

COURSE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this course is to better understand the ideas that animated American political life from the time of the American Founding to the Civil War. This is essentially a course on the Constitution, which means it is about the fundamental principles of self-government. The larger, overarching question animating the course is, “What is the meaning and significance of the *United States of America*?” To approach this question we will focus, first of all, on our attempts to frame a Constitution that is compatible with the principles of the American Founding. We will then think through the issues that arose (between 1790 and 1860) over what the Constitution means and how it should work in practice. We will discuss such constitutional issues as the nature of executive power, federalism, state sovereignty and national supremacy, and limited government – all of which continue to be debated today. By understanding how Americans in the pre-Civil War years of the Republic understood these ideas, we can gain a better perspective on how we think of American political principles and the Constitution today.

CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR:

Students are encouraged to meet with me outside of class to discuss any aspect of the materials or topics we cover in the course.

Office: Andrews 129

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Email: ccburkett@ashland.edu

Office Hours: TTh 10:00-10:30 am, W 2:15-3:45 pm, and by appointment

STUDENT RESOURCES:

Students are encouraged to visit my personal website at www.ashland.edu/~cburket1/. Occasionally I will post course materials online, and there are also other valuable links and resources for students posted at this website.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *The Federalist*, edited by Clinton Rossiter (Signet, 2003, ISBN 0451528816)
- Other assigned readings will be distributed by the professor during class.

GENERAL POLICIES:

1. PLAGIARISM: ANY WILLFUL PLAGIARISM ON PAPERS OR CHEATING ON QUIZZES/EXAMS WILL RESULT IN AN “F” FOR THE COURSE. You should read the Academic Integrity Policy in the student handbook or catalog. Also see the link on plagiarism at my website, www.ashland.edu/~cburket1/.

2. ATTENDANCE: You should make every effort to attend every class. Even if you have what you think is a good reason for missing a class, the professor retains the discretion to decide whether to count it as an excused or unexcused absence. An unacceptable number of absences will result in a deduction from the final grade for the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Class preparation and participation (roughly 20% of the final grade):

This portion of the grade includes class preparation, quality participation, memory of assigned readings, and attendance. This could include unannounced quizzes. Discussion is highly encouraged in this course. **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DO THE READINGS BEFORE CLASS.** The best way to prepare for class is to read the assignments and make a brief outline of the main points. Then memorize your outline.

2. Paper (roughly 30% of the final grade):

Students may select one of the following two options to satisfy the paper requirement for the course:

Option #1: Choose a topic from the reading plan (with professor's permission) and prepare a seminar paper on any or all of the readings assigned for one class. Students will submit a 6-8 page paper to the professor, and present their paper to the class, followed by a class discussion/question and answer session led by the student. Panel presentations (along with one or more other students) are acceptable and recommended. This option is no longer available in the last two weeks of the semester.

Option #2: Choose a topic from a list provided by the professor and write a 10-12 page scholarly paper, to be submitted on the date indicated on the syllabus/reading plan. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that you have grasped the importance and complexity of the question or topic and that you have familiarity with the texts assigned for the course. You may use outside sources, though this is not necessary, and your paper should use and rely heavily upon the primary texts assigned for class. *Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source and you should avoid using it in your paper.* It is also bad form to begin a paper with a definition from a dictionary. **See also "Guidelines for writing papers" at the end of this syllabus.**

3. Exams (roughly 25% each of the final grade, 50% total):

The exams will consist of a short answer section and an essay section. In writing your exam essays, you should demonstrate that you have a good grasp of the topics we have covered in class. The exams are your opportunity to demonstrate that you have been participating intellectually in and out of class and thinking seriously about the topics we have discussed.

See also "The Meaning of Grades" at the end of this syllabus

Contents of this syllabus are subject to change.

