

**PLSC 481B—American Political Development, Spring 2013**

**Instructor: Gregory Robinson**

**Wednesday, 1:40-4:40**

**Downtown Center (DC) 224**

**Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 2:30-3:30, or by appointment**

**Office: Library North (LN) G88**

**Email & Office Phone:**

**grobinso@binghamton.edu**

**Course Description**

This course explores questions at the intersection of political science and history. We look at development of American political institutions, political thought, and political behavior as the United States has transitioned from a loose confederation of agrarian colonies to a highly centralized, technologically-advanced country with enormous power on the world stage. We explore institutional, material, and ideational explanations of American political development, with an emphasis on the methods of inquiry of contemporary political science—and on contrasting them with the methodology of History as a discipline. Topics include: the politics and political thought of the Founding, slavery and the Civil War, the place of political ideologies in public discourse, the rise of the US as a world power, the creation and evolution of the separation of powers system in our political institutions, and the rise, development, demise, rebirth, etc. of American political parties.

**Course Announcements**

Please be aware that your Binghamton University email and you Blackboard account will be used for course announcements, including schedule changes, class cancellations, etc. You will be responsible for checking your email for any announcements regarding this course, so make sure you do so (even if you regularly use some other email service).

**Required Texts**

Zakaria, Fareed. 2007 [2003]. *The Future of Freedom*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Fukuyama, Francis. 2006 [1992]. *The End of History and the Last Man*, Reprint Edition. New York: Free Press.

Muir, William Ker. 2012. *Freedom in America*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Woodard, Colin. 2011. *American Nations*. New York: Penguin.

Ellis, Joseph J. 2002 [2000]. *Founding Brothers*. New York: Vintage Books.

Howe, Daniel Walker. 2009. *What Hath God Wrought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McPherson, James M. 2003. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gwynne, S.C. 2010. *Empire of the Summer Moon*. New York: Scribner.

Thomas, Evan. 2010. *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Daniels, Roger. 1998. *Not Like Us: Immigrants and Minorities in America, 1890-1924*. Lanham, MD: Ivan R. Dee.

Brinkley, Alan. 1983. *Voices of Protest*. New York: Vintage Books.

Terkel, Studs. 1997. *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II*. New York: The New Press.

Perlstein, Rick. 2001. *Before the Storm*. New York: Nation Books.

## Recommended Readings

- John H. Aldrich. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- John Milton Cooper, Jr. 1985. *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson & Theodore Roosevelt*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Christopher Dawson. 2001 [1929]. *Progress & Religion: An Historical Inquiry*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press of America.
- John Lewis Gaddis. 2002. *The Landscape of History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- David Held. 2006. *Models of Democracy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Albert O. Hirschman. 1991. *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press.
- Mancur Olson. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gideon Rose, ed. 2002. *America and the World: Debating the New Shape of Int'l Politics*. New York: The Council on Foreign Relations.
- E.E. Schattschneider. 1975. *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. Boston: Wadsworth.
- Alexis de Tocqueville. [2003]. *Democracy in America*. Trans. Gerald Bevan. New York: Penguin Classics.
- Alexander Tsesis. 2009. *We Shall Overcome: A History of Civil Rights & the Law*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

## Grade Disputes

A student wishing to dispute a grade for an assignment or exam **must do so in writing**. When doing so students should provide a clear explanation as to why they feel a different grade is order. Simply “wanting” or “needing” a higher grade is insufficient reason. Students should also be aware that when work is reviewed for a grade dispute, the entire assignment/exam is reviewed, not simply the specific detail being disputed by the student. This means that a grade dispute may result in a lower grade, the same grade or a higher grade. All grade disputes are due in writing within one (1) week after graded work is returned.

## Special Needs

Students with special needs must contact me immediately. Every effort will be made to accommodate special needs. In addition, students with disabilities should feel free to avail themselves of the services provided by Services for Students with Disabilities, (607) 777-2686 (voice/TT).

## Academic Dishonesty

Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Anyone found cheating or committing plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity will receive an automatic grade of 0.0 (F) for the course. Furthermore, all other available penalties within the University will be pursued to the fullest extent. Students should be careful about academic dishonesty since there are severe consequences, which may well extend beyond Binghamton University (it may complicate or prevent admission to law school or graduate school, adversely affect your chances of employment, etc.). **If you do not know what constitutes plagiarism it is your responsibility to find out.** You should make use of campus resources like the Writing Center<sup>†</sup> if you have questions. We will use TURNITIN for all writing assignments not completed in class. Submitting your work to TURNITIN **on time** is a serious requirement. Instructions for submitting your work to the TURNITIN system will be provided in class and on Blackboard.

