

Tufts University  
Spring 2019  
Mon/Wed, 10:30-11:45  
Bromfield-Pearson 006

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Office hours: Mon/Wed, 9:00-10:00  
Packard Hall 109

## PS 144 – The Meaning of America

This course will examine the principles upon which America rests through an investigation of some of the most influential works of American political thought. We will concentrate on the founding debate, the development of Lincoln's thought, and an outsider's perspective on America in Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. Among the topics we will consider are the Puritan origins of America, the meaning of our founding documents, the challenge posed by the Anti-Federalists, the defense of the large republic in *The Federalist*, the role of religion in American life, the problems presented by slavery, the proper role of a democratic leader, and Tocqueville's hopes and worries about liberal democratic society and government (especially its American variant).

### **Course Format and Requirements:**

By far the most important requirement of the course is that you complete all assigned readings *carefully* and *before class*. Most reading assignments will be relatively short, and you should do all of them more than once. My recommendation is to go over the readings fairly quickly once, to see what topics are covered and to pick out the main ideas, and then do them again, slowly and carefully, taking notes about what seems important or intriguing and about what you don't fully understand. These notes will also help in generating useful class discussion. To facilitate reading, I will hand out a list of study questions on each text; these questions can be used to guide your reading but are not exhaustive.

Attendance is required; more than two absences will affect your participation grade, and absence from more than a third of the classes will automatically result in a failing grade. Students arriving late will generally be counted as absent.

The class will be conducted mostly in discussion format. I may have to lecture a bit on some days, but every class will involve a good deal of discussion, and you should plan on participating every day. High-level participation requires that you grapple with the central ideas and arguments of the readings ahead of time, and bring to class any questions or confusions you might have. You should always bring the relevant text to class.

The use of laptops/tablets in class is permitted but discouraged. If you do use one, you may not use it for any purpose other than to look at the readings (when they are on Canvas) and to take notes: absolutely no email, Facebook, ESPN, etc. These non-class-related activities are disrespectful to me and your classmates and distracting for those sitting near you. I recommend disconnecting your computer from the internet during class to help avoid the temptation. You may not use your phone for any purpose during class time; if an emergency arises and you need to do so, please step out of the room first. If I see you using your computer for a non-class-related activity or your phone for any reason, I will lower your participation grade by 10 percentage points (each time).

There will be three paper assignments (5-6 pages each) over the course of the semester – see the schedule below. You are required to write the first paper. After that, you can choose to write either the second or the third paper, or you can choose to write both of them and I will drop the lowest of the three paper grades. The papers will be analytical in nature and won't require any research beyond the course readings; topics and guidelines will be handed out several classes in advance of the due date. Late papers will be penalized by 5 percent for each day they are late.

There will also be a comprehensive final exam, which will consist of short-answer and essay questions. The exam must be taken on the date scheduled by the university.

All written assignments will be given a numerical grade on the following scale:

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	59 and below

Grades will be determined as follows:

Two papers	30 % each
Final exam	30 %
Class participation	10 %

*The university's policy on academic honesty will be strictly adhered to.* For more information on plagiarism and the proper citing of sources, see:

<http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-resource-center/what-we-offer/writing-support/avoiding>

### **Required Texts:**

Herbert J. Storing, *What the Anti-Federalists Were For* (University of Chicago Press, 1981). ISBN: 9780226775746.

Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, *The Federalist*, ed. George W. Carey and James McClellan (Liberty Fund, 2001). ISBN: 9780865972896.

Abraham Lincoln, *The Writings of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Steven B. Smith (Yale University Press, 2012). ISBN: 9780300181234.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (University of Chicago Press, 2000). ISBN: 9780226805368.

These books are available at the bookstore; please buy the editions listed here. All other readings will be made available on Canvas.

