

GOV 312P: CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES: CORE TEXTS [#37270]

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Spring 2024

Instructor: Tom Samuels

Email: tomsamuels@utexas.edu

Class Time: MWF 9:00-10:00

Class Location: MEZ 1.216

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:30-3pm in MEZ 3.216. I am also available by appointment. I will make an announcement if office hours are changed to another time.

Course Description:

This class will focus on the fundamental principles of American political life such as democracy, equality, and liberty. We often unconsciously take these principles for granted without investigating what they mean, what their effects are, and whether there are alternatives. 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 and the process of applying ethical reasoning to real-life situations. We will do this by thinking about the difficult political and ethical questions faced by figures like the Founders, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Booker T. Washington, WEB Du Bois, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X.

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 the writings of Frederick Douglass, Booker T Washington, WEB Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and others. We will see how they wrestled with the question of what American principles mean to people who have suffered under slavery and its aftermath.

Required Texts:

Please make sure that you purchase physical copies of the exact editions listed below. 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. Course Packet. (This will be available for purchase from Document Solutions at GSB 3.136 at 100 W 21st St.).

Assignments:

Attendance & Participation (20%)

Reading Quizzes (10%)

2 Reading Response Papers (5%) (C/I) (extra credit possible, see description)

First Essay Draft (5%) (C/I)

First Essay Revision (15%)

Second Essay (20%)

Final Exam (25%)

(C/I = complete/incomplete)

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. The hope is that each of you takes ownership of your intellectual development and pursues the ideas and questions that the class material raises for you. I encourage all of you to talk in class, 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.

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

Reading Quizzes. Quizzes will be given randomly around once a week to assess that you're up to date on reading. 10% of the total number of quizzes will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Reading Response Paper. You will each write two reading response papers of 250-500 words. One paper will be due before spring break and the other after. Early in the semester, you will sign up for the classes you will write for. One paper should raise two-three questions that the reading brings out for you. The other paper should be an exploration of an aspect of the reading that you find interesting. The papers are due at 2:00 pm the day before the class that you write on. They should be sent to my email, tomsamuels@utexas.edu. *The assignments will be graded on a complete/incomplete (C/I) basis, but exceptional papers can earn one extra percentage point added to your grade at the end of the semester.*

First Essay Draft and Revision. The first essay draft will be short (2-3 pages) and graded on a complete/incomplete basis. After you turn the essay 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 (5-6 pages) and turn it in for a grade. This is to help you learn how to write better and incorporate feedback. A late penalty will apply to all students – 5% off the final score for each day of lateness. The due date can be found in the course schedule and may change given how the semester progresses and other factors.

Second Essay. You will receive second essay (5-6 pages) topics and guidelines approximately two weeks before the due date. The same late penalty will apply to all students – 5% off the final score for each day of lateness. The due date can be found in the course schedule and may change given how the semester progresses and other factors.

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.

Unexcused Absences. Two unexcused absences are permitted without penalty, and you may write a short reflection on the reading if you missed a quiz during one of those two absences. *Each unexcused absence after the first two will begin to lower your participation and attendance grade, and you may not make up a quiz if you miss one.*

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 office hours every 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. As you will notice, I built flexibility into the schedule with some days that do not yet have readings. Readings found in the course packet are marked "CP."

Week 1:

- January 17:
 - Syllabus
 - Excerpt from Aristotle's *Politics* (CP)
 - The Declaration of Independence (in *The Federalist Papers* book, pp. 528-32)
 - US Constitution, Title and Preamble (p. 542)
- January 19:
 - Excerpt from Hobbes's *Leviathan* (CP)
 - Locke, *Second Treatise* (*ST*) Chapters 1-2

Week 2:

- January 22: *ST* Chapters 3-4
- January 24: *ST* Chapter 5
- January 26: *ST* Chapters 6-7

Week 3:

- January 29: *ST* Chapters 8-10
- January 31: *ST* Chapters 11-14
- February 2: *ST* Chapter 19

Week 4:

- February 5:
 - US Constitution, through Article VII (in *The Federalist Papers* book, pp. 542-556)
 - *The Federalist* 1-2
- February 7: *The Federalist* 3 (p. 36 only), 9, 10, 37
- February 9: *The Federalist* 52-53, 55, 57, 62, 69-70

Week 5

Essay 1 draft due on February 11th at 11:59 pm

- February 12:
 - The Bill of Rights (in *The Federalist Papers* book, pp. 558-560, Articles I-10)
 - *The Federalist* 47-51, 84
- February 14:
 - Brutus I, from the Anti-Federalist (CP);
 - Centinel I, from the Anti-Federalist (CP)
- February 16: TBA

Week 6

- February 19: *Democracy in America* Introduction (pp. 3-15)
- February 21: *Democracy in America* I.1.2 (Vol. 1, Pt. 1, Ch. 2)-I.1.3 (pp. 27-45)
- February 23: *Democracy in America* I.1.3-6 (pp. 45-65 only)

Week 7

- February 26: *Democracy in America* I.2.7-8 (pp. 235-264)
- February 28: *Democracy in America* I.2.9 (pp. 264-282 only)
- March 1: *Democracy in America* I.2.9 (pp. 282-298 only)

Week 8

Essay 1 revision due on March 3rd at 11:59 pm

- March 4: *Democracy in America* Notice (p. 399), II.1.1-8 (pp. 403-426)
- March 6: *Democracy in America* II.2.1-9 (pp. 479-506)
- March 8: *Democracy in America* II.2.8-14 (pp. 500-517)

Spring Break

Week 9

- March 18: *Democracy in America* II.2.15-20 (pp. 517-532)
- March 20: *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville on race (pages TBA)
- March 22: TBA

Week 10

- March 25:
 - 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)
- March 27:
 - 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)
- March 29:
 - 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

- April 1: Frederick Douglass, *Life of Frederick Douglass* (all)
- April 3:

- Lincoln, First Inaugural (CP)
- Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation (CP)
- Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (CP)
- Lincoln, Second Inaugural (CP)
- April 5:
 - 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)

Week 12

- April 8: Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*, pp. 1-11, 57-64, 79-81, 105-115, 156-157
- April 10:
 - W.E.B. Du Bois, “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others” (CP)
 - W.E.B. Du Bois, “Of the Training of Black Men” (CP)
- April 12:
 - Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (CP)
 - Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream” (CP);

Week 13

- April 15:
 - Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (CP)
- April 17:
 - Ibram X. Kendi, “The American Nightmare” (CP)
 - Coleman Hughes, “A Better Anti-Racism” (CP)
 - Glenn C. Loury, “Unspeakable Truths About Racial Inequality in America” (CP)
- April 19
 - Excerpt from Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (CP)
 - Various, “Against the Dead Consensus” from *First Things* (CP)
 - Putnam, “Bowling Alone” (CP)

Week 14

- April 22: Fukuyama, “The End of History” (CP)
- April 24: Solzhenitsyn, “A world split apart” (CP)
- April 26: TBA

Essay 2 due on April 26th at 11:59 pm

Week 15

- April 29: TBA

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