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<sup>†</sup>“The Writing Center provides free tutoring in college writing for all students. Our excellent tutors are available Monday-Friday to assist you with any assignment from any class—essays, arguments, research papers, reports, analyses, editorials, proposals, abstracts, and lab reports, with critical reading, developing presentations, and citing sources. . . Our friendly tutors are here to help every student from every college and school—native speakers and ESL, undergrads and grad students—to become a better writer. We guide and advise you as you work on your paper. There are two ways to use our tutoring services: 1. **Schedule your appointment online**, 2. Drop in during Writing Center hours.”  
<http://www2.binghamton.edu/writing/writing-center/>

### Grading Scale\* (Total 100 possible points)

94-100 = A	77-79 = C+
90-93 = A-	73-76 = C
87-89 = B+	70-72 = C-
83-86 = B	60-69 = D
80-82 = B-	< 60 = F

### In-class Assignments (30 points)

There will be a series of in-class assignments over the course of the semester. These assignments will ask you to react critically to the readings and the class discussions or sometimes quiz you on reading material. Each assignment will have its own instructions, and may take place at any time during the class session. Make-ups will be allowed only for excused absences, medical/family emergencies, or university-approved absences, and the structure of the make-up assignments **will be different** from those that you miss. No make-up assignments will be given for any other absence or tardiness.

### Participation (25 points)

The success of a small seminar course relies on the participation of the students in discussion. As such, you will be graded on the quality (and to a lesser degree on the amount) of your participation. Obviously, **attendance is a necessary condition** for participation, but I will not be taking attendance for grading purposes. There will be a sign-in sheet for some classes to help me assess participation. Make sure you sign it! But also remember that **attendance is not a sufficient condition for participation**. Just showing up while never talking will get you 10 points at most. My assessment will largely be subjective, so make it easy on me (and thereby on you): participate!

Of course, the obvious reminder applies: Please be respectful of everyone, and of their right to voice their opinions.

### Semester Paper Assignment (40 points + 5 points)

A hard copy of the final paper is due to me **no later than Noon on Monday, May 13**. The paper should be well-written, well-sourced, of standard formatting (double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point font, with page numbers and a separate title page). I expect the papers to be 12-15 pages in length. Citations can be MLA, Chicago Style, APA, etc. **but you must cite appropriately**. I strongly encourage you to use the books we cover in class as sources, including sections that may not be assigned in class. I have provided a list of recommended readings from which you may draw additional outside sources, but this list is certainly not exhaustive.

A two to three-page prospectus/outline of your paper will be due in class on April 3, and will be worth up to 5 points. This is a serious requirement that I hope forces you to start thinking about your paper earlier rather than later!

**Assignments will not be accepted via email under any circumstances.** While TURNITIN will be used, uploading to TURNITIN alone is not sufficient. If I have not received a hard copy of your paper *and* a receipt of your TURNITIN upload by the assignment deadline **I will not grade your paper, and you will fail the assignment.**

Option 1: Identify and explore an event (election, battle, war, etc.) or thing (idea, invention, technology, publication, etc.) around which American political history (or some important aspect thereof) turned. Who were the important actors? What were its precedents (if any) in American experience or in human experience more generally? What are its continuing consequences?

Option 2: Identify and explore a recurring pattern or theme in American political history. Who were/have been/are the important actors? How definitive is it of the American political experience (as opposed to other times and places)?

Option 3: Identify and explore a trend (i.e. movement over time in a particular direction) in American political history. Who were/have been/are the important actors? Is the trend inevitable/irrevocable? What have been its consequences? How definitive is it of the American political experience (as opposed to other times and places)?

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\* If more points are possible because of extra in-class assignments, **the percentage will be calculated** and the grading scale will be applied to your percentage grade instead of points.

## Semester Schedule

Please note: I reserve the right to change this schedule. Appropriate notice will be given in class, and new schedules provided, if necessary. You should come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day's class.

### Class 1 (January 30)

Course Introduction/Syllabus  
Perspectives

## I. Unit One – Politics and World History

### Class 2 (February 6)

Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom* – ALL

**NOTE: Add/Drop Deadline is Friday, February 8!**

### Class 3 (February 13)

Fukuyama, *The End of History* – INTRO, CH. 1-20

## II. Unit Two – Perspectives on American Political History

### Class 4 (February 20)

Muir, *Freedom in America* – INTRO, PARTS I & III

### Class 5 (February 27)

Woodard, *American Nations* – ALL

## III. Unit Three – The Early American Republic & the Civil War

### Class 6 (March 6)

Ellis, *Founding Brothers* - ALL

### Class 7 (March 13)

Howe, *What Hath God Wrought* – INTRO, PROLOGUE, CH. 4, 9-11, 15, 18-19, FINALE

### Class 8 (March 20)

McPherson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, - PROLOGUE, CH. 1-8, 28, EPILOGUE, AFTERWORD

## **NO CLASS (Spring Break/Passover/Easter) - MARCH 27**

## IV. Unit Four – The Frontier, Empire, and Immigration

### Class 9 (April 3)

Gwynne, *Empire of the Summer Moon* – ALL

**Paper Outline/Prospectus Due**

**NOTE: Withdraw Deadline is Friday, April 5!**

### Class 10 (April 10)

Thomas, *The War Lovers* - ALL

### Class 11 (April 17)

Daniels, *Not Like Us* – ALL

## V. Unit Five – The American Century

### Class 12 (April 24)

Brinkley, *Voices of Protest* - ALL

### Class 13 (May 1)

Terkel, *The Good War* – BOOK ONE & EPILOGUE

### Class 14 (May 8)

Perlstein, *Before the Storm* – CH. 1-11

### Final Exam Week

**PAPERS DUE BY NOON ON MONDAY, MAY 13**