## Course Schedule and Readings:

- 1/16 Introduction
- 1/21 No class – Martin Luther King Day
- 1/23 Perry Miller, selection from *The American Puritans* (Canvas, pp. 1-4)  
John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” and “Speech to the General Court”  
(Canvas, pp. 78-84, 89-93)  
Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 1, Part 1, ch. 2 (pp. 27-44)
- 1/28 Declaration of Independence (in *The Federalist*, pp. 495-8)  
Thomas Jefferson, original draft of Declaration, letter to Weightman (Canvas, pp. 19-24,  
1516-17)  
Joseph Ellis, selection from *Founding Brothers* (Canvas, pp. 3-11)
- 1/30 Articles of Confederation (in *The Federalist*, pp. 500-508)  
U.S. Constitution (in *The Federalist*, pp. 526-51)  
Joseph Ellis, selection from *Founding Brothers* (Canvas, pp. 88-96)
- 2/4 Herbert Storing, *What the Anti-Federalists Were For*, chapters 1-4 (pp. 3-37)
- 2/6 Herbert Storing, *What the Anti-Federalists Were For*, chapters 5-9 (pp. 38-76)
- 2/11 *Federalist* # 1, 9, 10 (pp. 1-4, 37-49)
- 2/13 *Federalist* # 47, 48, 49, 51 (pp. 249-64, 267-72)
- 2/18 No class – Presidents Day
- 2/20 *Federalist* # 55, 62 (pp. 286-91, 319-24)
- 2/21 *Federalist* # 70, 72 (pp. 362-69, 374-78)  
(Thursday)
- 2/25 *Federalist* # 78 (pp. 401-8)  
Letter of Brutus, 20 March 1788 (Canvas, pp. 182-87)  
**First paper topics handed out**
- 2/27 Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, letter to Danbury Baptist  
Association (Canvas, pp. 346-48, 510)  
James Madison, “Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments” (Canvas,  
pp. 29-36)
- 3/4 Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, selection from Query 14, Query 18,  
letters to D emeunier, Gregoire, and Holmes (Canvas, pp. 263-70, 288-89, 591-92,  
1202, 1433-35)

3/6 Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government" (Canvas, pp. 226-45)  
Frederick Douglass, "The Various Phases of Anti-Slavery" and "The Danger of the  
Republican Movement" (Canvas, pp. 366-71, 385-90)

3/8 **First paper due by noon**  
(Friday)

3/11 Abraham Lincoln, Lyceum Address, Temperance Address (pp. 7-22)

3/13 Abraham Lincoln, fragments on slavery, letter to Durley, Eulogy on Henry Clay (pp. 58-  
59, 150, 189-90, 22-23, 43-54)

Spring break

3/25 Abraham Lincoln, selections from Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act, letter to  
Robertson (pp. 59-67, 72-77, 83-86, 92-93)

3/27 Abraham Lincoln, "House Divided" speech, end of Address at Cooper Institute, fragment  
on the Constitution, Speech at Independence Hall, First Inaugural Address (pp.  
126-33, bottom of 296-98, 321-22, 323-32)

4/1 Abraham Lincoln, letter to Greeley, Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg Address,  
Second Inaugural Address, selection from Message to Congress in Special  
Session, letter to Corning (pp. 361-62, 395-96, 417, 428-29, bottom of 337-40,  
399-406)

**Second paper topics handed out**

4/3 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume 1: Introduction (pp. 3-15), Part 2,  
chapter 6 (pp. 220-35), Volume 2: Notice (pp. 399-400), Part 3, chapter 1 (pp.  
535-39)

4/8 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume 1: Part 1, chapters 3-4 (pp. 45-  
55), Part 2, chapter 7 (pp. 235-49), Volume 2: Part 1, chapter 2 (pp. 407-10)

4/10 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume 2: Part 2, chapters 2, 4-5, 8-9  
(pp. 482-84, 485-92, 500-506), Volume 1: Part 2, chapter 9 (pp. 278-88)

4/12 **Second paper due by noon**  
(Friday)

4/15 No class – Patriots Day

4/17 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume 1: Part 1, chapter 5 (pp. 57-65),  
Volume 2: Part 2, chapter 1 (pp. 479-82), Part 4, chapters 2-4, 6-7 (pp. 640-50,  
661-73)

4/22 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume 2: Part 1, chapter 20 (pp. 469-  
72), Part 2, chapters 10-11, 13-14 (pp. 506-9, 511-17), Part 3, chapters 8, 12 (pp.  
558-63, 573-76)

4/24 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume 2: Part 3, chapters 17, 19, 21 (pp. 587-88, 599-604, 606-17), Part 4, chapter 8 (pp. 673-76)

**Third paper topics handed out**

4/29 Review

5/3 **Third paper due by noon**  
(Friday)

5/8 **Final exam, 3:30-5:30**  
(Wednesday)