

GOV 312P: CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES: CORE TEXTS [#38230]

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Fall 2023

Instructor: Mr. Evan Cree Gee

Email: e.creegee@gmail.com

(I do not communicate via Canvas)

Class Time: Tuesday/Thursday 2-3:30pm

Class Location: MEZ 1.216

Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30-2pm & Wednesday 2:30-4pm in MEZ 3.212

(or on Zoom by appointment)

I. Course Description

This class is devoted to the underlying principles of liberal democracy in America and American political life. We will proceed mainly through a close reading of primary sources. Topics discussed will include: contemporary critiques of liberal democracy; the principles of the Declaration of Independence; the debate over the Constitution of 1787 between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists; the nature of democracy as a social condition; the tyranny of the majority; the phenomena of individualism and materialism; the problem of slavery in the founding and the early republic; the moral and constitutional issues at stake in the Civil War; the question of civil disobedience. 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, and other African-American authors. The class also carries an “Ethics” flag: we will consider the difficult practical questions faced by leaders such as Douglass, Washington, Du Bois, Lincoln, Madison, 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. Publius (Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay). *The Federalist Papers*. (Signet: 2003) [ISBN: 0451628810]
2. Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*. Edited by CB Macpherson (Hackett: 1980) [ISBN: 091514493X]
3. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Translated by Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. (Chicago: 2000) [ISBN: 0226805360]
4. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. (Signet Classics) [ISBN 9780451529947]
5. Booker T. Washington. *Up From Slavery*. (Dover Classics) [ISBN 0486287386]
6. Course Packet. (This will be available for purchase as a physical text from Document Solutions in GSB 3.136 at 100 W 21st St).

III. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to

- articulate the principles of America's founding documents
- critically assess contemporary critiques of the principles found therein

- understand how to approach texts in political philosophy and contemporary political commentary
- compose, edit, and revise academic writing assignments
- identify the extent to which the founding principles of American liberal democracy are relevant today

IV. Assignments

Attendance & Participation (10%)

Reading Quizzes (10%)

First Mini-Essay (10%) (C/I)

First Mini-Essay Meeting (5%) (C/I)

First Essay with Revisions (15%)

Second Essay (20%)

Final Essay Exam (30%)

V. Assignment Descriptions & Due Dates

Reading Quizzes. Quizzes will be given **every day** 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. There will be no make-up quizzes.

First Essay. The first mini-essay will be very short (2 pages) and graded on a complete/incomplete basis. After turning the essay in, I will return it with extensive comments and you will be expected to have a meeting with me to discuss your writing. Following that meeting, you will have time to revise and expand the essay (4 pages), and turn it in for a grade. This is to help you learn to write better and incorporate feedback. The late penalty will apply to all students – 10% off the final score for each day of lateness. **DRAFT SEPTEMBER 19TH | REVISIONS OCTOBER 19TH**

Second Essay. You will receive second essay topics (5 pages) and guidelines approximately two weeks before the due date. The same late penalty will apply to all students – 10% off the final score for each day of lateness. **NOVEMBER 16TH**

Exam. The final exam will be an at-home, open note essay dealing with broader course themes. The due date will be Thursday, December 7th at 10:00am central time. **DECEMBER 7TH**

VI. 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 (2) unexcused absences are permitted without penalty. Each unexcused absence after the first two will result in a deduction of 10% of your attendance grade.

Excused Absences. You will be excused from attendance if you have: flu- or Covid-like symptoms (notify me at least an hour before class); a documented illness or family emergency; a religious holiday (notify me at least two weeks in advance).

Participation. Your final participation grade will be scored out of 10 on the following scale: 0-3 (rarely prepared, little participation); 3-5 (few or no contributions to class discussions over the semester as a whole); 6-8 (fair or good contributions to class discussions over the semester as a whole); 9-10 (very good or excellent contributions to class discussions over the semester as a whole).

Office Hours. I will hold office hours. If you would 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 alternative times to talk. 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.

Class Recordings. Classes will not be recorded.

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 final exam move to in-person format) 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 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.” Readings may change slightly as the semester proceeds and the instructor will notify students if and when that occurs.

