

Sul Ross State University-Rio Grande College

American Political Thought: Political Science 4302: W01

Summer 2022

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Office Hours: By Appointment

To successfully complete the requirements for this course, you must have a Sul Ross Blackboard account and be able to access documents and written assignments to this course.

Course Meeting Times: This is a web course and does not have scheduled meeting times. It is self-paced so you can work on and complete the assignments at your pace.

Course Description: This course covers such topics as:

1. The evolution of American democracy.
2. Ideas of important American writers, public figures, and intellectuals who have shaped and contributed to our political heritage.
3. Capitalism, its supporters and critics.
4. Civil Rights leaders and figures
5. American imperialism and empire-supporters and critics

Required Texts:

American Political Thought (Sixth Edition) Kenneth M. Dolbeare and Michael S. Cummings, editors. (ISBN # 978-0-87289-972-8).

Primary Learning Objectives:

At the successful conclusion of this course, through performance on short reading summaries, a paper, and a final examination, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge about the key topics and influential figures in the history of American political thought from the founding of the Republic to the present day.
2. Exercise critical thinking skills and demonstrate informed judgement in evaluating issues and answering questions relating to the topics listed above.
3. Improve upon and build sound writing skills.

Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRUS email only (Yahoo Gmail, Hotmail, etc. email will not be answered), which requires secure login information to verify student's identities and to protect

student's information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the Student Handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the Sul Ross website.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act): Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students who need accessibility services should contact Kathy Biddick at 830-279-3003. The address is 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde Texas 78801.

Course Requirements, course objectives and course grade breakdown

Short Written Assignments (50%), Reading Selections follow below. A set of question correspond to each reading assignment. You will be expected to type your answers to these questions. These do not need to be formal writing exercises, and they will not be evaluated based on writing style or elegance. The written assignments should not exceed two pages. A total of ten short writing assignments are required to receive credit for this component of the course.

Paper (25%). The paper will require you to select from one of the short writing assignment topics and to produce a fully elaborated argument concerning this topic. The paper must make use of *both* the appropriate reading selections and at least two works of peer-reviewed scholarship (e.g.. journal articles, book chapters, appropriate on-line resources, etc.) The paper is expected to be approximately 4-5 pages in length. A successful paper must observe the conventions standard to upper division level writing in analysis and citation. (APA, Chicago style or the Modern Language Association formats are all acceptable). I am happy to review rough drafts of the paper in advance of the due date. **Plagiarism will result in expulsion from the course grade and disciplinary action from the university. The paper will be graded based on a rubric. The rubric is attached to this syllabus.** I reserve the right to request modifications to papers before granting final credit for the course.

Final Examination (25%)

The final examination will consist of 100 multiple choice questions. The questions will be distributed in advance. You will be responsible for finding the answers to these questions through whatever means are available to you. You will be given two opportunities to take the test. On the first opportunity, I will indicate which questions you answered incorrectly. You will then have a second opportunity to answer the questions correctly.

Due Dates: The final day to drop this course with the grade of W. is June 24th, Friday, by 4:00 pm.

To ensure that I am able to meet the Registrar's deadline for grade submission, all written work for this course must be submitted NO LATER than 5: 00 p.m., Sunday July 3. You must complete the final examination by 5:00 p.m. Tuesday July 5.

Grading Methodology The 10 short written assignments will be evaluated on a ten-point scale (100 points total). The research paper will count as 50 points and the final examination 50 points (two points per question) on the following scale: **90-100 (A) 80-89 (B) 70-79 (C) 60-69 (D) < 60 (F).** At the end of the

course I will add up your points and your grade will be based on the following scale: **180-200 (A) 160-179 (B) 140-139 (C) 120-139 (D)<119 (F).**

Reading Selections: A Total of Ten of the fifteen short assignments are due for the course

Topic # 1: Faith in Early American Public Life

Reading: Introduction to Part 1, pages 1-10; Part I, Selections 1-3 (Jonathon Winthrop, Roger Williams, John Wise).

Short Writing Assignment: What role did religious faith play in the settlement of England's Atlantic colonies during the 1600s? What were the competing ideas concerning the role of faith in public life, or the relationship between church and state during this period?

Topic # 2: The American Revolution

Reading. Introduction to Part I, pages 6-13. Part I Selections 4-8 (Ben Franklin, Sam Adams, Benjamin Rush, Thomas Paine, the Declaration of Independence).

