

CEL 200: Great Debates in American Politics

School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership, Arizona State University

Semester X 2024

[template syllabus for department; Aaron Kushner, Sean Beienburg; edited to focus on syllabus of readings]

Course Description: Introduces fundamental ideas and debates about liberty and equality in American thought from the colonial era to the present, focusing on major political figures and issues – ideas that continue to shape political debates in 21st-century America, thus providing crucial foundations for future leadership roles in either public affairs or the private sector. A major theme is the tension between liberty and equality and between constitutionalism and democracy, in three centuries as a democratic, commercial republic.

Credit Hours: 3

Course Overview: This class is designed as an introduction to some of the key ideas in American political thought and the basic institutions of our constitutional republic. In this course, students examine fundamental ideas and debates about liberty, equality, constitutionalism, and democracy in American political thought by studying key thinkers and texts from the American Revolution into the twentieth century. The course focuses especially on debates about the meaning and implications of the two most influential political documents in American history: the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. It thereby provides future leaders with a deeper foundation for thinking about the principles, institutions, tensions, challenges, disagreements, and questions that have defined the American experiment and that continue to shape American civic life and what it means to be part of a constitutional republic today.

Instructor: X

Email:

Phone:

Office hours:

Course Objectives

1. Learn about tensions between liberty and equality and between constitutionalism and democracy.
2. Introduce key ideas in American political thought and the basic institutions of our constitutional republic.
3. Examine fundamental ideas and debates about liberty, equality, constitutionalism, and democracy in American political thought by studying key thinkers and texts from the American Revolution into the twenty-first century.
4. Focus on debates about the meaning and implications of the two most influential political documents in American history: the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students completing this course will be able to:

- Analyze and evaluate important political concepts such as freedom, equality, justice, and rights, and how they developed and have been applied in American political thought and history.
- Describe the basic structural design and institutions of the American constitutional order, especially federalism and the separation of powers.
- Interpret and analyze primary source texts in the American political tradition.
- Discuss the political principles that have shaped American history and politics.
- Demonstrate how ideas and groups have historically shaped the creation of and change in U.S. Institutions.
- Identify key institutions in U.S. politics and their impacts on social, economic, or political outcomes. This will include differential impacts on disparate communities.
- Describe the impact of key ideas, people, events, institution, or movements on the nature, history, and boundaries of American citizenship and the various forms of civic participation in a self-governing society.
- Communicate coherent arguments using evidence drawn from qualitative or quantitative sources.

General Studies

This course fulfills the ASU General Studies ASU GOLD “AMIT” requirement.

Students completing an ASU American Institutions (AMIT) course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how ideas and groups have historically shaped the creation of and change in U.S. institutions.
2. Identify key institutions in U.S. politics and their impacts on social, economic, or political outcomes. This will include differential impacts on disparate communities.
3. Describe the impact of key ideas, people, events, institutions, or movements on the nature, history, and boundaries of American citizenship and the various forms of civic participation in a self-governing society.
4. Communicate coherent arguments using evidence drawn from qualitative or quantitative sources.

Required Materials

SCETL US Pocket Constitution

(contains US Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and King’s I Have a Dream. Available in the department office, Coor 6th floor. AZ Pocket Constitution also available)

The Federalist Papers: You are free to use any edition, print-out, etc. of your choice.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). The readings in the syllabus are in the form of Volume. Book. Chapter to correspond with both Mansfield and most other editions of Tocqueville. (Page numbers are to the Mansfield edition.) I recommend Mansfield, but you may use another version if you have it—provided you are responsible for making sure to do the correct reading and you make any paper citations in the Volume. Book. Chapter format above.

All other readings will be made available on Canvas

Assignments and Exams

Your grade of 100 possible points will be determined by

- **One 4-6 page reflection paper** (25%), which will be a response to readings. This is due X/X/X; the essay prompt options will be given later in the semester.
- **Participation** (20%), will consist of thorough preparation for, and faithful attendance at, all classes. Unexcused absence will count against your participation grade, though I will drop two unexcused absences for each of you.
- **Quizzes** (30%): Fifteen times throughout the semester, I will administer a brief six question quiz on that day's materials, testing you on basic arguments and facts from the reading. Unexcused absences, that is, absences except for a documented medical or university approved absence, count as a zero on the quiz, but I will automatically drop your lowest quiz of the semester, including unexcused absences. (If you have no absences, I will instead add one quiz's worth of correct answers to your other quizzes). I will also drop, up to a total of two times, an additional low quiz should you attend one of our SCETL guest speaker/lecture series and submit a one page double-spaced response to it within a week of the lecture.
- **Final Exam** (25%): A final exam consisting of short answer and multiple choice questions that reflects over the course as a whole will be administered during the final week of the semester.

You must complete all assignments to have a passing grade for this class.