READING PLAN

WEEK 1: Sources of American political and constitutional thought

- Th (8/25):** Declaration of Independence, 1776
Abraham Lincoln, "Fragment on the Constitution and Union," 1861
Federalist No. 1 (paragraph 1 only)

WEEK 2: Sources of American political and constitutional thought

- Tu (8/30):** Town of Boston, "Rights of the Colonists," 1772
John Adams, "Thoughts on Government," 1776
- Th (9/1):** Declaration of Rights of Virginia, 1776
Declaration of Rights of Massachusetts, 1780

PAPER TOPICS FOR OPTION #2 DISTRIBUTED

WEEK 3: Articles of Confederation

- Tu (9/6):** Articles of Confederation (in back of *The Federalist Papers* and *The Anti-Federalist Papers*)
Alexander Hamilton to James Duane, 3 Sept. 1780
George Washington to James Warren, 7 Oct. 1785
George Washington to John Jay, 15 August 1786
- Th (9/8):** *The Federalist*:
No. 15 (all)
No. 21 (paragraphs 1-5 only)
No. 22 (last 6 pars. only, starting with "A circumstance which crowns...")
James Madison, Vices of the Political System of the United States, 1787

WEEK 4: The Constitutional Convention

- Tu (9/13):** “Important Names at the 1787 Convention”
Madison, *Report of Debates in the Federal Convention*:
May 29 (Virginia Plan)
May 30 (debate on VA Plan)
May 31 (mode of election)
June 6 (mode of election)
June 9 (debate on the nature of the Union)
- Th (9/15):** Madison, *Report of Debates in the Federal Convention*:
June 11 (Sherman’s compromise proposal)
June 15 (New Jersey Plan)
June 16 (Debate on NJ Plan)
June 18 (Hamilton Plan)
June 19 (Debate on NJ Plan)
June 29 (Connecticut Compromise offered)
July 2 (CT Compromise debated)
July 5 (Committee report on CT Compromise)
The Federalist No. 62 (pars 3-4 only, starting with “II. It is equally unnecessary...”)

WEEK 5: The ratification debates: federalism

- Tu (9/20):** U.S. Constitution, in the back of *The Federalist Papers*
“Outline of the U.S. Constitution”
George Mason, “Objections to This Constitution of Government”
Centinel I
James Wilson, “State House Speech,” 6 October 1787
- Th (9/22):** *Brutus* I

WEEK 6: The ratification debates: federalism

- Tu (9/27):** “Outline of the Plan of *The Federalist Papers*”
Federalist No. 9 (paragraphs 1-3)
Federalist No. 10 (all)
- Th (9/29):** *Federalist* No. 51 (paragraphs 8-10, starting with “There are, moreover...”)
Federalist No. 63 (paragraph 8, starting with “It may be suggested...”)

EXAM #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

WEEK 7: The ratification debates: federalism / representation & security of rights

- Tu (10/4):** *Federalist* No. 14 (paragraph 8, starting with “In the first place...”)
Federalist No. 23 (paragraphs 1-8)
Federalist No. 31 (paragraphs 5-10, starting with “A government ought to...”;
and last paragraph, starting with “It should not be forgotten...”)
Federalist No. 33 (paragraphs 6-7, starting with “But it may be again asked...”)
Federalist No. 45 (paragraphs 9-11, starting with “The powers delegated...”)
- Th (10/6):** *Report of Pennsylvania Minority*
Brutus IV

WEEK 8: The ratification debates: representation & security of rights

- Tu (10/11):** *Federalist* No. 31 (paragraph 11, starting with “This mode of reasoning...”)
Federalist No. 37 (all)
Federalist No. 47 (paragraphs 1-3 only)
Federalist No. 48 (paragraphs 1-6 only)
Federalist No. 51 (paragraphs 1-6 only)
Federalist No. 62 (paragraphs 7-9, starting with “IV. The number of senators...”;
and paragraphs 10-18, starting with “Third. Another defect...”)
Federalist No. 63 (paragraphs 4-7, starting with “I add, as a sixth defect...”)
- Th (10/13):** *Federalist* No. 84 (first 12 paragraphs only)
Federalist No. 85 (paragraph 3 only, starting with “The additional securities...”)
James Madison, Speech in Congress on amendments to the Constitution, 1789

WEEK 9: Constitutional issues: the necessary and proper clause

- Tu (10/18):** Thomas Jefferson, Opinion on the National Bank, 15 February 1791
Alexander Hamilton, Opinion on the National Bank, 23 February 1791
- Th (10/20):** *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 1819
Andrew Jackson, “Veto of the Bank Bill,” 10 July 1832

WEEK 10: Constitutional issues: executive power

- Tu (10/25):** Washington, Proclamation of Neutrality
Helvidius and Pacificus letters
- Th (10/27):** John Locke, *Second Treatise*, §§ 143-148, 159-160
Thomas Jefferson to John B. Colvin, 20 September 1810

WEEK 11: Constitutional issues: executive power

Tu (11/1): Lincoln, Message to Congress in Special Session, 4 July 1861
Lincoln, Letter to Albert Hodges, 4 April 1864