Short Writing Assignment. What were the most significant reasons why the American Revolutionaries called for independence?

Topic # 3: The Constitution

Reading. Introduction to Part I, pages 3-14; Selections 9-13 (The Articles of Confederation, writings from John Adams, the Constitution, "In Favor of Adoption of the Constitution," "Against Adoption of the Constitution")

Short Writing Assignment: Our first Constitution, the Articles of Confederation went into effect in 1781. In 1787, just six years later, the "founders" of our Republic felt compelled to write a *new* Constitution. Why? Be sure to explain the reasons for supporting the Constitution and the reasons for opposing the Constitution.

Topic # 4: Hamilton vs. Jefferson

Reading: Introduction to Part II, pages 184-186; Part I Selections 14-16 (Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington).

Short Writing Assignment. Describe the differences between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. What were the primary reasons for their disagreements? In the history of the early republic, whose vision won out?

Topic # 5: Civil Disobedience.

Reading: Selections 21 and 48 (Henry David Thoreau and Martin Luther King Jr.)

Short Writing Assignment. What was Henry David Thoreau's attitude towards government? What was his theory of civil disobedience? What impact did his theory have on the twentieth century civil right movement and Martin Luther King Jr. in particular?

Topic # 6: Slavery.

Reading: Introduction to Part III, pages 281-290; Selections 18, 23, 25 and 26 (William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglas, George Fitzburgh, Abraham Lincoln)).

Short Writing Assignments. What were some of the important arguments against slavery? What were some of the important arguments in favor of slavery?

Topic # 7: Capitalism and its Supporters

Reading: Introduction to Part III, pages 281-290; Selections 28, 30, 42 (William Graham Sumner, Andrew Carnegie, Frederick Taylor).

Short Writing Assignment: Very briefly, describe capitalism. Why did Andrew Carnegie, William Graham Sumner and Frederick Taylor support capitalism?

Topic # 8: Capitalism and its Critics

Reading: Introduction to Part III, pages 284-290. Introduction to Part IV, pages 366-369; Selections 29, 31, 33, 34, 38 (“Anarchism: What It Really Stands For”) and 39 (Edward Bellamy, Populism, Henry Demarest Lloyd, Ambrose Pierce, Emma Goldman, Eugene V. Debs)

Short Writing Assignment: Why were some Americans critical of capitalism? What political (or ideological) options were available to critics of American society, economy and politics around the turn of the twentieth century? Your essay should use and demonstrate some understanding of the following words: populism, socialism and anarchism.

Topic # 9: Capitalism and its Synthesizers.

Reading: Introduction to Part IV, pages 370-373; Selections 40, 41, 43, 44, 45 (Herbert Croly, Progressivism, Woodrow Wilson, John Dewey, Franklin Roosevelt)

Short Writing Assignment: How did prevailing views concerning the relationship between the national government and the American economy and society change in the early twentieth century, and particularly during the New Deal starting in 1933? How did important national leaders like President Franklin Roosevelt seek to preserve capitalism, but at the same time put in place important safeguards under the eye of the state?

Topic # 10: American Imperialism

Reading: Selections 16 (pay particular attention to President Washington’s comments starting at the bottom of page 181) 20, 28 (The Conquest of the United States by Spain”), 35, 58, 59, 63, and 69.

Short Writing Assignment: What have been the typical arguments in favor of American imperialism in the world? What have been the arguments against American imperialism? Is the United States today an imperialist power? Why or why not?

Topic # 11: African Americans and Civil Rights

Reading: Introduction to Part IV, pages 369-370, Introduction to Part V, pages 475-476, Selections 37, 46, and 48 (W.E.B. Dubois, Langston Hughes, Martin Luther King Jr.) and the following selections found

at <http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org> Booker T. Washington, "Speech at Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition" (<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/speech-before-the-atlanta-cotton-states-and-international-exposition/>) and Malcolm X "The Ballot or the Bullet" (<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-ballot-or-the-bullet/>)

Short Writing Assignment: Starting with the end of slavery (1865) and leading into the 1960s, what did prominent African American civil rights leaders want? What were the important points of conflict concerning segregation and confrontation with white society?

Topic # 12: Liberalism, the Age of Consensus and the Emergence of the Counterculture

Reading: Introduction, Part V; Selections 47, 49, 53 ("The Culture of Narcissism") (John F. Kennedy, the Students for a Democratic Society, Christopher Lasch) and the following documents from the internet Karen Asbley, et al. "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows" (1969) (<http://archive.org/stream/YouDontNeedAWeathermanToKnowWhichWayTheWindBlows-925/weather#page/n0/mode/2up>)

Short Writing Assignment: In the context of post-1945 American history, what did Liberalism mean? What did it mean to be "on the Left?" What was the "New Left" starting in the 1960s and what did it want?

Topic # 13: Feminism

Reading: Introduction to Part II, Page 188-189; Selections 10 (Correspondence with Abigail Adams), 22, 27, 38 ("The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation") and 51 (Abigail Adams, Elizabeth Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Emma Goldman and Betty Friedan).

Short Writing Assignment. What is a feminist? In the context of American history, what have feminists wanted? What were their important points of agreement and disagreement?

Topic # 14: Mexican Americans in American History

Reading: Selections 50 and 61 (La Alianza Federal de Mercedes and Rudolfo Anaya)

Writing Assignment: What have been the special concerns and aspirations of the Mexican American community in the United States?

Topic # 15: The Rise of American Conservatism

Reading: Introduction to Part IV, Selections 55-59 and 63.

Short Writing Assignment: What is conservatism? What historical factors explain the rise of conservatism in American politics? What special challenges does conservatism face today?

Paper Scoring Rubric—There are four separate categories for my evaluation of your paper.

Rubric: Criteria for the Thesis Topic--

1. **Inadequate—less than fourteen points**-No clear thesis topic or the thesis topic does not relate to the purpose and the audience.
2. **Passing-14 to 15 points**-The thesis or the topic is not stated early; or it is unconvincing because it is too broad or vague or unrelated to the purpose/audience.
3. **Good-16-17 points**--the thesis topic is good and relates to purpose, although it could be more precise.
4. **Excellent-18-20 points**-The thesis/topic is precise, clear and related to the purpose.

Rubric: Development Reason and Evidence—

1. **Inadequate—less than fourteen points**—The essay does not offer clear reasons and evidence to support the thesis/topic. It may offer only reasons unsupported by evidence.
2. **Passing—14 to 15 points**—The paper list reasons and evidence, but they are unconvincing and/or underdeveloped. Lack of critical discussion of evidence.
3. **Good-15 to 17 points**—The paper offers reasons and evidence that support the thesis/topic; but more supporting details and other kinds of evidence would have demonstrated mastery.
4. **Excellent—18 to 20 points**—Reason and evidence are accurate, precise, and relevant. The thesis/topic is fully and convincingly developed.

Rubric: Organization of entire paper and of paragraphs

1. **Inadequate-less than fourteen points**—An overall logical structure is lacking. Paragraphs lack cohesion. No transitions.
2. **Passing-14 to 15 points**—overall logical structure is evident, but paragraphs may lack cohesion and transitions may be lacking.
3. **Good-16 to 17 points** – The paper is supported with adequate overall structure and paragraph cohesion; sequence of ideas or transitions could be improved.
4. **Excellent—18 to 20 points**—Paragraphs are coherent & unified, and connected with effective, eloquent transitions.

Rubric: Style, Vocabulary, Grammar & Mechanics

1. **Inadequate—less than fourteen points**—The reader cannot understand the paper because of distracting patterns of error in word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and usage.
2. **Passing—14 to 15 points**—The often must reread because of distracting patterns of error in word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and usage.
3. **Good—16 to 17 points**—The writing successfully communicates through effective grammar and mechanics, except for one or two patterns of error, word choice, grammar, or usage.
4. **Excellent—18 to 20 points**—The writer chooses words aptly and observes the conventions of correct grammar and usage.

Rubric: Documentation-in texts citations & bibliography page

1. **Inadequate—less than fourteen points**—Author does not cite the in-text sources or provide a bibliography (works cited page) at the end of the paper.

2. **Passing—14 to 15 pages**—Author does not cite in-text sources accurately or consistently and/or does not fit the format bibliography accurately or consistently.
3. **Good—16-17 pages**—Author documents sources consistently with one or two minor errors, inconsistencies or mistakes that do not damage the writer's ethos.
4. **Excellent—18 to 20 points**—Author documents sources accurately and consistently.