Assignment	Number	Points Each	Total Points
Participation	Ongoing	20	20
Quizzes	15	2	30
Reflection Paper	1	25	25
Final Exam	1	25	25
Total			

Reflection Paper Policies:

These are due *at the start of* class since they are meant to provoke you to reflect on the material ahead of time. Late submission of papers will be reduced one full letter grade per day, including on the day they are due.

Papers should be submitted in 12 font, Times New Roman, double-spaced 1 in. margins. Double-sided printing is fine as long as it is clear on both sides.

Late papers will receive a reduction of one letter grade per day late – including the day of – without a *documented* and excused medical or other emergency.

“A” range papers are those which are especially creative, perceptive, and persuasive in presenting original, clear arguments backed up by both textual evidence and fluid writing. Consistent with the learning outcomes for the class, they should also anticipate and seriously grapple with counterarguments. “B” range papers are for solid, clear arguments with textual support and serviceable writing. Papers that contain one or more of the following errors--primarily summarizing, failing to meaningfully engage the prompt or texts, or lacking basic proofreading--will warrant grades C or below.

These are neither collaborative nor research papers. You need not undertake, and indeed, I do not want, outside research for these papers; thoughtful, *individual* reflection on course materials is more than enough. Citations should be either as parentheticals or endnotes; as no outside research is expected, simple citations (page numbers only) are sufficient. Parenthetical citations or simple endnotes are fine (e.g. Tocqueville 1.2.4; McCulloch; Frymer 20).

Standard canons of academic integrity as described in the college handbook apply. Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and referral to the appropriate disciplinary boards. Ask me if you have any specific questions.

I do keep the quality of writing in mind in assigning paper grades. Writing well is one of the essential skills that every college graduate ought to possess, and one which employers increasingly prize, so it is to your benefit to spend time developing your writing. I am happy to work one-on-one with you on your writing. For those interested in improving their writing, I recommend Strunk and White.

I am more than happy to have you run *ideas and thoughts* for papers by me in advance, but I do not review drafts themselves.

Attendance/Participation/Discussion (Expected Classroom Behavior)

Thorough preparation for, and faithful attendance of, all classes is expected of all participants in the course. Unexcused absences will count against your participation grade, though I will drop two unexcused absences for each of you.

As participation is an essential part of the course, I expect each of you to contribute to the discussion; merely showing up will not earn a strong grade. I am happy to expand on any material or answer any questions, but the primary purpose of our meetings is to think hard about the material in conversation with one another. Your participation grade is based not on attendance – which is assumed – but on thoughtful contribution to discussion- *not* measured by how many times you raise your hand but the substance of the contribution. This includes serious engagement with and reference to the texts- which you should bring to class.

As this is a discussion based course, I want your attention focused on what your peers are saying. Thus, with the exception of documented medical needs, the use of laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices is not allowed in class. This is not meant to be punitive or because I don't trust you, but because research has shown participation, retention, and comprehension are drastically lessened even when laptop users conscientiously and diligently focus on participation and note-taking. (Because I believe in conservation I will allow, and indeed encourage, those of you with old-fashioned, e-ink readers such as non-Fire Amazon Kindles to use them and save paper and ink by not printing the materials.)

My expectations include courteous treatment of your peers; this is often controversial material that elicits strong passions (including my own!), but discussion should remain

civil and respectful, even when forceful, focused on the ideas and not the speaker, as reasonable people of good will may disagree.

Contact/Office Hours:

I will do my best to respond to emails within 48 hrs, but you should not email me at the last minute for questions about papers. (I also do not check work email on Sunday.) If you have a substantive question – not a logistical one – come to my office instead so we can discuss it. I love discussing this material and really do welcome any chance to meander over it, so you should feel free to come in and discuss it more.

Technology Support

Other than initial retrieval of readings and assignments at the start of the semester, there is no technological or online component to the class.

Other policies, notes, and addenda:

Please arrive on time and do not leave early; let me know if you must be late or depart early. Should you withdraw from the class, please let me know.

Course Itinerary

Day 1: August 18 January 11

Introduction

Lincoln, Lyceum Address (1838)	4
Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (1863)	1

Day 2: August 23 January 13

Mayflower Compact (1620)	1
Locke, 2nd Treatise, §§ 4, 6, 27, 95, 123-127, 222, 225 (1690)	4
Virginia Resolves on the Stamp Act (1765)	1
Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress (1774)	4
Mason, Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776)	2
Jefferson, Drafts of Declaration of Independence (1776)	10

Day 3: August 25 January 18

Jefferson, Drafts of Declaration of Independence (1776)	(review)	10
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Day 4: August 30 January 20

Articles of Confederation (1777)	7
Northwest Ordinance of 1787	2
Madison, "Vices of the Political System of the United States" (1787)	6
Lee to Mason on the Convention (1787)	2

