

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Political Science 409C: American Political Thought  
Spring 2007  
MW 1:00-2:15 p.m., WRI C237

Professor David Fott  
Office: WRI B217; 895-4187

Hours: MTuW 2:30-4:30 p.m., or by appointment  
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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. Mentor, 1999.  
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.

Suggested readings include chapters from Bryan-Paul Frost and Jeffrey Sikkenga, *History of American Political Thought* (available at the library on two-hour reserve), on the authors studied.

**Schedule of Readings:**

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| W Jan 17 | Introduction   |
| M Jan 22 | Declaration of Independence ( <i>The Federalist Papers</i> , pp. 528-32) |
| W Jan 24 | Franklin, pp. 1-40   |
| M Jan 29 | Franklin, pp. 40-76  |
| W Jan 31 | Franklin, pp. 77-109   |
| M Feb 5  | Franklin, pp. 109-46, 212-28   |
| W Feb 7  | <i>Federalist</i> #1, 6, 9, 10, 14                                       |
| M Feb 12 | <i>Federalist</i> #15, 23, 37-39, 47, 51                                 |
| W Feb 14 | <i>Federalist</i> #63, 68, 70, 72, 78; <b>paper #1 due</b>               |
| M Feb 19 | No class (Presidents' Day recess)  |
| W Feb 21 | Tocqueville, pp. 3-15, 27-55   |
| M Feb 26 | Tocqueville, pp. 56-65, 82-98, 149-70                                    |
| W Feb 28 | Tocqueville, pp. 187-90, 217-49  |
| M Mar 5  | Tocqueville, pp. 250-58, 264-302   |
| W Mar 7  | Tocqueville, pp. 379-90, 395-96, 401-10, 417-24, 426-28, 469-72          |
| M Mar 12 | No class (spring break)  |

W Mar 14	No class (spring break)
M Mar 19	Tocqueville, pp. 477-84, 485-92, 496-509, 511-17, 526-32
W Mar 21	Tocqueville, pp. 533-39, 587-604, 606-17, 637-43, 661-76
M Mar 26	Douglass, pp. 12-42; <b>paper #2 due</b>
W Mar 28	Douglass, pp. 42-80
M Apr 2	Douglass, pp. 88-127
W Apr 4	Lincoln, pp. 76-85, 278-79, 283-325
M Apr 9	Lincoln, pp. 332-36, 352-66, 372-81, 385-405
W Apr 11	Lincoln, pp. 428-69, 488-90, 493-505
M Apr 16	Lincoln, pp. 513-14, 517-39, 567-70, 577-90, 594-609
W Apr 18	Lincoln, pp. 651-53, 666-88, 689-92, 734-37, 738-41, 748-50, 763-64, 792-93, 796-801
M Apr 23	Du Bois, pp. ix, 3-45, 167-72; <b>paper #3 due</b>
W Apr 25	Du Bois, pp. 46-88
M Apr 30	Du Bois, pp. 89-134
W May 2	Du Bois, pp. 134-64

**Final examination: M May 7, 1:00-3:00 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.

**Assignments:**

Written assignments include:

1. An interpretive, analytical paper of 2 pages on a topic to be assigned (paper #1), which will count for 15% of your final grade.
2. Two interpretive, analytical papers concerning the assigned readings (not primarily research papers) of 5 to 7 pages each (papers #2 and 3). Topics will be assigned. Of the two papers, the one with the higher grade will count for 30% of your final grade, and the one with the lower grade 20%.
3. A final examination, which will count for 35% of your final grade. That examination will consist mainly or exclusively of essay questions.

The papers will be due at the beginning of class on the dates specified. 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.