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### PSC 352.01: American Political Thought

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**University of Montana  
Department of Political Science  
American Political Thought**

PSC 352  
Spring 2001  
MWF 1:10-2  
email: rgrey@selway.umt.edu

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Course Description

This course will explore American political thought from the period of the Puritans in Massachusetts to the late nineteenth-century, age of robber barons. Our focus will be on the ideas, movements, parties, and individual thinkers that have contributed to the development of an "American tradition" of political thought and practice. As we shall quickly discover, political thought in this country is not merely an offshoot of the well-worn European themes, but develops out the search for identity, common experiences, and historical political struggles.

The assigned books are as follows:

1. Mason and Baker (eds.), Free Government In The Making
2. Hamilton, Madison, Jay, The Federalist Papers
3. Bellamy, Looking Backward
4. Paine, Common Sense
5. Fac Packet: "The Puritans"; Thoreau's Civil Disobedience; R. Bourne, War & the Intellectuals

Course Objectives: upon successfully completing the course work, the student should be able to:

1. Identify the major pre-Civil War thinkers and assess their contributions to the philosophical ideas and values that underscore America political discourse.
2. Develop an analytical essay examining a particular American thinker's assumptions about human nature, equality, individual and community rights, the good life, constitutionalism, etc. The goal of the essay assignments (including the midterm and the final) is to encourage students not only to learn about American political thought, but also to learn how to think theoretically about politics.
3. Provide an interpretive final essay on Edward Bellamy's utopian novel, *Looking Backward*. What, if any, are the distinctively "American" ethical values and political themes found in Bellamy's conception of the good life. (please see Bellamy Paper Guidelines)

Course Grading: The work of the course consists of reading all assignments, attending the class lectures and participating in class discussion (\*10% of course grade.) This includes being prepared to discuss the readings and essays.

Each student will submit **one analytical essay** (25% of course grade), not to exceed 3 double-spaced pages. The essay is due no later than the class period before the scheduled oral presentations. Selected essays will orally presented and defended. However, all students are expected to critique their colleagues' work. Students will have an opportunity to revise and resubmitted the essay. If your essay is turned in late or if you are absent the day that we are scheduled to discuss your essay topic, you will not get credit for it. *No make-up essays accepted.*

In addition, each student will complete on time a take-home **midterm** (25% of course grade) and a **final** (40%).

\* Cautionary note: if you are absent more than 3xs, three points will be deducted for every absence thereafter. Excused absences require an athletic or medical note.

### Class Schedule

1/29 Introduction

1/31- "New World Man": the Study of American Political Thought

2/2 Recommend Film Rentals: 'Paint Your Wagon,' 'Mr. Deeds Goes to Town,' and 'Horse Whisperer'

2/2- *Puritanism in Massachusetts: the Calvinist Theocrats*

2/7 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 54-66;  
Miller and Johnson, The Puritans, 194-214 (in packet);  
Randolph S. Bourne, "The Puritan's Will to Power," from  
War and the Intellectuals, 156-161 (in packet.)

2/9 *Roger William's and Religious Dissent*

Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 66-70;  
Miller and Johnson, The Puritans, 214-225 (in packet.)

2/12 *Separation of Church & State: Three Traditions*

2/14- *Discuss Essays (\*due 2/12): "Puritanism is un-American."*  
2/16

2/19 No Class-- President's Day

2/21- *War of Independence*

2/23 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 88-121;  
Recommend: Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution

2/26- *Thomas Paine and Natural Rights/ Problem of Union*

2/28 Read: Paine, Common Sense

3/2 *Problems of Paine*

Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 144-148, 152-157.

*Discuss Essays(due 2/25): Why might historians and scholars disqualify Paine as "a full-fledged founding father?"*

3/5- *US Constitutional Thought: Hamilton, Madison, and the Problem of 3/7 Union*

Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 178-180;

Hamilton, The Federalist, Nos. 15, 23, 31, 33, 70.

3/9- *Madison & the Constitutional Republic*  
3/12 Read: Madison, The Federalist, Nos. 10 & 52-58

3/12- *The Constitutional Debate: Federalists v. Anti-Federalists*  
3/14 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 227-250, 285-290.

3/16 *Discuss Essays (due 3/14):* What theoretical difficulties can be found in Madison's theory of representation?

*Spring Break 3/17-3/25*

\*\*\*\*\* Midterm Due March 26th \*\*\*\*\*

3/26 *John Adams and Mixed Government*  
Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 160-169, 142-144, 160-169.  
Recommend: Joseph Dorfman, "The Regal Republic of John Adams," in John Roche's Origins of American Political Thought

3/28 *Political Thought of the Formative Years: Hamilton, Marshall and National Supremacy*  
Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 299-323

3/30- *Jeffersonian Democracy*  
4/2 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 329-351

4/4 *Discuss Essays(due 4/2):* Jefferson and the authors of The Federalist Papers had two different visions for the American Republic. On the one hand, Jefferson imagines a country of "yeoman" farmers whereas the Federalists envision a society consisting of a plethora of competing business interests. Critically evaluate the competing visions. Which one, in your view, is more compatible with "republican" government?  
Why?

4/6- *The Jacksonian Movement*  
4/9 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 361-395, 425-431.

4/11 *The Slavery Controversy: Pro-Slavery Arguments*

4/13- *John C. Calhoun and Concurrent Majorities*  
4/16 Reading: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 453-462

4/18- *Ralph Waldo Emerson and Transcendentalism*  
4/20 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 409-415.

4/23 *Discuss Essays (due 4/20):* Is Emerson's philosophy essentially radical or conservative? Explain

4/25- *Anti-Slavery Arguments: H.D. Thoreau and Civil Disobedience*  
 4/27 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 438-453;  
 H.D. Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," 109-137 (in  
 packet.)

4/30 *Discuss Essays (due 4/30):* "Thoreau's doctrine of civil disobedience  
 raises but does not resolve a crucial problem in democratic thought."

5/2 *Lincoln and the Cause of Union*  
 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 462-472, 479-482,  
 484-501, \*Bellamy's Looking Backward

5/4- *Sumner and Laissez-Faire*  
 5/7 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 510-529  
 \*Bellamy's Looking Backward

5/9- *Bellamy and Socialism 3 lectures*  
 5/11 Recommend: Michael Harrington, Socialism, Chap. VI, "The  
 American Exception"  
 Read: Mason and Baker, Free Government..., 531-536  
 \*Bellamy's Looking Backward (finish)

\*\*\*Final Due May 16th Wednesday by 5pm \*\*\*\* {see attached}