PSC 371: American Political Thought (Speaking Intensive)  
Spring 2013  
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
Curry 244  

Instructor: Professor Carisa R. Showden  
Office: 323 Curry Building  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30 – 1:00 p.m.,  
    Thursdays 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.,  
    and by appointment  
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Catalog Description: This course examines major themes in American political thought from the colonial era to the contemporary period. We will investigate the tensions between the ideals of freedom and equality, the role of religion in political life, ideological and identity-based challenges to problems of exclusion, the ideal of individualism, and the question of what it means to be an “American.”  

Student Learning Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:  
1. orally explain summaries of and reflections on one’s reading and research;  
2. differentiate main ideas from secondary ideas in theoretical arguments;  
3. analyze theoretical writings for author biases and proposed political actions;  
4. describe the main features and themes in American political thought as it has developed from the colonial period to the present;  
5. explain how the tension between freedom and equality has evolved from the founding period to the present.  

Speaking Intensive Course: This course is designated to meet one of your University-required “speaking intensive” learning opportunities. As such, you will be required to participate frequently in class discussion and many of your graded assignments incorporate oral presentation as central elements of the tasks. Oral communication is a fundamental component of—and not just a method of delivering—what you are learning this semester. To facilitate the development of your oral communication skills in a variety of contexts, we will dedicate some class time to the fundamentals of oral communication in addition to the substance of American political thought as a body of knowledge. Your final course grade will rest on how well you develop your speaking skills in addition to your mastery of political theory.  

Required Texts:  
2. E-reserve & Blackboard readings: in lieu of a course pack, we will use e-reserves, which are marked “e-reserves” in the schedule of readings, and other supplemental readings, marked “BB.” You can access both sets of readings through the course Blackboard page.
Schedule of Readings:

The Religious and Secular Roots of American Political Thought

Tues., Jan. 15th: Course Introduction: What is American Political Thought?

Thurs., Jan 17th: Colonial Thought—Religious Roots of APT
2. John Winthrop: “The Little Speech” (Dolbeare, pp. 15-18)
5. Cotton Mather: “Bonifacius” (BB)

Tues., Jan. 22nd: Colonial Thought—From Religious to Secular Roots of APT
1. Roger Williams: “The Bloody Tenet of Persecution” (Dolbeare, pp. 19-22)
3. William Penn: Preface to the First Frame of Government for Pennsylvania (BB)

1. Benjamin Franklin: 2 excerpts in (Dolbeare, pp. 28-36).
2. Speaking Center Handouts (all BB):
   a. “Public Speaking Tips”
   b. “Question and Answer Tips”
   c. “Strategies for Managing Speaking Anxiety”
   d. “Guidelines for Effective Presentations”
3. “Annotated Bibliographies” & “Critically Analyzing Information Sources” (BB)

Revolutionary America: The Constitutional Era

Tues. Jan. 29th: Revolutionary Ideas
2. Thomas Paine: “Common Sense” (Dolbeare, pp. 49-55) RS
4. John Adams: “Thoughts on Government” (Dolbeare, pp. 67-72) RS
5. “The Declaration of Independence” (Dolbeare, pp. 58-61)

Thurs., Jan. 31st: Federalism and Constitutionalism
1. The Articles of Confederation (Dolbeare, pp. 61-67)
2. The Constitution (Dolbeare, pp. 78-88)
3. J. Madison, “Federalist Essays” (Dolbeare, pp. 91-108) RS

Tues., Feb. 5th: Arguing the Principles of the Union (Class Kick-Off 1)
1. A. Hamilton: “Federalist Essays” (Dolbeare, pp. 109-123)
2. “Against Adoption of the Constitution” (Dolbeare, pp. 124-137)
Democracy, Individualism, and Development

Thurs., Feb. 7th: The Frontier
1. Alexis de Tocqueville: “A Fortnight in the Wilderness” (BB) RS

Tues., Feb. 12th: The Frontier (Class Kick-Off 2)
2. Chief Joseph: “An Indian’s View of Indian Affairs” (e-reserve)

Thurs., Feb. 14th: Equality and Political Culture
1. Alexis de Tocqueville: “Democracy in America” (e-reserve) RS

Tues., Feb. 19th: Equality, Liberty, and Critiques of Liberalism
1. Henry David Thoreau: “Civil Disobedience” (Dolbeare, pp. 221-231)
2. Orestes Brownson: “The Laboring Classes” (Dolbeare, pp. 207-214)
3. George Fitzhugh: “Cannibals All!” (Dolbeare, pp. 255-262)

Thurs., Feb. 21st: Slavery, Abolitionism, and War (Class Kick-Off 3)
2. Elizabeth Cady Stanton: 2 excerpts (Dolbeare, pp. 231-236)
3. Frederick Douglass: 2 excerpts (Dolbeare, pp. 236-242)
4. Abraham Lincoln: 5 excerpts (Dolbeare, pp. 263-277)

