

Emory College Voluntary Core Curriculum

POLS 150: Foundations of American Democracy

Emory University
Department of Political Science

“What else is government but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?” James Madison, Federalist 51

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Course Description

This course is part of Emory's Voluntary Core Curriculum, a group of courses designed to provide the foundation for a true education in the liberal arts. The course will provide an opportunity for students to study the foundational ideas that informed the creation of the American constitutional system, major debates and crises that have arisen in American political life, and some of the contemporary challenges in maintaining American constitutional democracy. Emphasis will be placed on close reading and discussion of classic texts and original documents on democracy and from the American political tradition. The goal of the course will be to provide students with a shared core of knowledge that will provide a strong foundation for further study of politics or law and for engaged and responsible citizenship.

Texts

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. University of Chicago Press.
- The Federalist Papers*, edited by Clinton Rossiter. Signet Classics
- All other required readings will be in the course packet.

Course Requirements

Class Participation: 10%. Attendance and contribution to class discussion. Attending office hours also contributes to your participation grade. I am looking for evidence of active and serious intellectual engagement with the course material. You are allowed two unexcused absences.

Discussion Board (Blackboard): 10%. Minimum one post per reading assignment; either starting a thread or responding to another post. Posts will not be evaluated for style or content, but it must be evident that you have read thoughtfully and reflected on the assignment. You get full credit for each post, so these should be 10 easy points. You are allowed to miss two discussion board assignments without penalty.

Two midterm examinations (25% apiece) and final examination (30%). Take-home exams, essay questions, administered online on Canvas. Exact timing will be announced in class.

Course Policies

Class Participation and Readings: Discussion of the readings is the heart of this course. Preparation and participation are therefore essential. Students will be expected to come prepared to discuss the readings in detail. I want to hear from everyone, so you may be called on!

Emory Williams Lectures: Guest speakers will come during the semester to speak on topics related to this course and other courses in the Voluntary Core Curriculum program. The schedule for lectures for this fall is listed below and on the VCC webpage. Students are required to attend all of the Emory Williams Lectures. Students who have schedule conflicts with university-related events may watch a video of a lecture online and submit a 500 word written summary. Lecture summaries must be submitted no later than the last class day (April 26).

Laptops and electronic devices: There is a strict no laptop, tablet, or cell phone policy in this class. Turn off all electronic devices and put them away before class starts.

Honor Code: All written work for this course is to be completed strictly in accordance with the Emory Honor Code. If you are unsure of what the honor code requires in regard to a particular assignment, do not hesitate to contact the instructor. For the text of the honor code see: http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/policy/honor_code.html

Emory University is committed under the Americans with Disabilities Act and its Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to providing appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide me with an accommodation notification letter from Access, Disabilities Services and Resources office. Students are expected to give two weeks-notice of the need for accommodations. If you need immediate accommodations or physical access, please arrange to meet with me as soon as your accommodations have been finalized.

COURSE OUTLINE

	I. Democracy & Liberal Education
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August 29	<p>1. Course Introduction</p> <p>II. From Political Philosophy to Political Founding</p> <p>A. Foundations in Political Philosophy, Part 1: Classical Republicanism and the Best Regime</p>
September 5	<p>1. Classical Republicanism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Xenophon, <i>Education of Cyrus</i>, Book 1, ch. 2 (b) Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>, Book 1, ch. 2; Book 3, ch. 7, 9; Book 7, ch. 4-7; Book 8, ch. 1
September 10	<p>2. The Practical Politics of Mixing Regimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>, Book 4, ch. 1-11 (b) Cicero, <i>Republic</i>, Book 1 excerpts <p>B. Foundations in Political Philosophy, Part 2: The Intellectual Revolution of Modern Republicanism</p>
September 12	<p>1. The State of Nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, ch. 2-3, 5 <p>2. The Social Contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, ch. 9-11, 19 (§§ 222-229)
<u>September 18</u>	<p><u>*Emory Williams Lecture #1: Jeffrey Tulis, University of Texas at Austin.</u> “The Anti-Federalist Appropriation of the Constitution.” Wednesday, September 12, 4:30 pm.</p> <p>C. Revolutionary Principles</p>
September 19	<p>1. Revolt from England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) John Dickinson, “Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania,” Letter VII, 1768 (b) Declaration of Independence (pp. 528-532 in <i>Federalist Papers</i>) (c) John Adams, Letter to John Penn, 1776 (d) James Madison, “Property” 1792 (e) Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Henry Lee, 1825 (f) Jefferson, Letter to Roger Weightman, 1826

