

**PSC1011
Fall 2019**

**Introduction to Politics:
The Theory and Practice of Democracy in America**

Monday 3:30-6:00 and Wednesday 3:30-6:00 (ACAD 100);
Friday, either 9:00-10:00 (ACAD 101) or 11:00-12:00 (ACAD 100).

Professor Samuel Goldman
Email: swgoldman@gwu.edu
Office Hours/Location: W 2:30-3:30 PM in Ames café, F 3-4 PM in Monroe 476, and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Adam Lenton
Email: lenton@gwu.edu
Office Hours/Location: Pelham Commons

Course Description: What is democracy? What distinguishes democracy from other kinds of 'regime'? Is the United States a democracy? Should it be? What might have to change to make it so? In this course, we will address these questions by studying the origins and design of American institutions, debates about the authority of the Constitution, arguments about equality in regard to property, race, and sex, and the emergence of progressive and conservative interpretations of the American political tradition.

Course Goals: By the time they have completed the course, students will be able to:

- 1) perform close analysis of classic works of political thought;
- 2) contrast historically significant conceptions of values including liberty and equality;
- 3) identify key features of the Constitution and major arguments for and against them;
- 5) engage in academic writing;
- 6) practice informal public speaking on academic topics.

Schedule and Credit Hour Policy: We will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays for *Lectures*, and on Fridays for *Discussions*. Lectures will consist of two sessions of about an hour each, separated by a 15-minute break. Discussions will last for sixty minutes. In total, you will spend approximately 300 minutes per week in class.

Per accreditation standards, you should devote *at least* 100 minutes to independent study for every 50 minutes you spend in class. Thus, you should plan to spend a *minimum* of 600 minutes (ten hours) per week engaged in reading or other preparation for P&V. You are likely to spend considerably more than that in weeks when you are working on an essay.

Depending on your response to the material, I may make minor changes to the syllabus while the course is in progress (e.g., subtracting a chapter from an assigned text, adding a brief article). I will announce any such changes at least one session in advance.

Grade Breakdown:

Essay 1: 15%

Essay 2: 15%

Essay 3: 15%

Thesis: 25%

Participation: 20%

Presentation: 10%

Texts: The titles listed below are available at the Gelman and Eckles libraries, the GW bookstore, and many online vendors. It is important to acquire the editions listed below because the reading assignments refer to their pagination.

Aristotle, *The Politics and the Constitution of Athens* (Cambridge University Press)

St. Augustine, *City of God* (Penguin Classics)

Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Dover)

Charles R. Kesler, ed., *The Federalist Papers* (Signet)

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Hackett)

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (University of Chicago Press)

Charles-Louis Secondat de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (Cambridge University Press)

Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Harvard University Press)

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Library of America)

In addition to the assigned books, readings in the public domain will be available on the course website. I will also distribute hard copies at least one session in advance.

E-books are not acceptable for use in P&V. For more information, see the electronic devices policy below.

SCHEDULE

Unit 1: Athens and Jerusalem

- M 8/26 Aristotle, *Politics*, 11-49
- W 8/28 Review Aristotle, *Politics*, 11-49

After class movie: *The Magnificent Seven* (1960)
Ames B117
- F 8/30 Discuss movie
- M 9/2 NO CLASS

LABOR DAY TACO PARTY
12-2 PM, MVC QUAD
- W 9/4 Aristotle, *Politics*, 61-139

Hint: Because you have a day off, the reading for this session is longer and more demanding than usual. I strongly encourage you to make an early start.
- F 9/6 Josh Ober, "Learning from Athens"
- M 9/9 Excerpts from the Bible; St. Augustine, *City of God*, II, 2, 19-21; IV, 3-6, 15; V, 17-18, 24; XIV 1, 28; XV 1, 4, 5; XIX, 6-7, 12-15, 21, 24, XXII, 22
- W 9/11 The Mayflower Compact; John Winthrop, "Modell of Christian Charitie"; Fundamental Agreement of the Colony of New Haven; Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1-17, 31-51.
- F 9/13 *Introduction to Writing for P&V; Distribute Unit 1 essay assignment*

Unit 2: Liberty and Constitutional Government

- M 9/16 Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chs. 1-4, 8-9, 19
- W 9/18 Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 3-66, 112-121, 124-126, 154-166, 325-333, review Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1-17
- F 9/20 TBD
- M 9/23 James Otis, "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved"; Edmund Burke, "Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies"; Virginia Declaration of Rights; Preamble to the Resolution on Independent Governments, May 15, 1776; Declaration of Independence; Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825; Jefferson to Roger Weightman, June 24, 1826; Articles of Confederation

