Course Description

The objective of this course is to introduce the student to the varieties of American political thought from the inception of the Republic to the present time. We will also analyze the consequences of these political points of view in terms of contemporary American issues.

Requirements and Grading

Grades will be determined according to the following scheme:

- Mid-term: 25%
- Final: 50%
- Individual book review: 10%
- Periodical reports: 15%
- Attendance/participation: +- 5%

Hint: You can well in this class by attending regularly. Much of what we discuss will be the raw materials for our mid-term and final exam.

The mid-term exam will take place in March, the exact time and topics covered will be announced at least a week in advance. The final exam will be comprehensive. Make up exams will not be given except in extreme circumstances and only at the discretion of the instructor for reasons generally approved before the day of the exam.

Each student will be required to review a book chosen from a list that appears in the topical section of this syllabus. Completion of the assignment will require reading the book, writing a critical analysis of it (5 pages and due by the last class), and presenting your results orally to the class in a short, informal question and answer format.

Each student will also be required to read one copy every month of one periodical from the following list: New Republic, National Review, The Nation, The American Prospect, Weekly Standard,
Reason, Liberty, The American Conservative. From this periodical, choose a lead article and write a two page critique of it. You will be doing this assignment three times (one per month) and you cannot choose the same periodical title more than once. The two page critiques are due on the last class of Feb, March and April.

We will start off class each Tuesday by discussing the latest items on the political agenda. In order to participate, you must keep up with the news. I would recommend a newspaper, but the electronic media also have many good sources for the latest political news.

I do NOT accept papers via email. Please print off hardcopies and bring them to class on the due date.

Textbooks
The following textbooks will be used in the course:

Terence Ball and Richard Dagger, Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal.

Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition.

From time to time, I will email you online readings that seem to be appropriate to our topic.

Topics and Readings

Topic 1: Populism

Michael Kazin, The Populist Persuasion in American History
David Lebedoff, The Uncivil War: How a New Elite Is Destroying Our Democracy
William Kazin, A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan
Angello Codivilla, The Ruling Class: How They Corrupted America and What We Can Do About It
William Deresiewicz, Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation Of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life
David Rothkopf, Superclass: The Global Power Elite And the World They are Making.
Elizabeth Warren, A Fighting Chance
Henry Olsen, The Working Class Republican
Chris Hayes, Twilight of the Elites: America After Meritocracy
Jon Meacham, American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House
Roger Kimball(ed.), Vox Populi: The Perils and Promises of Populism
Joan Williams, The White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America
Philip Hamburger, The Administrative State
Elizabeth Currid-Halkett, The Sum of Small Things: A Theory of the Aspirational Class
John Judis, The Populist Explosion
Richard D. White, Kingfish: The Reign of Huey P. Long
Dana Loesch, Flyover Nation: You Can’t Run a Country You’ve Never Been To
Omar El Akkad, American War
Jason Brennan, Against Democracy
Jennifer Bachner and Ben Ginsberg, What Washington Gets Wrong: The Unelected Officials Who Actually Run the Government and their Misconceptions About the American People

Part One: Origins of American Political Thought
Readings:

Topic 2: Classical Political Thought

Topic 3: The Enlightenment
  Martin Davis, Thinking about the Enlightenment: Modernity and its Ramifications

Part Two: The Founding of the Republic
Readings: Hofstadter chs. 1–2.
Topic 4: The American Revolution
Cullen Murphy, Are We Rome? The Fall of the Empire and the Fate of America
Ron Chernow, Alexander Hamilton
Pauline Maier, American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence
Bernard Maya, ed. Jefferson Himself: The Personal Narrative of a Many-Sided America
James Flexner, Washington, the Indispensable Man
Gordon Wood, Friends Divided: John Adams and Thomas Jefferson
David McCullough, John Adams
Jon Meacham, Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power

Topic 5: Two American Constitutions
Robert A. Goldwin, From Parchment to Paper: How James Madison Used the Bill of Rights to Save the Constitution
John Ferling, Jefferson and Hamilton: The Rivalry that Forged a Nation
William L. Miller, The Business of May Next: James Madison and the Founding
Lynn Cheney, James Madison
Mary Bilder, Madison’s Hand
Anthony Lewis, Freedom of Thought We Hate
Richard Brookhiser, Alexander Hamilton, American
Jean Edward Smith, John Marshall: Definer of a Nation
Richard Brookhiser, What Would the Founders Do?