September 24	<p>2. The Failure of Plan A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Excerpts from <i>The Framer's Coup</i> (b) Articles of Confederation, (pp. 533-541 in <i>Federalist Papers</i>) (c) Hamilton, Madison, Jay, <i>Federalist Papers</i>, Nos. 15 & 23 (d) John Jay, Letter to George Washington 1786 (e) John Jay, Letter to Thomas Jefferson 1786
September 26	
October 1	<p>3. The New Constitution: Federalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) U.S. Constitution, Articles I-VII (b) Federalist Papers, Nos. 10, 14 (last paragraph only, pp. 98-100), 51 <p>4. Objections of the Anti-Federalists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Brutus, "No. 1" 1787 (b) Centinel, "No. 1" 1787 (c) Herbert Storing, selection from <i>What the Anti-Federalists Were For</i> (d) Bill of Rights (Amendments 1-10)
<u>October 2</u>	<p><u>*Emory Williams Lecture #2: Pellom McDaniels, Curator of African-American Collections, Emory. "Ralph Ellison's <i>Invisible Man</i>."</u></p> <p>Wednesday, October 2, 4:30.</p>
October 3	<p>NO CLASS: TAKE-HOME MIDTERM #1</p>
	<p>III. Foundational Historical Questions of American Constitutionalism</p> <p>A. Interpreting the Constitution</p>
October 8	<p>1. Questions of Interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Federalist Papers, No. 78 (b) Selections from <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> (c) William Brennan, "The Constitution of the United States: Contemporary Ratification" (1986) (d) Antonin Scalia, "Originalism: The Lesser Evil" (1988)
October 10	<p>2. The Court Decides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> (2003) (b) <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> (2015)

October 15	<p>FALL BREAK</p> <p>B. Religion and the American Republic</p> <p>1. The Puritan Influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Mayflower Compact (b) John Winthrop, "On Liberty" (1639) (c) Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i>, pp. 27-44, 417-424, Letter to Kergorlay <p>2. Religious Pluralism & Revolutionary Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, Q.17 (b) Jefferson, "Letter to Danbury Baptist's Association" (c) George Washington, "Letter to Touro Synagogue" (d) Washington, "Letter to Quakers" (e) Washington, "Thanksgiving Day Proclamation" (f) Patrick Henry, "A Bill Establishing a Provision for Teachers of the Christian Religion" (g) James Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments" <p><u>October 23</u> <u>*Emory Williams Lecture #3: William Ransom, Professor of Piano, Emory.</u> "Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata." Wednesday, October 23, 4:30.</p> <p>C. Slavery & Civil Rights</p> <p>1. Slavery at the Founding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) John Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i>, ch. 4 (turn back in course packet) (b) Benjamin Franklin, "An Address to the Public from the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery" (c) Alexander Hamilton, "Letter to John Jay" (e) Herbert Storing, "Slavery and the Moral Foundations of the American Republic" (selection) (f) Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to John Holmes," 1820 (g) John C. Calhoun, Speech on the Oregon Bill 1848 (h) Alexander Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech" 1861 <p>2. Lincoln-Douglas Debates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Abraham Lincoln, "Speech on the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise," 1854
October 24	
October 29	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (b) Lincoln, Selections from first, fifth, sixth, and seventh of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, 1858 (c) Stephen Douglas, Selections from the Lincoln-Douglas debates, 1858 (d) Lincoln, "Speech at Chicago" 1858
November 5	<p>3. Lincoln's Oratory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Abraham Lincoln, "Lyceum Address" (b) Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" (c) Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address"
<u>November 6</u>	<p><u>*Emory Williams Lecture #4: David Guidot, MD, Emory School of Medicine.</u> "Gray's Anatomy." Wednesday, November 6, 4:30.</p>
November 7	<p>4. Frederick Douglass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Frederick Douglass, "Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln" (b) William Lloyd Garrison, "On the Constitution and the Union" 1832 (c) Slavery provisions in the U.S. Constitution: Art. 1 Sec. 2, Clause 3; Art. 1, Sec. 9, Clause 1; Art. 4, Sec. 2, Clause 3(c) (d) Frederick Douglass, "The Constitution of the U.S.: Is It Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery?" 1860
November 12	<p>5. Debating the Path Forward: Washington v. DuBois</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Exposition Address" (b) Booker T. Washington, "Industrial Education for the Negro" (c) W.E.B. DuBois, Selections from <i>Souls of Black Folk</i>
November 14	<p>6. King's Liberalism v. Malcolm X's Nationalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream Speech" (b) Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (c) Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"
November 19	NO CLASS: TAKE-HOME MIDTERM #2
<u>November 20</u>	<p><u>*Emory Williams Lecture #5: Geraldine Higgins, Department of English, Emory.</u> "W. B. Yeats." Wednesday, November 20, 4:30.</p>
	IV. Tocqueville's <i>Democracy in America</i>

November 21	A. Democratic Social Condition and Its Power <i>Democracy in America</i> , pp. 3-15, 187-192, 220-235, 238-245
Nov. 26-28	NO CLASS
December 3	B. The Problem of Individualism <i>Democracy in America</i> , pp. 403-410, 482-484, 485-492, 500-503
December 5	C. Material well-being, Religion, and the Prospect of a New Aristocracy <i>Democracy in America</i> , pp. 506-521, 530-532
December 10	D. Soft Despotism <i>Democracy in America</i> , pp. 640-650, 661-676
TBD	TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM