

POLSC 370B / HIST 352: The American Founding
MW 3:00-4:15 PM

Fall 2010
Christopher C. Burkett

COURSE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this course is to better understand the American political mind as it was during the Founding Era. Through an examination of writings and documents from that time, we will consider the foundational ideas – namely, nature, history/tradition and religion – that influenced and animated American political life during the Founding Era and into the early nineteenth century.

Contrary to the claims of some recent scholars, the American Founding did not simply represent an extension of British political and social customs. The American Founding was strongly influenced by a backward-looking appeal to political traditions (Classical Republicanism, for example) and a forward-looking religious identity (for example that America was the land of God's chosen people). The American Founding, however, was unique among all previous foundings because it represented a conscious act of "reflection and choice," to borrow a phrase from Hamilton, as Americans turned to a particular understanding of "nature" as both the justification for their independence and the standard for justice in their political order. The American way of life – or the regime, as it used to be called – was understood to be compatible with political and moral laws derived from what was knowable about the nature of human life, and particularly about human nature. The "turn toward nature" affected not only political institutions, but nearly every aspect of what Jefferson called "the American mind," including education, religious liberty, the family, and political rights.

This foundation on "nature" provided Americans with a coherent framework for their political way of life. Without a proper understanding of this framework, it is difficult to comprehend how Founding Era Americans could possibly justify what seem to be blatant contradictions in the eyes of contemporary Americans. How, for example, could a regime founded on the idea of natural equality allow for the development of actual inequality? How could men and women be considered equal when they did not enjoy the same political privileges? How was it that not all men could vote in a political system that claimed to be based on the principle of consent? It is with an eye to answering these and other questions that we will engage in our pursuit to understand the nature of "the American mind" during the Founding Era.

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

Mobile Phone: (419) 908-5967 (emergencies only please)

Email: ccburkett@ashland.edu

Office Hours: TTh 9:30-10:30 and Wednesday 1:00-2:30 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.

Contents of this syllabus are subject to change.

GENERAL POLICIES:

- **PLAGIARISM:** *ANY WILLFUL PLAGIARISM ON PAPERS OR CHEATING ON 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/.
- **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 30% of the final grade):

This portion of the grade includes class preparation, quality participation, memory of assigned readings, and attendance. The preparation portion of the grade may also be influenced by reading quizzes, which may be given on occasion without prior notice. **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DO THE READINGS BEFORE CLASS.** Discussion is highly encouraged in this course. 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 35% 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.

Option #2: Choose a topic from the list provided by the professor and write a 9-12 page scholarly paper, to be submitted on the date assigned by the professor. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that you have grasped the importance and complexity of the question or topic. You should be as concise and specific as possible in your essays, presenting a reasoned argument in support of or against a particular aspect of the American Founding. Every paper should begin with a paragraph laying out your thesis, and in the body of the paper you should present evidence that supports your thesis. This is not an opportunity for you to simply give your own opinions; rather, you should make observations and reasoned arguments, and support them with evidence from the readings assigned for the course. You may also use outside sources, but the emphasis should be placed on the primary source documents assigned for class. **Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source, and you should avoid using it for 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. Exam (roughly 35% of the final grade):

The exam 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 exam is your opportunity to demonstrate that you have been participating intellectually in and out of class and thinking seriously about the topics we have discussed. The exam date is due at the end of the semester.

See also “The Meaning of Grades” at the end of this syllabus

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Hyneman, Charles S. and Donald S. Lutz, ed. *American Political Writing during the Founding Era, 1760-1805*, 2 volumes (Liberty Fund, 1983, ISBN 0865970416 or 978-0865970410)
- Reading Packet, which will be distributed by the professor the first day of class.

READING PLAN:**WEEK 1: Introduction: nature, history and religion in the American Founding**

- M (8/23):** Declaration of Independence, 1776 (packet)
 Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, 8 May 1825 (packet)
 Thomas Jefferson to Roger Weightman, 24 June 1826 (packet)
- W (8/25):** Edmund Burke, Speech on Conciliation, 1775 (packet)
 Calvin Coolidge, Speech on the Declaration of Independence, 1926 (packet)
The Federalist No. 2 (packet)
 David Ramsay, History of the American Revolution, in *American Political Writing (APW)*, volume II, pp. 720 (beginning) to 731 (end of 2nd paragraph)

WEEK 2: Historical foundations: ancient findings and classical republicanism

- M (8/30):** Theophilus Parsons, "The Essex Result," 1778, *APW* vol. I, pp. 484 (2nd full par.) to 489 (end of 1st full paragraph); pp. 520 (3rd full paragraph) to 522
The Federalist Nos. 1, 37, 38, and 40 (packet)
- W (9/1):** *The Federalist* Nos. 18, 63, and 70 (packet)

TOPICS FOR PAPER OPTION #1 DISTRIBUTED**WEEK 3: Historical foundations: British constitutionalism and Whig republicanism**

- M (9/6):** Thomas Jefferson, Summary View of the Rights of British America, 1774 (pkt.)
 Demophilus, "The Ancient Saxon or English Constitution, 1776, *APW* vol. I, pp. 340 to 354 (end of 1st paragraph)
- W (9/8):** John Adams, "Thoughts on Government," 1776, *APW* vol. I, pp. 402 to 405 (end of last full paragraph)
 John Adams to Hezekiah Niles, 1818 (pkt.)