Th (11/3): Readings to be announced

WEEK 12: Constitutional issues: slavery

Tu (11/8): William Lloyd Garrison, “On the Constitution and Union,” 1832
Frederick Douglass, “Is the Constitution Pro- or Anti-Slavery?” 1860
Stephen Douglas, Homecoming Speech at Chicago, 1858
Abraham Lincoln, Joint Debate at Ottawa, Illinois, 1858

Th (11/10): Calhoun, Speech on Reception of Abolition Petitions, 1837
Calhoun, Speech on the Oregon Bill, 1848
Alexander Stephens, “Cornerstone Speech,” 1861

WEEK 13: Constitutional issues: nullification and secession

Tu (11/15): Thomas Jefferson, Draft of Kentucky Resolutions, 1798
James Madison, Report on the Virginia Resolutions, 1799-1800
Webster-Hayne debates, 1830
James Madison to Nicholas Trist, 23 December 1832
James Madison to Daniel Webster, 1833

Th (11/17): John C. Calhoun, *A Disquisition on Government*, c. 1830s

LAST DAY FOR PAPER OPTION #1

WEEK 14: Constitutional issues: nullification and secession

Tu (11/22): John C. Calhoun, “Fort Hill Address,” 26 July 1831

EXAM #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Th (11/24): NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 15: Constitutional issues: nullification and secession

Tu (11/29): Andrew Jackson, Proclamation Regarding Nullification, 10 December 1832

Th (12/1): Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1861

WEEK 16: Constitutional issues: secession

Tu (12/6): Lincoln, Message to Congress in Special Session, 4 July 1861

Th (12/8): **NO CLASS – UNIVERSITY READING DAY**

Sat (12/10)(1:30-3:30 pm): No readings assigned

PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

LAST DAY OF CLASS – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

The Meaning of Grades:

“A”: Excellent work demonstrating unusually thorough preparation, genuine comprehension and synthesis, insight and even originality. It is remarkably well-written and presented. The grade signifies not simply very good work but exceptionally fine work.

—in a word, MASTERY.

“B”: Very good, thorough work. The work demonstrates thorough preparation, a grasp of the subject matter and thorough command of the materials of the course. It may not show any special insight or originality, but it demonstrates clear understanding of the material with answers presented in a clear and logically correct style.

—in a word, COMPETENCE.

“C”: The work is acceptable for degree credit. It does not mean “poor” work because we should not award degrees for poor work. The work demonstrates an adequate, though not comprehensive, grasp of the subject matter. Significant information might be overlooked. The work may not display a full appreciation of the meaning or implication of a question. Answers might be too brief to allow sufficient development. An essay might read like a list of facts rather than a well-developed argument. It might appear to be wholly derived from the lecture material, ignoring relevant readings or references to the readings. Though imperfect, the work is, on the whole, of a quality that is acceptable in the sense that the award of the degree for this level of work is warranted.

—in other words, ACCEPTABLE or SATISFACTORY.

“D”: Work that barely qualifies for academic credit. The student has clearly learned something from the course, but the work is shoddy and shows poor or inconsistent preparation. The general impression is of an examination or essay that is inadequately prepared or understood or poorly presented. A student who performs consistently at this level should not expect to be awarded a college degree.

—in other words, POOR BUT PASSING.

“F”: Work that shows little or no preparation or comprehension. Many facts or references are missing or are misunderstood. There is little or no analysis, and the style is poor, confused or incomprehensible. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT NO WORK HAS BEEN DONE, NO CLASSES WERE ATTENDED, NO ESSAYS WERE WRITTEN OR NO LEARNING HAS TAKEN PLACE. A student can attend classes (or at least some or most of them), do the reading (perhaps inconsistently), and hand in the required work and yet receive an “F” if the product does not reflect some minimal command of the materials of the course.

—in a word, UNACCEPTABLE.

Guidelines for writing papers

1. Papers should be double spaced, with 1” margins at the top and bottom and 1 ¼” margins on each side. Use 12 point, Times New Roman font or equivalent.
2. *Always* number your pages.
3. Check spelling, punctuation and capitalization. These should be *perfect*.
4. Correctly cite your sources, even if you paraphrase an author. You may use footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations.

Example: “A wise prince, therefore, has avoided these arms and turned to his own” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 86).

Example: Machiavelli wrote that wise princes rely on their own resources rather than relying on the arms of other men (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 86).