Unit 2: The Constitution and its Structures

Day 5: September 1 January 25

US Constitution

Day 6: September 6 January 27

US Constitution: Article I Section 8, and Tenth Amendment

<i>Brutus</i> #1	2.5
<i>Federalist</i>	
#32 [first two paragraphs only]	1
#39 [start with para beginning 'but it was not sufficient']	3
#45 [start with para beginning "the state governments will"]	3.5
#62 [paragraph beginning "in this spirit" only]	2

Day 7: September 8 January 31

The Convention

Federalist:

#39 [start with para beginning 'but it was not sufficient' (review)]	3
#45 [start with para beginning "the state governments will" (review)]	3.5

[on the necessary and proper and tax clauses]

<i>Federalist</i> #33	4
#41 [last four paragraphs]	1
#44 [read first paragraph, then skip to paragraph beginning "Bills of.."]	4
<i>Brutus</i> # 5,7	5

[on bills of rights]

Wilson, State House Yard Speech (1787)

1

Federalist:

#84 [read until paragraph beginning "Another objection which..."]	5
<i>Brutus</i> #2	2.5
Madison, Speech Proposing Constitutional Amendments (1789)	3

Day 8: September 13 February 2

Federalism II

Madison, on structural features of Constitution, *National Gazette* (1792) 1.5

Tocqueville:

1.1.5: "On the Necessity of Studying What Takes Place in the Particular States," 56

1.1.5 "On the Political Effects of Administrative Centralization," 82-92

1.2.8 "Absence of Administrative Centralization," 250-51

1.1.8 ""Summary Picture of the Federal Constitution," 107-110

What Distinguishes the Federal Constitution..." 152-54

["Introduction to Federalism and the Arizona Constitution"](#)

From SCETL AZ Pocket Constitution 5

Day 9: September 15 February 7

Federalism III

Beienburg, "Federalism and the American Constitutional Order," From <i>Prohibition, the Constitution, and States' Rights</i> (2019)	6 (p.18-25)
Douglass, "Reconstruction" (1866)	1
Altgeld, Lewelling, and Hunt on economic regulation, state sovereignty, "Address on the State of Illinois," January 19, 1895 "Farewell Address to the Kansas Legislature," January 9, 1895 Letters to Governors from AZ Gov. Hunt (1931)	3
Croly, <i>Promise of American Life</i> (1909)	1.5
Roosevelt on Federalism (1929-1930)	4

Day 10: September 20 February 9

Federalism and the Supreme Court: The Commerce Clause

<i>Schechter Poultry v. United States</i> (1935)	3
<i>Wickard v. Filburn</i> (1942)	2
<i>United States v. Lopez</i> (1995)	5
<i>Gonzales v. Raich</i> (2005)	5
(recommended)	
Urofsky, "Sandra Day O'Connor and Federalism"	3.5

Day 11: September 22 February 14

The Legislature

US Constitution, Article I, Section 1-7; Article 2, Section 2 (second paragraph)	
Rush, "On the Pennsylvania Constitution," (1777)	6
AZ Constitution: Article IV, Part 1; Article VIII, Part 1	
<i>Federalist</i> #52, #53, #55, #63 [stop at ".....required in every public act" and skip to last paragraph]	
Tocqueville, 1.1.8, "How the Federal Constitution is Superior," 143-46	

Day 12 September 27 February 16

The Legislature: Political Parties

<i>Federalist</i> #10, #51	10
n.b. pay very close attention to how Madison defines a faction.	
Washington, Farewell Address (1796) (first two and a half pages only for now)	2
Tocqueville	
1.2.2, "On Parties in the United States,"	166-72
1.2.4 "On Political Associations in the United States,"	180-86
2.2.5-7 "On the Relationship Between Parties and Newspapers, Relations Between Civil Associations and Political...." 489-91, 493-500	

Day 13: September 29 February 21

The Executive Power

US Constitution, Article II [skip blue/bracketed/amended out sections]	
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AZ Constitution, Article V, Section 1-4, 9	
<i>Federalist</i> #47 (skip from "I pass..." until the last paragraph)	3.5
#48 (skip from "The first example..." until the last paragraph)	2
<i>Pacificus-Helvidius</i> #1	2
<i>Federalist</i> #70 (skip last three paragraphs)	4.5
Tocqueville, 1.1.8, "On the Executive Power,"	113-124

Day 14: October 4 February 23

The Executive Power ctd.

Lincoln, On Constitutional Executive Power in War and Peace: (1861-64): 10	
Habeas Corpus	
Fourth of July Message to Congress, July 4, 1861	
Proclamation Suspending the Writ of Habeas Corpus, September 24, 1862	
Letter to Erastus Corning and others, June 12, 1863	
Reply to the Ohio Democratic Convention/Birchard Letter, June 29, 1863	
Emancipation	
Letter to O.H. Browning, September 22, 1861	
The Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863	
Letter to Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase, September 2, 1863	
Letter to Albert G. Hodges, April 4, 1864	
Exchange with Zechariah Chandler, from John Hay's Diary, July 4, 1864	

Day 15: October 6 February 28

The Executive Power, ctd.