WEEK 4: Historical foundations: British common law

M (9/13): TBA

W (9/15): TBA

WEEK 5: The foundational appeal to nature

M (9/20): John Bulkley, Preface to “Poetical Meditations,” 1726 (packet)
 John Adams, Notes of Debates in *Letters of Delegates to Congress* (packet)
 Richard Bland, *Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies*, 1766, *APW* vol. I, pp. 67-76 (end of 1st par.) only
 Founders’ Quotes on the Laws of Nature and Natural Rights (packet)

W (9/22): Town of Boston (Sam Adams), Rights of the Colonists, 1772 (packet)
 Massachusetts Constitution and Declaration of Rights, 1780 (packet)
 David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution*, *APW* vol. II, pp. 738 (1st full paragraph starting with “In former ages...” to 753 (end of last full par.)

WEEK 6: Religious foundations: “Laws of Nature and Nature’s God”

M (9/27): Phillips Payson, “A Sermon,” 1778, *APW* vol. I, pp. 534 (2nd full paragraph) to 536 (end of 2nd paragraph)
 Thomas Bradbury, “The Ass or the Serpent,” 1774, *APW* vol. I, pp. 240 to 242 (end of 4th full paragraph); pp. 250 (2nd full paragraph) to 252 (end of 6th paragraph)
 Anonymous, “Dialogue between the Devil and George III,” 1782 (packet)

W (9/29): Abraham Williams, “Election Sermon,” 1762, *APW* vol. I, pp. 5 (1st full paragraph on) to 9 (end of 1st paragraph)
 John Tucker, “Election Sermon,” 1771, *APW* vol. I, pp. 158 to 168 (end of last full par.)
 Samuel West, “On the Right to Rebel against Governors,” 1776, *APW* vol. I, pp. 410 to 416 (end of last par.); pp. 422 (1st full par.) to 428 (end of 1st par.); pp. 440 (last par., starting with “Our fathers...”) to 441 (end of 1st full par.)

WEEK 7: History, nature and religion: origins of liberty and rights

- M (10/4):** John Locke, *Second Treatise* (packet)
A Well-Wisher to Mankind, *Theory of Agency...*, 1771, *APW* vol. I, pp. 138 to 140 (end of last par.); pp. 142 to 143 (end of first par.); pp. 148 to 149 (end of last par.)
Virginia Declaration of Rights, 1776 (packet)
Founders' Quotes on Property Rights (packet)
James Madison, "Property," 1792 (packet)
- W (10/6):** George Washington to Hebrew Congregation at Newport, August 1790 (packet)
George Washington to United Baptist Churches in Virginia, 10 May 1789 (pkt.)
George Washington to Gen. Assembly of Presbyterian Churches, May 1789 (pkt)
George Washington to Roman Catholics, 15 March 1790 (packet)
George Washington to the Annual Meeting of Quakers, September 1789 (packet)

WEEK 8: Religion and liberty

- M (10/11):** George Washington, Farewell Address, 19 October 1796 (packet)
Jacob Rush, "Nature and Importance of an Oath," 1796, *APW* vol. II, pp. 1014-22 (all)
Samuel Kendal, "Religion the Only Sure Basis of Free Government, 1804, *APW* vol. II, pp. 1244 (1st full par.) to 1247 (last par.); pp. 1249 (1st par.) to 1251 (last par.); pp. 1252 (last par., starting with "We next infer...") to 1254 (end of 1st full par.); pp. 1256 (last par., starting with "The opinion of some...") to 1257 (end of 1st par.)
An Impartial Citizen, "Dissertation... Freedom of the Press," 1801, *APW* vol. II, pp. 1153 (2nd full par. starting with "There can be no standard...") to 1157 (end of 1st par.)
- W (10/13):** Worcestriensis, "Number IV," 1776, *APW* vol. I, pp. 449-54 (all)
Zabdiel Adams, "An Election Sermon," 1782, *APW* vol. I, pp. 556 to 557 (end of 1st par.)
Joseph Lathrop, "The Reformer No. III," 1786, *APW* vol. I, pp. 668-70 (all)

WEEK 9: Religion and liberty

- M (10/18):** **NO CLASS – FALL BREAK**
- W (10/20):** U.S. Constitution, First Amendment, 1791 (packet)
George Washington, Thanksgiving Proclamation, 3 October 1789 (packet)
Thomas Jefferson to Rev. Samuel Miller, 23 January 1808 (packet)
Thomas Jefferson to Danbury Baptist Association, 1 January 1802 (packet)
State Constitutions (VA, NC, PA, NY, VT, SC, MA, NH)(packet)
Joseph Story, Commentaries on the Constitution, 1833 (packet)
James Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance," 1785, *APW* vol. I, pp. 631-37 (all)
Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Statute for Religious Liberty, 1786 (packet)
Jack Nips (John Leland), "The Yankee Spy," 1794, *APW* vol. II, pp. 978 (2nd full paragraph, starting with "The illustrious patriots...") to 984 (last full par.)
Theophilus Parsons, *Barnes v. First Parish in Falmouth*, 1810 (packet)