Recommended:
Civil War Amendments & Failure of the 16th Amendment (Dolbeare, pp. 291-301)

Tues., Feb. 26th: MIDTERM EXAM

Industrialization and Reaction

Thurs., Feb. 28th: Liberty and Individualism: Social Darwinism
1. Sumner: “What the Social Classes Owe to Each Other” (Dolbeare, pp. 301-315)
2. Andrew Carnegie: “Wealth” (Dolbeare, pp. 327-334)

Tues., March 1st: The Socialist Moment in America (Class Kick-Off 4)
2. Eugene V. Debs: 2 excerpts (Dolbeare, pp. 400-415)

Thurs., March 7th: Double-Consciousness
2. E. Goldman: “The Tragedy of Women’s Emancipation” (Dolbeare, pp. 395-399) RS
3. Jane Addams: “If Men Were Seeking the Franchise” (e-reserve)

Recommended:
W. E. B. DuBois: “The Talented Tenth” (e-reserve)
Tues., March 12th - Thurs., March 14th: NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK.

Tues., March 19th: Progressivism and Pragmatism (Class Kick-off 5)
2. The Progressive Party Platform & Amendments (Dolbeare, pp. 426-431)

Thurs., March 21st: Progressivism and Pragmatism, continued
2. F. D. Roosevelt: “The Commonwealth Club Address” (Dolbeare, pp. 452-460) RS
3. Thorstein Veblen: “The Theory of the Leisure Class” (e-reserve)

The Cold War, The Culture War, and the On-going Contest Over the Meaning of American Liberalism

Tues., March 26th: The Cold War and the American Dream (Class Kick-Off 6)
1. Russell Kirk: “The Conservative Mind” (e-reserve)
2. Frank S. Meyer: “A Rebel Finds His Tradition” (e-reserve)

Thurs., March 28th: NO CLASS MEETING. (WPSA Annual Conference)

Tues., April 2nd: Civil Rights and The American Dream
1. Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (Dolbeare, pp. 481-487)
2. Malcolm X: “The Ballot or the Bullet” (e-reserve)
4. bell hooks: “Feminist Theory from Margin to Center” (e-reserve) RS

Thurs., April 4th: The New Left, the Culture War, and the American Dream (Class Kick-Off 7)
1. SDS: “The Port Huron Statement” (Dolbeare, pp. 488-497)
2. Aldo Leopold: “Sand County Almanac” (Dolbeare, pp. 516-526)

Tues., April 9th: Neo-conservatism, the Culture War and The American Dream
1. Christopher Lasch, 2 excerpts (Dolbeare, pp. 528-533)
2. Ronald Reagan: “First Inaugural Address” (Dolbeare, pp. 541-544)
3. Irving Kristol: “Capitalism, Socialism, and Nihilism” (e-reserve) RS
4. Dan Himmelfarb: “Conservative Splits” (e-reserve) RS

Thurs., April 11th: WORKSHOP FINAL PROJECTS (In-Class Presentations; Mandatory)

Tues., April 16th: Crafting a National Identity: What Does It Mean to Be An American?
1. Michael Walzer: “What Does It Mean to Be An American?” (e-reserve)
2. “Questions for Conducting Interviews” (BB)
3. “Tips for Listening to Others” (BB)

Thurs., April 18th: What Is “American Political Thought?”
Student Interviews (In-Class; Mandatory)
Tues., April 23rd: Liberty and Obligation: What Does It Mean to Be An American? 
   Michael Sandel: “The Public Philosophy of Contemporary Liberalism” (e-reserve) RS

Thurs., April 25th: What Is American Political Thought? 
   Read: Michael Walzer: “The Company of Critics” (e-reserve) 
   Present: Reports on Student Interviews. (Student Interview Papers Due)

Thursday, May 2nd: Final Projects Due no later than 3:00 p.m. (final exam period is Noon-3:00)

Evaluation, Grading, and Rules of the Road:

Midterm Exam: 15% 
Final Project: 20% 
Student Interview Paper: 10% 
Class Kick-Off Presentation: 15% 
Annotated Bibliography for Class Kick-Off: 13% 
Reading Summaries: 12% 
Participation: 15%

Midterm Exam (10%):
   The midterm will be short essay format and will be held in class on Tuesday, Feb. 26th. You will need to bring one blue book to the midterm exam.

Final Project (20%):
   In lieu of an in-class exam, you will do a final project that requires you to make an argument for how you understand the development of key ideas in American political thought. You will workshop your final project drafts in class on Thursday, April 11th. The final version of your project will be due by the end of our University-scheduled final exam period. See Blackboard for a detailed assignment prompt.

Student Interview Paper (10%):
   Near the end of the semester, students will be paired up to interview each other on what they have learned about American political thought through this course. Each student will write a three-page (single-spaced) paper that summarizes his or her interviewee’s responses as well as reflections on the interview process. See Blackboard for a more detailed assignment prompt. 
   Note well: all students must be present on Thursday, April 18th to conduct their interviews. This assignment cannot be made up outside of class.