Roosevelt, T., on the stewardship theory of the president, from the <i>Autobiography of Theodore Roosevelt</i> (1913)	6
Taft, "The Limitations of the Presidential Power," from <i>Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers</i> (1916)	[136-48, 156-57]
Wilson, "The Study of Administration" (1887)	9

Day 16: October 13 March 2

The Judicial Power

US Constitution, Article III, Section 1 and 2	
<i>Federalist</i> #78	6
#80 [skip everything after "Having thus..." except for last paragraph]	2.5
#81 [read to "Let us resume..."]	4
<i>Brutus</i> #11, #12, #15 (1788)	8

Day 17: October 18 March 14

The Judicial Power II

<i>Marbury v. Madison</i> (1803)	4
Tocqueville, 1.1.6, "On Judicial Power," 93-98	
1.1.8, "On the Federal Courts," 130-42	
Lincoln on <i>Dred Scott</i>	

(from Lincoln-Douglas Debates, First Inaugural Address) (1857, 1861) 3

Day 18: October 20 March 16

Judicial Power III: Modern Free Speech Law and its Development

US Constitution, First Amendment	
Arizona Constitution, Declaration of Rights/ Article II, Sections 5, 6, 12 (first sentence)	
<i>West Virginia v. Barnette</i> (1943)	6
<i>Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire</i> (1942)	1.5
<i>Cohen v. California</i> (1971)	2.5
<i>Brandenburg v. Ohio</i> (1969)	1.5
<i>Terminiello v. Chicago</i> (1949)	5
<i>Matal v. Tam</i> (2017)	2

Unit 3: Liberty and Equality

Day 19: October 25 March 21

Liberty and Equality in Antebellum America

Hall, "Petition from a number of free blacks" (1777)	2
Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1852)	19

Day 20 October 27 March 23

The Constitution and Slavery

Garrison, "On the Dissolution of the Union," (1855)	9.5
Douglass, "The Constitution: Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery?" (1860)	8

Day 21: November 1 March 28

The Civil War

Democratic and Republican Party Platforms of 1860	3
Secession Declarations from Mississippi and Georgia (1861)	5
Lincoln, First Inaugural Address (1861)	2
Stephens, Cornerstone Speech (1861)	8

Day 22: November 3 March 30

Civil Rights: Two Reconstructions

<i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> and Lincoln's Speech on <i>Dred Scott</i> Case (1857)	9
US Constitution, 13 th , 14 th , 15 th Amendments	
Douglass, "Reconstruction" (1866) (review)	1

Day 23: November 8 April 4

Civil Rights: Two Reconstructions

<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> (1896)	6
<i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i> (1954)	3
<i>Grutter v. Bollinger</i> (2003)	8
King, "I Have a Dream" (in SCETL Pocket Constitution)	

Day 24: November 10 April 6

Women's Rights

<i>Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls</i> (1848)	6
Stanton, Address at Seneca Falls (1848)	3
Truth , Address at Women's Rights Convention (1851)	1
Anthony, "Is it a Crime for a Woman to Vote?" (1873)	5

Day 25: November 15 April 11

Economic Thought:

Locke, 2nd Treatise, §§ 5
Hamilton, "Report on Manufactures,"
Coolidge, "Inaugural Address,"
Roosevelt, "Commonwealth Club"
Hayek, "Pretence of Knowledge"

Day 26: November 17 April 13

Foreign Policy: America and the World:

Washington, "Farewell Address" (1796)	6
Adams, "Fourth of July Address," (1821)	5
and "Monroe Doctrine" (1823)	5
Wilson, "Fourteen Points" and Lodge, on League (1918)	7
Eisenhower, "Farewell Address," (1961)	6

Day 27: November 22 April 18

The Constitution and Declaration: A Reassessment

Wilson, "What is Progress?" (1912)	2
Wilson, "The President," from <i>Constitutional Government</i>	5
Coolidge, On the Occasion of the 150 th Anniversary of the Declaration (1926)	8

Day 28: November 29 April 20 Paper 2 Due

Conclusion: The Enduring Project?

Tocqueville,	
1.2.8, "On what Tempers the Tyranny of the Majority in the United States" [see note below]	
"Absence of Administrative Centralization"	250-51
2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.4 [on equality and individualism] [479-88]	
2.4.3 "The Sentiments of Democratic Peoples [Bring] Them to Concentrate Power,"	643-45
2.4.6-7 "What Kind of Despotism Democratic Nations Have to Fear,"	661-72