

AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT
PSC 342
SPRING 2008

Dr. Jeneen Hobby
MW 6 to 7:50 pm
CB 247
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The following books are required:

Michael Kammen, ed., *The Origins of the American Constitution*
Abraham Lincoln, *Selected Speeches and Writings*
Jean Bethke Elshtain, ed., *The Jane Addams Reader*
John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*
Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*

Excerpts from John Winthrop, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Randolph Bourne will be handed out in class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A course on American Political Thought must in some way address the question, “What is America?” This is so because this nation is as much a reality—in terms of a development of political institutions and social and economic relations—as it is an idea. The authors we will read in this class address this question either directly or indirectly, as they struggle to define what it is about this country that is unique, of what or whom it is composed, what poses a threat to its existence, and where its future lies. From the outset, America was seen as an experiment both by those who were engaged in founding it, and by those who watched from afar.

We begin by reading the Puritan John Winthrop, who, with his description of America as a “City upon a Hill” for all the world to see and judge, set out the idea of American exceptionalism, that America was *different* from all other places in the world. We will read writers arguing both for and against the establishment of the Constitution—the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Ralph Waldo Emerson gives us a chance to see how the individual can flourish in a society that is becoming mass oriented, how liberty of conscience and freedom of thought are necessary to the health of the nation. Abraham Lincoln speaks to the issue of slavery, the inheritance and institution that brings the country to the crisis of war. Lincoln tries to hold the nation together despite it, and in the process, redefine a new set of values.

Our 20th Century writers are Randolph Bourne, Jane Addams, and John Lewis. Randolph Bourne, writing at the time of World War I, asks to what extent war is “the health of the nation,” how American society can be represented in its political institutions, and what fate intellectual life in America might have. Jane Addams, leader of the settlement movement in Chicago at the turn of the century, discusses social and political life in America’s cities, how newly-arrived immigrants can find a home in those cities, and how issues such as women’s rights and peace figure on the American stage. John Lewis, a leader of the civil rights movement of the Sixties, and currently U.S. Representative from Atlanta, Georgia, questions in both thought and action the legitimacy of the state that denies democratic freedoms on the basis of race, and describes what he feels the civil rights movement contributes to the present and future of America.

From the 21st century, we read a novel by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*. Lahiri traces the life of an Indian-American boy through his upbringings in Boston, to college, and on to life in New York City as a young man. Through the novel, we can ask questions about what it means to be an “American” in today’s world, when the politics of identity is upon us.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

One of the most important requirements is that you attend class prepared to discuss the reading. Always bring the book or article under consideration to class. Formal requirements consist of 4 papers and class participation. Paper topics will be passed out in class, and will be due one week later. The instructor will then give students feedback on their papers, and students will then take one more week to write a final draft. Students will have a choice of paper topics on which to write.

Papers will be 4–6 pages in length, and will consist of your interpretation of the material in responding to the question chosen. They are not research papers. You should be able to write the papers based upon your own interpretation of the material, the class lectures, and what you’ve learned from your peers in class discussion. Papers less than a week late will be penalized three points. Papers one week late will not be accepted.

PSC 342 is a writing across the curriculum (WAC) course. Therefore, revision of the papers will take place. Students will receive feedback from the professor based not only upon grammar, spelling, and style, but upon the student’s ability to focus his or her paper and develop that focus. In a political theory course, a student should choose a thesis for his or her paper that reflects a questioning attitude: it is not simply a matter of summarizing the course material in a paper, but of confronting difficult issues that are not easily resolved. The Writing Center in room 105 of the main library offers a wealth of services and materials to help you focus and improve your writing. The style manual to be followed is the fifth edition of the American Psychological Association (APA). Copies of the APA style manual are available for consultation in the Writing Center.

The final version of each paper will be worth 20 points, according to the following scale:

18–20 A	12–13 D
16–17 B	11 and below F
14–15 C	

Attendance and participation: Attendance at all classes, lectures, and discussions, is **REQUIRED**. Active participation in the forms of listening, discussing, asking questions, respectfully challenging others, and submitting your own ideas to scrutiny by others is a central ingredient of this course. Discussion topics and questions will often be passed out in class prior to the meeting of the next class, so that students will have the aid of a guideline in orienting their readings. They should not restrict themselves to the discussion questions, however. Any unexcused absences over two during the course will count against the student's participation grade. The class participation grade is worth 20 points. There will be occasional in-class writing assignments, which count toward the participation grade, and which cannot be made up.

Timeliness: Class will begin promptly, and students are expected to arrive on time and to stay for the duration of the class. Persistent tardiness will result in a reduced participation grade and confrontation by the instructor. All cell phones, pagers, laptops, and any other electronic devices must be turned OFF prior to entering the classroom.