Class Kick-Off Presentation (15%):
   This is your research project for the semester. Each of you will be assigned one class period in which you, along with 2-3 peers, will “kick-off” the day’s discussion with a multi-media research presentation explaining the historical context for our readings. Such context can include biographical information about our authors, information on the time period, key events of the period, social movements, etc. Your presentation will take 30-35 minutes of the class period. Dates for class-kick
offs are on the syllabus and will not be changed. You will be given the opportunity to indicate your topic/date preference early in the term. See Blackboard for a more detailed assignment prompt.

Annotated Bibliography for Class Kick-Off (13%):
You will document your research for your class kick-off in a critical/evaluative annotated bibliography. (This will be defined and explained in class on Thursday, Jan. 24th.) While your class presentation is an integrated group effort, you will turn in your own bibliography and will receive an individual grade on it. See Blackboard for a more detailed assignment prompt.

Reading Summaries (12%):
To facilitate both comprehension of the reading material and engaged class participation, you will write six reading summary and response papers. These are short, single-spaced papers (approximately 300-350 words—no more than one page!) that summarize the main idea(s) of the reading, pull out key quotes, and offer your thoughts about how the reading fits with other concepts we’ve encountered or excerpts we’ve read this semester. You should also record questions you still have, either about passages you don’t understand or things you want to discuss in greater detail in class.

Because these papers serve as the basis of our class discussion, reading summaries are due in class on the day we discuss the reading. Late summaries will not be accepted, and summaries must be typed. Readings for which you can write summaries are marked in the syllabus as “RS.” On days with multiple readings marked “RS,” you should only summarize ONE of the readings.

There are more than six reading summary options, so you have some flexibility, but do at least three before spring break. For clarity’s sake, I have also posted to blackboard a chart listing the days and readings that are reading summary writing options.

Participation (15%):
As this is a speaking-intensive course, in-class participation is an essential element of your course grade as it provides you with a consistent, and fairly informal, means through which to work on your small-group communication skills. All students are expected to read the assigned material before coming to class and come prepared to offer reflections on and/or questions about the day’s material. The reading summaries will often provide the basis of your participation, but you are expected to help keep the class conversation moving along even when you have not written a paper or prepared a kick-off.

Grading Scale:
I use a standard “ten-point” grading system. For example:
93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B, etc.

In assigning grades, I follow the University’s Undergraduate Bulletin “Grading System for Undergraduates”:

A Excellent—indicates achievement of distinction and excellence in several if not all of the following aspects: 1) completeness and accuracy of knowledge; 2) intelligent use of knowledge; 3) independence of work; 4) originality.

B Good—indicates general achievement superior to the acceptable standard defined as C. It involves excellence in some aspects of the work, as indicated in the definition of A.
C  Average—indicates the acceptable standard for graduation from UNCG. It involves such quality and quantity of work as may fairly be expected of a student of normal ability who gives to the course a reasonable amount of time, effort, and attention.

Such acceptable standards should include the following factors: 1) familiarity with the content of the course; 2) familiarity with the methods of study of the course; 3) full participation in the work of the class; 4) ability to write about the subject in intelligible English.

D  Lowest Passing Grade—indicates work that falls below the acceptable standards defined as C but which is of sufficient quality and quantity to be counted in the hours of graduation if balanced by superior work in other courses.

F  Failure—indicates failure that may not be made up except by repeating the course.


Academic Integrity Policy:
I expect all students in this course to abide by both the letter and spirit of the university’s academic integrity policy. Violations of the university honor code will be prosecuted. The full text of the Academic Integrity Policy can be viewed at: http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/. Pay particular attention to the policies regarding plagiarism and cheating.
Please sign/pledge all of your written work in this course.

An Electronics-Free Classroom:
This is an electronics-free classroom. You may not use computers, cell-phones, iPads, iPod Touches, Blackberries, or any other battery powered, power corded, or solar powered equipment in class. You should always bring the readings, your (paper) notebook, and pens/pencils. You should not bring other note-taking (or sending) devices. Please silence your phones before coming to class. If you have an emergency situation where you must have your phone available, please let me know before class begins.

Inclement Weather Policy:
Snow seems to be the “new normal” during Central North Carolina winters, but snow removal has not yet caught up. If class is cancelled due to exciting “weather events,” please check email and Blackboard for updates to the reading assignments and notes about alternate assignments.

Americans with Disabilities Policy Statement:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with differing abilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you require an accommodation, please talk with me contact the office of Disability Services: 334-5440.

Please Note: This syllabus is subject to revision. Revisions will be announced in class, and posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for being aware of them. If you miss class, you should check Blackboard to see if any assignments or syllabus changes have been posted.