General reminders on style:

5. Vague and unclear writing is the product of vague and unclear thinking. If you are having a difficult time conveying an idea, it is because you are unclear about that idea.
6. Read your essay aloud several times before you submit it. If it sounds awkward or unclear, rewrite your essay until it becomes clear. Remember, the reader does not know what you are trying to say, only what you *are* saying.
7. Organize your ideas in paragraphs; avoid huge leaps from one idea to another between paragraphs. Each paragraph should have some thematic relation to the preceding and following paragraphs.
8. Eliminate wordiness, flowery language, and overly complex or run-on sentences.
9. Avoid pusillanimous phrases such as “I believe,” “I think,” or “In my opinion.”
10. Always strive for clarity. Try to avoid vague words such as “thing,” “stuff,” “this,” and “that.”
Bad: The main thing that Churchill disliked was this.
Good: Churchill most disliked inactivity.
11. When quoting another author, make sure the reader knows who is speaking. Never simply drop a quote into your paper.
Bad: “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”
Okay: As James Madison wrote, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”
Better: “If men were angels,” James Madison wrote, “no government would be necessary.”
12. Never introduce a new paragraph with a conjunction; never introduce a sentence with “however” or “therefore.”
Unacceptable: However, the evidence suggests that he is wrong.
Acceptable: The evidence, however, suggests that he is wrong.
13. If you quote another author, and the quote is more than four lines in length, use a block quote: single space, full justify, and indent the text an additional ½ inch on each side. For example:
In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions (Madison, 232).
14. For further advice, consult William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*. It has gone through many editions, is short, inexpensive, lively and invaluable.

Common grammatical mistakes:

15. *Never* write in sentence fragments.
 - ALL sentences must have a subject and a verb:
 - Fragment: The extreme hostility toward those against the measure.
 - Prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses can not stand alone without a main clause:
 - Fragment: Although he could not go to class.
16. Make sure nouns and verbs agree in number and tense:
 - Incorrect: He had went to class early.
 - Incorrect: Cindy, along with most of her friends, believe that it was unfair.
17. Never use “he or she” or “they” to indicate a single person; use “he.”
 - Incorrect: If a person (singular) decides to write, they (plural) should write well.
18. Avoid comma faults.
 - Incorrect: She was able, to understand the economy.
19. In a series of three or more terms, use a comma after each (except the last).
 - Correct: red, white, and blue
 - Correct: He baked the cake, iced it, and ate it after supper.
20. Enclose parenthetical expressions between commas.
 - Incorrect: The executive, as Hamilton envisioned should hold a very long term of office.
 - Correct: The executive, as Hamilton envisioned, should hold a very long term of office.
21. Use “that” and “which” correctly. “Which” introduces a subordinate clause and must follow a comma.
 - Incorrect: He sat on the chair which was empty.
 - Correct: He sat on the chair that was empty.
 - Correct: He sat on the chair, which was not being used by anyone.
22. Whenever possible, use active verbs.
 - Passive: The problem was understood by him.
 - Active: He understood the problem.
23. Avoid contractions, such as don’t, can’t, wouldn’t, doesn’t, she’s
24. Use “being” correctly; it is not a substitute for “as,” “since,” or “because.”
 - Incorrect: Although he did not win, Tom accepted the praise, being that he had raced well.
 - Correct: Although he did not win, Tom accepted the praise, as he had raced well.
25. Use apostrophes correctly.
 - Incorrect: Sharons car is red.
 - Incorrect: I solved three problem’s.
26. The possessive of “it” does not use an apostrophe; “It’s” means “it is.”
 - Incorrect: It’s paw was stuck in the rocks.
 - Correct: Its paw was stuck in the rocks.
27. Beware of homonyms (words that sound the same but have different meanings).
 - Incorrect: Their were two problems to be red.
 - Incorrect: There car was read.
 - Incorrect: He lead the others in the fight.
 - Incorrect: The society excepted him as a new member.
28. Do not confuse “than” and “then.” “Than” indicates comparison; “then” indicates time.
 - Incorrect: If he does, than I will go with him.
 - Incorrect: His wisdom is greater then mine.
29. Keep related words together.
 - Incorrect: He noticed a large stain on the rug that was right in the center.
 - Correct: He noticed a large stain right in the center of the rug.
30. Use “second, third,” etc., rather than “secondly, thirdly,” etc.