- W 9/25 Constitution, Preamble; *Federalist Papers*, No. 10, 14, 51; Brutus #1; Centinel #1; Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 62-65, 179-193, 283-291.
- Th 9/26 *Unit 1 essay due – 11:59 PM on Blackboard*
- F 9/27 Carey McWilliams, “The Anti-Federalists”
- M 9/30 Fed. 55 and 63; Benjamin Rush, excerpts from “Observations on the Government of Pennsylvania”; Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 126-135, 227-232
- W 10/2 John Adams to Jonathan Jackson, October 2, 1780; Jefferson, “First Inaugural Address”; Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 197-204; James Bryce, “The Party System”
- After Class Movie: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939)
AMES B117
- F 10/4 David R. Mayhew, “Is Congress the ‘Broken Branch’?”
- M 10/7 Northwest Ordinance (1787), excerpts from Washington, “Farewell Address”; Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 58-59, 224-230, 348-52, 483-498, 516-578
- W 10/9 Phillip Converse, “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics”
- F 10/11 Chris Hayes, “Decision Makers”; Jason Brennan, “The Right to Vote Should be Restricted to Those With Knowledge”
- M 10/14 Constitution, Art. III; Fed. 78; Brutus, “The Problem of Judicial Review”; Jackson, “Veto of the Bank Bill”; Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 111-116, 156-71, 302-311
- W 10/16 Constitution, Article V, Amendments; Jefferson, Letter to James Madison, September 6, 1789; Jefferson, Letter to Samuel Kercheval, July 12, 1816; excerpts from *Missouri v. Holland*; Thurgood Marshall, “Bicentennial Speech”; Antonin Scalia, “Constitutional Interpretation the Old Fashioned Way”
- F 10/18 Mark Tushnet, “Democracy Versus Judicial Review”
- M 10/21 NO CLASS—FALL BREAK
- W 10/23 Niccoló Machiavelli, *The Prince*
- After Class Movie—*Richard III* (1995), read an online plot summary to prepare
AMES B117
- F 10/25 Discuss movie

M 10/28 Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 14; Constitution, Article II; *Federalist*, #70; Cato #4; Old Whig #5

W 10/30 In-Class movie: *Lincoln* (2012), read Abraham Lincoln, "Habeas Corpus Proclamation", "Letter to Albert Hodges" to prepare

Distribute Unit 2 essay assignment

F 11/1 Discuss movie

Unit 3: Boundaries of Democracy

M 11/4 Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 5; Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, 1-72

W 11/6 Jefferson, *Notes Query* 19; Jefferson to Jay, 8/23/1785; Jefferson to Madison, 10/28/1785; Jefferson to Austin, 1/9/1816; Madison, "Property"; Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 617-622, 625-632, 642-652, 722-23.

Th 11/7 *Unit 2 essay due—11:59 PM on Blackboard*

F 11/8 Martin Gilens, "Under the Influence"

M 11/11 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); Fed. 54; John C. Calhoun, "Speech on the Oregon Bill"; Frederick Douglass, "The Constitution of the U.S.: Is It Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery?"; Alexander Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech"

W 11/13 Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Exposition Address"; W.E.B. DuBois, excerpts from *The Souls of Black Folk* 43-95, 121-139; Martin Luther King, "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"; Malcolm X, "The Bullet or the Ballot"

F 11/15 James Forman, "Harm's Way"; Michelle Alexander, "A System of Racial and Social Control"

M 11/18 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 331, 655-659, 685-708; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, "Declarations"; Susan B. Anthony "Constitutional Argument"

W 11/21 Betty Friedan, excerpts from *The Feminine Mystique*; NOW Statement of Purpose; excerpts from *Griswold v. Connecticut*, *Roe v. Wade*, and *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*

Distribute Unit 3 essay assignment

F 11/23 TBD

M 11/25 Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, 1-65, 132-168

Distribute Thesis Assignment

T 11/26 *Unit 3 essay due—11:59 PM on Blackboard*

W 11/27 NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING

F 11/29 NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING

Unit 4: Progress or Return?

M 12/2 Woodrow Wilson, “What is Progress?”; John Dewey, “The Future of Liberalism”; Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The Commonwealth Club Address”, State of the Union 1944; Lyndon B. Johnson, “The Great Society”

W 12/4 William F. Buckley, “Our Mission Statement”; Frank Meyer, “Freedom, Tradition, Conservatism”; Ronald Reagan, “First Inaugural Address”; Irving Kristol, “America’s ‘Exceptional’ Conservatism”

After Class Keynote Lecture TBD

F 12/6 “Debriefing”

M 12/9 Thesis Workshop
*Thesis **Draft** due in class.*

M 12/16 *Thesis due—11:59 PM on BlackBoard*

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

1) Attendance at all meetings is mandatory. You cannot succeed in P&V unless you attend class regularly and punctually (we begin and end at the scheduled times).

Yet conflicts arise even in the best-planned schedule. To deal with these conflicts, each student is allowed **one** unexcused absence per semester. You do not have to give a reason, but you must notify me **within 24 hours** of the class you missed that you want to use your “free” absence.