University policies on attendance, honesty, physical abuse, appropriate conduct, sexual harassment, and irresponsible student behavior will be followed. You should be familiar with these policies. None of these inappropriate behaviors or infringements will be tolerated. Any student with a documented disability who needs to arrange accommodations must contact both the instructor and the office of disability services at the beginning of the term.

Teaching methods: This course combines lectures with class discussion, along with other interactive learning methods. Learning is understood to require a collaborative effort among students and the instructor involving a sharing of responsibility and accountability. Students, who will produce knowledge as well as consume it, will be expected to participate in the identification of issues, in the posing of questions, in the exploration of potential answers, and in the sharing of individual and group knowledge with others in the classroom.

Calculation of Grades: Therefore, there are a total of 100 points comprising the final grade. (4 papers at 20 points, and class participation for 20 points).

Grades will be calculated as follows:

A	95–100
A-	90–94
B+	86–89
B	83–85
B-	80–82
C+	75–79
C	70–74
D	60–69
F	below 60

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

January 14

Introduction

January 16

John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” and “Little Speech on Liberty”, handouts

WEEK TWO

January 21

NO CLASS—MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

January 23

Kammen, pages 3-8 (Document 1), 10-18 (Document 3), 22-25 (Document 5), 30-33 (Document 7), 38-50 (Document 10).

WEEK THREE

January 28

Kammen, pages 55-56 (Document 14), 65-76 (Document 22), 81-84 (Document 28), 84 (Document 29), 90-93 (Document 34), 101-103 (Document 42), 126-130 (*Federalist* 1, Document 60), 130-134 (*Federalist* 2, Document 61), 134-140 (*Federalist* 6, Document 62).

January 30

Kammen, 145-152 (*Federalist* 10, Document 64), 169-173 (*Federalist* 23, Document 68), 198-202 (*Federalist* 49, Document 73), 202-206 (*Federalist* 51, Document 74).

WEEK FOUR

February 4

Kammen, Anti-Federalists: pp. 258-261 (Document 83), 261-278 [end at bottom of page] and 288-301 (Document 84), 301-331 (Document 85), 365-366 (Document 88), 376-378 (Document 94), 383-384 (Document 97).

February 6

Emerson, "Nature," handout.

WEEK FIVE

February 11

Emerson, "The American Scholar" and "Self-Reliance," handouts.

FIRST PAPER DUE

February 13

Emerson, "The Poet" and "Experience" handouts.

WEEK SIX

February 18

NO SCHOOL—PRESIDENTS' DAY

February 20

Emerson, "Politics" and "Woman" handouts.

WEEK SEVEN

February 25

Lincoln, pp. 13-21, 34-43, 91-99, 102-106, 117-122, 131-139.

February 27

Lincoln, 149-159, 164-175, 177-196.

WEEK EIGHT

March 3

Lincoln, 200-208, 215-216, 233-237, 284-293, 300-315.

March 5

Lincoln, pp. 338-344, 348, 368-69, 405, 411-14, 419-21, 430-31, 449-50.

WEEK NINE

March 10 & 12

NO SCHOOL---SPRING BREAK

WEEK TEN

March 17

Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America" handout

March 19

Bourne, "The State" handout.
SECOND PAPER DUE

WEEK ELEVEN

March 24

Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," pp. 14–28; "The Objective Value of a Social Settlement," pp. 29–45.

March 26

Addams, "The Thirst for Righteousness," pp. 136–46; "Survivals of Militarism in City Government," pp. 147–162; "Americanization," pp. 240–247.

WEEK TWELVE

March 31

Addams. "If Men were Seeking the Franchise," pp. 229–234. "Women's Conscience and Social Amelioration," pp. 252–263; "A Review of Bread Rations and Woman's Tradition," pp. 307–315; "Personal Reactions in Time of War," pp. 316–326; "Address of Miss Addams at Carnegie Hall," pp. 327–340;

April 2

Addams, "Pen and Book as Tests of Character," pp. 379–81; "The Play Instinct and the Arts," pp. 416–31; "Tolstoy and Ghandi," pp. 436–41.

WEEK THIRTEEN

April 7

Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, chapters 1–5.

April 9

Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, chapters 6–9.
THIRD PAPER DUE

WEEK FOURTEEN

April 14

Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, chapters 10–13.

April 16

Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, chapters 14–16, 21.

WEEK FIFTEEN

April 21

Lahiri, *The Namesake*, chapters 1–4.

April 23

Lahiri, *The Namesake*, chapters 5- 7.

WEEK SIXTEEN

April 28

Lahiri, *The Namesake*, chapters 8–12.

April 30

CONCLUSION
FINAL PAPER DUE BY WEDNESDAY, MAY 7th, at 10
am in the Political Science Department, Rhodes Tower
1744