WEEK 10: Freedom of speech; equality and inequality

- M (10/25):** An Impartial Citizen, “Dissertation... Freedom of the Press,” 1801, *APW* vol. II, pp. 1132 (2nd full par., starting with “In order to define...”) to 1136 (end of last full par.); pp. 1147 (2nd full par., starting with “The liberty of the press...”) to p. 1151 (end of last full par.)
 James Wilson, Penn. Ratifying Convention, 1787 (packet)
 PA Supreme Court, *Respublica v. Oswald*, 1788 (packet)
 PA Federal District Court, *U.S. v. Cooper*, 1800 (packet)
 New York Supreme Court, *People v. Croswell*, 1804 (packet)
 Joseph Story, *Commentaries on the Constitution*, 1833 (packet)
- W (10/27):** James Wilson, *Lectures on Law*, 1791 (packet)
 Nathaniel Chipman, “Of the Nature of Equality in Republics,” 1793 (packet)
 Samuel Williams, *Natural and Civil History of Vermont*, 1794, *APW* vol. II, pp. 954-55 (on “Equality”)

WEEK 11: Consent and representation

- M (11/1):** Alexander Hamilton, “The Farmer Refuted,” 1775 (packet)
 John Adams to John Sullivan, 26 May 1776 (packet)
 Theophilus Parsons, “The Essex Result,” 1778, *APW* I, pp. 492 (top) to 493 (end of 1st par.); pp. 496 (last par., starting with “The first important branch...”) to 499 (end of 1st par.)
 Thomas Jefferson to William Pendleton, 26 August 1776 (packet)
 Statements of three Massachusetts towns on voting rights (packet)
- W (11/3):** Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March 1776 (packet)
 John Adams to Abigail Adams, 14 April 1776 (packet)
 Abigail Adams to John Adams, 7 May 1776 (packet)
 John Adams to James Sullivan, 26 May 1776 (packet)
 Theophilus Parsons, “The Essex Result,” 1778, *APW* vol. I, pp. 496 (last par., starting with “The first important branch...”) to 497 (end of 1st par.)
 Richard Henry Lee to Hannah Corbin, 17 March 1778 (packet)

WEEK 12: Equality of the sexes in the Republic

- M (11/8):** Founders’ Quotes on Equality of the Sexes (packet)
 James Wilson, *Lectures on Law*, 1791 (packet)
- W (11/10):** Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (packet)
 Samuel Williams, *Natural and Civil History of Vermont*, 1794, *APW* vol. II, pp. 952-953 (on “Early Marriages”)

WEEK 13: Republican education and character

- M (11/15):** Samuel Williams, *Natural and Civil History of Vermont*, 1794, *APW* vol. II, pp. 951-952 (on “Education”)
 Benjamin Rush, “A Plan for the Establishment...in a Republic,” 1786, *APW* vol. I, pp. 680 (starting with “Thoughts upon the mode of education...”) to 691 (end of 1st full par.)
 Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, “Report of the Commissioners of the University of Virginia,” 1818 (packet)
- W (11/17):** John Adams to Mercy Warren, 8 January 1776 (packet)
 John Adams, “Thoughts on Government,” 1776, *APW* vol. I, pp. 407 (4th full par. starting with “Laws for liberal education...”) to 408 (end of 4th full paragraph)
 Benjamin Franklin, Information to . . . Remove to America, 1782 (packet)

WEEK 14: Republican virtue and American character

- M (11/22):** Zabdiel Adams, “An Election Sermon,” 1782, *APW* vol. I, pp. 554 (last par., starting with “Frugality...”) to 556 (end of 1st par.)
 Joseph Lathrop, “The Censor No. IV,” 1786, *APW* vol. I, pp. 663-64 (all)
 Joseph Lathrop, “The Reformer No. I,” 1786, *APW* vol. I, pp. 665-66 (all)

PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS, MONDAY, 11/22

- W (11/24): NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

WEEK 15: Republican virtue and American character

- M (11/29):** Simeon Howard, “Artillery Sermon,” 1773, *APW* vol. I, pp. 185 to 198 (end of 2nd full par.); pp. 201 (last paragraph, starting with “Men are bound...”) to 202 (end of last par.)
 Phillips Payson, “A Sermon,” 1778, *APW* vol. I, pp. 523 (beginning) to 528 (end of 2nd full par.)
- W (12/1):** George Washington, Farewell Address, 19 October 1796 (packet)

LAST DAY OF CLASS WEDNESDAY, 12/1

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.