INTRODUCTION

August 22 Introduction and Liberal Democracy in America	The Declaration of Independence (in <i>The Federalist Papers</i> , pp. 528-32) U.S. Constitution, Title and Preamble (p. 542) Read this course syllabus entirely
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PART I: THE FOUNDING, LOCKE, & THE FEDERALIST

August 24 Introduction to Locke	Excerpt from Aristotle's <i>Politics</i> (CP) Excerpt from Hobbes's <i>Leviathan</i> (CP) Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> Chapters 1-3
August 29 Locke's <i>Second Treatise</i> (cont.)	<i>ST</i> Chapter 4-5
August 31 Locke's <i>Second Treatise</i> (cont.)	<i>ST</i> Chapter 6-7
September 5 Locke's <i>Second Treatise</i> (cont.)	<i>ST</i> Chapter 8-10 First mini-essay assigned.
September 7 Locke's <i>Second Treatise</i> (cont.)	<i>ST</i> Chapters 11-14; 19
September 12 <i>The Federalist</i> Introduction	<i>The Federalist</i> 1, 9, 10, 37
September 14 The Legislature & Executive	U.S. Constitution, Articles I-II <i>The Federalist</i> 52-53, 55, 57, 69-70
September 19: Federalism	The Bill of Rights <i>The Federalist</i> 47-51, 84 First mini-essay due.
September 21: The Anti-Federalist Debates	Brutus I, from the Anti-Federalist (CP) Centinel I, from the Anti-Federalist (CP)

PART II: TOCQUEVILLE'S FRIENDLY CRITIQUE

September 26: Introduction to Tocqueville's <i>Democracy in America</i>	<i>Democracy in America</i> Introduction and Vol.1, Pt.1, Chapter 2 (pp. 3-15 & 27-44)
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September 28: The Spirit of Equality	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol.1, Pt.1, Chapters 3-5 (pp. 45-63)
October 3: Tyranny of the Majority	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol.1, Pt.2, Chapters 7-8 (pp. 235-258) <i>Mini essay conferences during office hours this week.</i>
October 5: On the Principle Causes Tending to Maintain a Democratic Republic	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol.1, Pt.2, Chapter 9 (pp. 264-298) <i>Mini essay conferences during office hours this week.</i>
October 10: Modes of Thought & Philosophy	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol.2, Pt.1, Chapters 1-8 (pp. 403-426)
October 12: Individualism	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol.2, Pt.2, Chapters 1-7 (pp. 479-500)
October 17: Self Interest Well Understood	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol.2, Pt.2, Chapters 8-20 (pp. 500-530)
October 19: Tocqueville on Race	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol.1, Pt.1, excerpts from Chapter 10 (TBA) <i>First Essay with revisions due in-class.</i>

PART III: SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY

October 24: The Problem of Slavery in the Early Republic	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)
October 26: Frederick Douglass on Slavery and the Constitution <i>*Class will be held on Zoom*</i>	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)

October 31: Lincoln vs. Douglas (and others)	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)
November 2: The Life of Frederick Douglass	Frederick Douglass, <i>Life of Frederick Douglass</i> <i>Second essay assigned.</i>
November 7: Lincoln as Statesman	Lincoln, First Inaugural (CP) Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation (CP) Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (CP) Lincoln, Second Inaugural (CP) 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)
November 9: Reconstruction Washington vs. DuBois	U.S. Constitution, Amendments 13-15 (in <i>The Federalist Papers</i> , pp. 561-63) Booker T. Washington, <i>Up From Slavery</i> , pp. 1-11, 57-64, 79-81, 105-115, 156-157 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)
November 14: The Civil Rights Era	Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (CP) Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream” (CP) Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (CP)
November 16: The Enduring Legacy of Slavery	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) <i>Second Essay Due in-class</i>
November 28: Does liberal democracy fulfill its promise?	Excerpt from Nietzsche’s <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i> (CP) Various, “Against the Dead Consensus” from <i>First Things</i> (CP) Putnam, “Bowling Alone” (CP)

November 30: What comes next for liberal democracy?	Fukuyama, “The End of History” (CP) Solzhenitsyn, “A world split apart” (CP) Excerpt from Bloom, <i>The Closing of the American Mind</i> (on Canvas)
December 7: Final Exam	Final exam will be open-note with an online submission.