

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

PSC 409C: American Political Thought
TuTh 7:00-8:15 p.m., WRI C237

Fall 2009
Professor Fott

Office: WRI B217; 895-4187
Office hours: TuTh 3:00-4:30 p.m., or by appointment
E-mail: dfott@unlv.nevada.edu

This course explores leading thinkers who have devoted attention to American politics. The emphasis is on understanding fundamental American political principles: liberty, equality, and government by the consent of the governed. Particular attention will be given to the matter of race.

Readings:

The following books have been ordered for purchase:

- Benjamin Franklin. *Autobiography*. Edited by J. A. Leo Lemay and P. M. Zall. Norton, 1986.
Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. Edited by Clinton Rossiter. Signet Classic, 2003.
Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. Edited and translated by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000.
Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*. Edited by William L. Andrews and William S. McFeely. Norton, 1997.
Abraham Lincoln. *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*. Edited by Roy P. Basler. Da Capo Press, 2001.
W. E. B. Du Bois. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Terri Hume Oliver. Norton, 1999.

Schedule of Readings:

- Tu Aug 25 Declaration of Independence
Th Aug 27 Franklin, pp. 1-40
Tu Sep 1 Franklin, pp. 40-76
Th Sep 3 Franklin, pp. 77-109
Tu Sep 8 Franklin, pp. 109-46, 212-28
Th Sep 10 *Federalist* #1, 6, 9, 10, 14
Tu Sep 15 *Federalist* #15, 23, 37-39, 47, 51
Th Sep 17 *Federalist* #63, 68, 70, 72, 78
Tu Sep 22 Tocqueville, pp. 3-15, 27-55; **paper #1 due**
Th Sep 24 Tocqueville, pp. 56-65, 82-98, 149-70
Tu Sep 29 Tocqueville, pp. 187-90, 217-49
Th Oct 1 Tocqueville, pp. 250-58, 264-302
Tu Oct 6 Tocqueville, pp. 379-90, 395-96, 401-10, 417-24, 426-28, 469-72
Th Oct 8 Tocqueville, pp. 477-84, 485-92, 496-509, 511-17, 526-32
Tu Oct 13 Tocqueville, pp. 533-39, 587-604, 606-17, 637-43, 661-76
Th Oct 15 **Midterm examination**
Tu Oct 20 Douglass, pp. 12-42
Th Oct 22 Douglass, pp. 42-80
Tu Oct 27 Douglass, pp. 88-127

Th Oct 29 Lincoln, pp. 76-85, 278-79, 283-325
Tu Nov 3 Lincoln, pp. 332-36, 352-66, 372-81, 385-405
Th Nov 5 Lincoln, pp. 428-69, 488-90, 493-505
Tu Nov 10 Lincoln, pp. 513-14, 517-39, 567-70, 577-90, 594-609
Th Nov 12 Lincoln, pp. 651-53, 666-88, 689-92, 734-37, 738-41, 748-50, 763-64, 792-93, 796-801
Tu Nov 17 Du Bois, pp. ix, 3-45, 167-72
Th Nov 19 To be announced
Tu Nov 24 Du Bois, pp. 46-88; **paper #2 due**
Th Nov 26 No class (Thanksgiving recess)
Tu Dec 1 Du Bois, pp. 89-134
Th Dec 3 Du Bois, pp. 134-64

Final examination: Tu Dec 8, 8:10-10:10 p.m.

Format:

Each session will combine lecture and discussion. It is imperative, therefore, that you come to class having done the assigned reading for that day. A superior method of preparation is to read the material twice: first fairly quickly in order to grasp the direction of the argument, then slowly and thoroughly, taking notes as you go. Often I will refer to page numbers in the readings, so it is important that we all have the same editions of them. A list of questions for discussion from the readings is available at <<http://faculty.unlv.edu/dfott/>> (free Adobe Reader required).

Assignments:

Written assignments include:

1. An interpretive, analytical paper of 2 pages on a topic to be assigned from the readings (paper #1), which will count for 15% of your final grade.
2. A midterm examination, which will count for 20% of your final grade.
3. An interpretive, analytical paper of 5 to 7 pages on a topic to be assigned from the readings (paper #2), which will count for 30% of your final grade.
4. A final examination, which will count for 35% of your final grade.

The papers will be due at the beginning of class on the dates specified. The examinations will consist mainly or exclusively of essay questions. You must complete all written assignments in order to pass the course. Your contribution in class may increase the grade on one of the assignments by one increment (e.g., from B to B+). Your grade may be reduced if you have more than two unexcused absences; lateness normally counts as an absence.

Extensions for submitting papers will be granted only in cases of emergency (e.g., personal illness, preferably with a note from a doctor; serious illness in one's family). The grade on a paper will be reduced by one increment for each day the paper is late without an approved extension (e.g., a paper of B+ quality will receive a B if it is one day late; a paper of B quality will receive a B-/C+ if it is two days late). No alternate arrangements for the examinations will be made except in case of illness.

Other Information:

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Any academic dishonesty will make a student liable to failure of the course. Plagiarism is one example of academic dishonesty. Students are expected to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. The academic misconduct policy for students may be reviewed at <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>.

By UNLV policy for the sake of students' privacy, faculty should send e-mail to students only via students' Rebelmail accounts. Please use that account to send me e-mail. If you use another account I will use my discretion in deciding whether to respond. For information see <http://rebelmail.unlv.edu/>.

If you use a computer to take notes in class, I reserve the right to require you to send me, by your Rebelmail account, a copy of your notes within twelve hours of that session. Failure to do so will result in a penalty of the grade.

Except with prior permission, use of any other electronic device in class is prohibited and will be considered the equivalent of an absence for that class. Unauthorized recording of the class is prohibited.

If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you should contact the Disability Resource Center for coordination of services. The center is located in the Student Services Complex, room 137. The telephone number is 895-0866 (TDD 895-0652). For more information see <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.

For UNLV policy on religious holidays see <http://catalog.unlv.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=44&bc=1>.

For information on tutoring services see <http://academicsuccess.unlv.edu/tutoring/>.