Part Three: The Consolidation of the Republic
Readings: Hofstadter, chs. 3-6.

Topic 6: The Formation of the Party System
John Ferling, Adams vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800
Topic 7: The Civil War as a Grave Constitutional Crisis
Henry Mayer, All of Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery
Michael Lind, What Lincoln Believed: The Values And Convictions of America’s Greatest President
John Stauffer, Tribunal: Responses to John Brown
Henry Wiencek, Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves

Part Four: The Consequences of Industrialism
Readings: Hofstadter, chs. 7-12.

Topic 8: Progressivism
James Chace, 1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft and Debs: The Election that Changed the Country
Jeane Bethke Elshtain, Jane Addams And The Dream Of American Democracy
Herbert Croly, The Promise of American Life
Michael Wolraich, Unreasonable Men: Theodore Roosevelt and the Republican Rebels Who Created Progressive Politics
John J. Miller, Scrum: How Teddy Roosevelt Saved Football
Thomas Leonard, Illiberal Reformers, Race, Eugenics And American Economics in the Progressive Era
Richard Zack, Island of Vice: Theodore Roosevelt’s Doomed Quest to Clean Up Vice in Sin-Loving New York

Part Five: Contemporary American Political Thinking
Readings: Ball, chs. 1-4, 8-10.

Topic 9: The Political Left
Readings:

Matthew Scully, Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy
Edmund Fawcett, Liberalism: The Life of an Idea
Norman Podhoretz, Why Are Jews Liberal
Edmund Fawcett, Liberalism: The Life of an Idea
Fred Siegel, The Revolt Against the Masses: How Liberalism has Undermined the Middle Class
Greg Lukianoff, Unlearning Liberty: Campus Censorship and the American Debate
Jonah Lan and Amie Parnes, Shattered: Inside Hillary Clinton’s Doomed Campaign
Michael Wolff, Fire and Fury
Thomas Frank, Listen Liberal: Or Whatever Happened To the Party of the People?
Welsey Lowery, The Can’t Kill Us All: Ferguson, Baltimore and a New Era in American Racial Justice Movement
Jonathan Haidt, The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion

Topic 10: The Political Right
Barry Goldwater, Conscience of a Conservative
F. A. Hayek, The Road to Serfdom
Milton Friedman, Free to Choose
Mark Levin, Plunder and Deceit: Big Government’s Exploitation of Young People and the Future
John Lott Jr., More Guns, Less Crime
Heather MacDonald, The War on Cops: How the New Attack on Law and Order Makes Everyone Less Safe
David Gelernter, America, Lite: How the Imperial Academia Dismantled Our Culture
Albert Brooks, The Conservative Heart: How to Build A Fairer, Happier and More Prosperous America
John Stossel, No They Can’t: Why Government Fails
Lawrence Solomon, The Deniers: The World Renowned Scientists Who Stood Against Global Warming Hysteria, Political Persecution and Fraud
Carl T. Bogus, Buckley: William F. Buckley and The Rise of American Conservatism
Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Heretic: Why Islam Needs Reformation Now
Patrick Buchanan, Suicide of a Superpower

Part Six: Contemporary Factions and the Major Issues
Readings: TBA

Topic 11: The Politics of Race
Ta-Nehisi Coates, Between the World and Me
Shelby Steele, Shame: How America’s Past Sins Have Polarized Our Country
John McWhorter, Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America
bell hooks (aka Gloria Watkins) Killing Rage: Ending Racism
J. Christian Adams, Injustice: Exposing the Racial Agenda of the Obama Justice Department
Thomas Sowell, Intellectuals and Race.
Nicholas Wade, The Troubled Inheritance
John Hope Franklin, Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin

Topic 12: Culture Wars
Daniel Okrent, Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition
Steven Rhoads, Taking Sex Differences Seriously
Harvey Mansfield, Manliness
Paula Kamen, Her Way: Young Women Remake the Sexual Revolution
Donna Freitas, The End of Sex.
Suzanne Venker and Phyllis Schlafly, The Flipside Of Feminism: What Conservative Women Know and Men Can’t Say
Anna Fels, Necessary Dreams: Ambition in Women’s Changing Lives
Robert Hofler, Sexplosion: From Andy Warhol to A Clockwork Orange
Jeff Flake, Conscience of a Conservative: The Rejection of Destructive Politics and a Return To Principle
Hanna Rosin, The End of Men and the Rise of Women
Kirsten Powers, How the Left is Killing Free Speech
Milo Yiannopoulos, Dangerous (March 14)

Topic 13: The Role of the Judiciary
James McGregor Burns, Packing the Court: The Rise Of Judicial Power and the Coming Crisis of the Supreme Court.
Jeffrey Toobin, The Nine: Inside the Secret World Of the Supreme Court
David Strauss, The Living Constitution
Damon Root, Overruled: The Long War for Control of the US Supreme Court
J. Harvie Wilsonson III, Cosmic Constitutional Theory: Why Americans Are Losing Their Inalienable Right to Self-Governance
Topic 14: The Economy and Poverty

J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family In Crisis*

Michael Tanner, *The Poverty of Welfare: Helping Others in Civil Society*

Steven Greenhouse, *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times For American Workers*

Robert Putnam, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*

Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Guilded Age*

Roger Lowenstein, *America’s Bank*


Nicholas Eberstadt, *A Nation of Takers: America’s Entitlement Epidemic*

William Voegel, *Never Enough: America’s Limitless Welfare State*

Gretchen Morgenson, *Reckless Endangerment: How Out-Sized Ambition, Greed, and Corruption Led to Economic Armageddon*

Sylvester Schieber, *The Predictable Surprise: The Unraveling of the U.S. Retirement System*

Martin Wolf, *The Shifts and the Shocks: What We Learned and Have Yet to Learn from the Financial Crisis*

Stefan Halper, *The Beijing Consensus: How China’s Authoritarian Model Will Dominate the Twenty-First Century*

Charles Peters, *We Do Our Part: Toward a Fairer And More Equal America*

Brian Alexander, *The Glass House*

Thomas Picketty, *Capital in the 21st Century*

Tyler Cowen, *The Average is Over*

Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today’s Divided Society Endangers our Future*

Topic 15: The Alienated Mass Americans

Robert Frank, *Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class*

Charles Murray, *By the People: Rebuilding Liberty*
Without Permission
Tyler Cowen, The Complacent Class: The Self-defeating Quest for the American Dream
Richard Florida, The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class
Sharly Atkinson, The Smear: How Shady Political Operatives Control What You See, What you Think And How You Vote
Richard Reeves, Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class Is Leaving Everyone Behind In the Dust
Joel Kotkin, The New Class Conflict
Lawrence Lindsey, Conspiracies of the Ruling Class

Topic 16: Macro Models of the Political System--Who Rules America?
Alvin Gouldner, The Future of the Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class

Topic 17: The American Identity
Samuel Huntington, Who are We? The Challenges to America’s Identity
Ann Coulter: Adios America: The Left’s Plan to Turn Our Country into a Third World Hellhole
Steven Greenhouse, The Big Squeeze: Tough Time for American Workers
Byron Dorgan, Take This Job and Ship It: How Corporate Greed and Brain Dead Politics Are Selling Out America

Topic 18: Foreign Policy
Timothy Weiner, Legacy of Ashes: The History Of the CIA
Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Heretic: Why Islam Needs Reformation Now
Michael Hayden, Playing to the Edge: America’s Intelligence in the Age of Terror
Bret Stephens, America in Retreat
Henry Kissinger, Does America Need a Foreign Policy: Towards a Diplomacy for the 21st Century
Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilization
Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic Of Suicide Terrorism*