; B: 84.5; B-: 81; C+: 78; C: 74.5; C-: 71; D: 65; F: 0-50

Grades in between two letter grades count as the average of those two grades—an A-/B+ is an 89.5, for instance.

For final 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). *(I will round from the tenths place such that a 93.50 is an A, but a 93.49 is an A-.)*

Academic Integrity. Academic dishonesty will be treated extremely seriously. Plagiarism will result in an F for the course. 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/>). **In addition to these guidelines, note that the use of artificial intelligence or large language model generative services (such as ChatGPT) is strictly prohibited in this course for any purpose. The instructor reserves the right to use AI detection software and take further measures (including requiring that the essays change to in-person exams) should this become a problem.**

Disabilities. If you are a student with a disability or think you may have a disability and need accommodations, please contact UT's Disability and Access office (D&A). You may refer to D&A'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.

Title IX & SB 212 Disclosure. Beginning January 1, 2022, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities,

including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, written forms, applications, one-on-one conversations, class assignments, class discussions, or third-party reports) must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Education Code, Section 51.252, they are mandatory reporters under federal Title IX regulations and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct, including the types of misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities. The Title IX Office has developed supportive ways and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX matter. For more information about reporting options and resources, please visit: <https://titleix.utexas.edu>, contact the Title IX Office via email at: titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule below is subject to revisions and additions. You will be given at least two weeks' notice before the midterm and essay due dates. I will make a weekly announcement with the week's reading, a reading guide, and other information for that week.

Week 1:

- 8/26:
 - Syllabus
 - The Declaration of Independence, Preamble (class handout and online PDF)
- 8/28:
 - Excerpt from Aristotle's *Politics* (class handout and online PDF)
 - Excerpt from Hobbes's *Leviathan* (class handout and online PDF)
- 8/30:
 - Excerpt from Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* (class handout and online PDF)

Week 2:

- 9/2: Labor Day, no class
- 9/4:
 - Locke, Second Treatise (ST), Chapters 1-2
- 9/6:
 - Locke, Second Treatise, Chapter 5 through Section 35

Week 3:

- 9/9:
 - *ST* Chapter 5 through end
- 9/11:
 - *ST* Chapters 8-10
- 9/13:
 - *ST* Chapters 11-14; Chapter 19

Week 4:

- 9/16:
 - US Constitution, through Article VII (in *The Federalist Papers* book, pp. 542-556)
- 9/18:
 - *The Federalist* 1-2
- 9/20:
 - *The Federalist* 3 (p. 36 only), 9, 10, 37

Week 5

- 9/23:

- *The Federalist* 52-53, 55, 57, 62, 69-70
- 9/25:
 - The Bill of Rights (in *The Federalist Papers* book, pp. 558-560, Articles I-10)
 - *The Federalist* 47-51, 84
- 9/27:
 - Anti-Federalist readings (class handout and online PDF)

Week 6

- 9/30:
 - Anti-Federalist readings (class handout and online PDF)
 - *Democracy in America* Introduction (pp. 3-15)
- 10/2:
 - *Democracy in America* I.1.2 (Vol. 1, Pt. 1, Ch. 2)-I.1.3 (pp. 27-45)
- 10/4: (guest lecturer)
 - *Democracy in America* I.1.3-6 (pp. 45-65 only)

Week 7

- 10/7: (guest lecturer)
 - *Democracy in America* I.2.7-8 (pp. 235-264)
- 10/9: (guest lecturer)
 - *Democracy in America* I.2.9 (pp. 264-282 only)
- 10/11: (guest lecturer)
 - *Democracy in America* I.2.9 (pp. 282-298 only)

Week 8

- 10/14:
 - *Democracy in America* Notice (p. 399), II.1.1-8 (pp. 403-426)
- 10/16:
 - *Democracy in America* II.2.1-7 (pp. 479-500)
- 10/18:
 - *Democracy in America* II.2.8-14 (pp. 500-517)

Week 9

- 10/21:
 - *Democracy in America* II.2.15-20 (pp. 517-532)
- 10/23:
 - *Democracy in America*, II.4.6 (pp. 661-665)
- 10/25:
 - *Democracy in America*, pp. 302-307, 326-333 (up to the first full paragraph on page 333); 345 (start at bottom, "I am obliged...")-348

Week 10

- 10/28:
 - Patrick Henry, Letter to Robert Pleasants (CP)
 - Debates on Slavery at the Constitutional Convention (CP)

- Benjamin Franklin, “Petition” (CP)
- William Lloyd Garrison, “On the Constitution and the Union” (CP)
- Lincoln, Lyceum Address (CP)
- 10/30:
 - Frederick Douglass, “The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro” (CP)
 - Frederick Douglass, “The Constitution of the United States: Is It Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery?” (CP)
- 11/1:
 - John C. Calhoun, Speech on the Oregon Bill (CP)
 - Abraham Lincoln, Peoria Speech (CP)
 - Stephen A. Douglas, Springfield Speech (CP)
 - Alexander Stephens, “Cornerstone Speech” (CP)

Week 11

- 11/4:
 - Frederick Douglass, *Life of Frederick Douglass* (all)
- 11/6:
 - Frederick Douglass, *Life of Frederick Douglass* (all)
- 11/8:
 - Lincoln, First Inaugural (CP)
 - Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation (CP)
 - Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (CP)
 - Lincoln, Second Inaugural (CP)

Week 12

- 11/11:
 - U.S. Constitution, Amendments 13-15 (in *The Federalist Papers* book, pp. 561-63)
 - W.E.B. Du Bois, “Abraham Lincoln” (CP)
 - W.E.B. Du Bois, “Again, Lincoln” (CP)
 - Frederick Douglass, “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln (CP)
- 11/13:
 - Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*, pp. 1-11, 57-64, 79-81, 105-115, 156-157
- 11/15:
 - W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, excerpts
 - W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, excerpts

Week 13

- 11/18:
 - Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (CP)
 - Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream” (CP);

- 11/20:
 - Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (CP)
- 11/22:
 - Contemporary essays on race in America (CP)

Week 14: Thanksgiving, no class

Week 15

- 12/2:
 - Excerpt from Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (CP)
 - Putnam, “Bowling Alone” (CP)
- 12/4:
 - Fukuyama, “The End of History” (CP)
- 12/6:
 - Solzhenitsyn, “A world split apart” (CP)

Week 15

- 12/9: TBA

Final exam date TBA (<https://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/242/finals>)