Your participation grade will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for every additional unexcused absence (e.g., B+ to B).

2) Absence from class may be excused in cases of illness, family emergency, religious observance, or varsity sports obligations. Extracurricular commitments such as clubs or internships are **not** grounds for absence.

I will request documentation (e.g., a doctor’s note) to support requests for an excused absence. If you miss class due to unforeseeable circumstances, it is **your responsibility** to get in touch and explain the situation **within 24 hours** of the class you missed.

On movie nights, absences will be excused in cases of conflict with other courses (e.g. evening labs). If you cannot watch the movie due to a course conflict, you are responsible for locating and viewing it on your own before that week’s discussion meeting.

3) Late work will be docked one letter grade as soon as the deadline passes, with an additional 1/3 letter grade deducted every 24 hours.

If you feel unable to complete your assignments, contact me **in advance** to discuss possible solutions. Once the deadline has passed, penalties will apply.

4) Extensions may be granted in cases of illness, family emergency, religious observance, or varsity sports obligations. I will request documentation (e.g., a doctor’s note) to confirm the reason you need an extension.

5) University Policy on Religious Holidays:

In accordance with University policy, students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. For details and policy, see:
students.gwu.edu/accommodations-religious-holidays.

PREPARATION FOR CLASS

The reading for P&V is difficult. Take time to read carefully, to struggle with unexpected formulations, and to ponder what you have read. For most students, that means reviewing most of the assignments more than once.

The good news is that keeping up with the reading doesn't mean understanding everything. Scholars have been studying these texts for decades and centuries, but still don't agree about their meaning! Prepare for lectures and discussions by making your best effort to understand the reading and taking note of terms, ideas, or arguments you're struggling with. Then we can work together to make things as clear as possible.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation is an important part (20%) of your grade. You will not earn an A just by showing up. Rather, you are expected to *participate actively*, *advance the discussion* with questions and comments, and express *constructive disagreement* when appropriate.

What does it mean to *participate actively*?

- a) To listen attentively when others speak, making notes or consulting sources as appropriate.
- b) To ask questions when you feel you do not understand what has been said or what you have read.
- c) To suggest answers to questions that others raise.
- d) To advance the discussion on a regular basis, not just once or twice in the semester.

What does it mean to *advance the discussion*?

- a) To ask the person who has spoken to elaborate or develop what was said.
- b) To rephrase what was said in your own words, and ask "Is this what you mean?"
- c) To make connections between others' comments, the reading, and your own ideas.
- d) To refer whenever possible to evidence (quotes, key terms, etc.) from assigned readings, handouts, or other sources.

Conversation often moves forward when someone objects to something that has been said (including something said by the professor!). Although disagreement is an important part of learning, many students are reluctant to object because they are afraid of seeming rude. Here are some guidelines for *constructive disagreement*:

- a) Establish the issue about which you disagree by repeating what you think has been said and asking the person who said it whether you have stated their opinion accurately. In this way, you confirm that you have a real disagreement rather than a misunderstanding.
- b) State your objection in a civil manner, focusing on the statement or idea to which you object rather than on the person who presents it.
- c) Provide textual or other evidence that supports your objection.
- d) Invite the person to whom you have objected to respond.

From time to time, students make arguments they don't necessarily accept in order to test others' ideas. This can be a useful exercise but also carries a risk of unnecessary controversy. Here are some suggestions for being an effective "devil's advocate":

- a) State explicitly that you're trying out an idea rather than expressing your considered opinion.
- b) Provide textual or other evidence that might lead a reasonable person to accept the idea under consideration.
- c) Don't let provocation substitute for other forms of participation.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of electronic devices—laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.—is not permitted during class. Although they seem helpful, studies show that these devices interfere with learning even when they are used for academic purposes. You are free to catch up on email or texts during breaks.

I will make exceptions to the electronic devices rule in documented cases of disability or other academic support issues. For more information about accommodations, see the statement below on Support for Students Outside the Classroom or consult me privately.

COMMUNICATION

E-mail will be my primary method of communication with you outside of class. Below you'll find a list of e-mail policies:

- I will send email to your official GW address.
- You are responsible for any information I send to the class or you personally. So be sure to check regularly—at least once a day.
- I will make every effort to respond to any message you send within 24 hours. That said, you should not count on an immediate answer. When you're facing a deadline, try to plan ahead!
- Do not let e-mail substitute for participation or office hours. If you have a question, try to ask it in class so everyone can benefit.

In addition to email, I hold regular office hours. You do not need an appointment—or even a specific question. Feel free to drop by to talk about P&V, other academic issues, life at GW, or anything else that you'd like to discuss. I am also usually available to chat after class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For details and complete code, see: studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

Penalties for academic dishonesty may include failure of the course.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in

the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information see: disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/

Mental Health Services

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. For additional information see: counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

SECURITY

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.