

**AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT
POLITICAL SCIENCE 317
SPRING 2023**

Introduction

1-12 Receive syllabus; get acquainted; review the requirements; the child tax credit debate

I Republican principles and government institutions

A: The Declaration of Independence

1-17 Republican principles: Being free from domination and empowered to act
Allen, *Our Declaration*, 19-71

1-18 *SPECIAL EVENT*: Martin Luther King Jr. Day Teach-in
11am Hansen: Menah Pratt-Clark “Filling Place and Spaces with Our Voices”

1-19 A memo of 1337 words and the opening sentence word by word
Allen, *Our Declaration*, 72-142

THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

1-24 Equality as a concept: a focus on the opportunity facet
Allen, *Our Declaration*, 143-188
Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions*, 9-28; 129-150

1-26 *class debate: is equality of condition necessary for equality of opportunity?*
Allen, *Our Declaration*, 240-282
Ellis, *American Political Cultures*, 43-62

1-30 MICRO-ESSAY #1 DUE AS A GOOGLE DOC BY 4PM

B: Federalists and the theory of the US Constitution

1-31 How Marshall uses the contracts clause to temper state sovereignty
Kammen, *The Origins of the American Constitution*, 65-76; 145-152
McCulloch v. Maryland, 17 US 316: 400-425 (1819)

2-2 How Marshall uses the contracts clause to temper state majoritarianism
McCulloch v. Maryland, 17 US 316: 425-437 (1819)
Ely, *Democracy and Distrust*, 73-101

2-7 The “independent state legislature theory” and its rejection
Moore v. Harper (Republican Redistricting amicus brief), 5-14
Moore v. Harper (Common Cause amicus brief), 5-40

THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

2-9 What would John Marshall do?
class debate: should state legislatures have the final say on federal election districts?

2-13 MICRO-ESSAY #2 DUE AS A GOOGLE DOC BY 4PM

C: Case Study: Jacksonian majorities and Mormon minorities

- 2-14 Illinois as a developing democracy and the “Illinois Way”
The Saints and the State, 1-43
- 2-16 The new politics of belief and the challenge of minority religion
The Saints and the State, 44-78
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 2-21 Joseph Smith, the Illinois regime, and the worth of the independent producer
The Saints and the State, 81-92; 119-149; 168-179
- 2-23 Societal cultures and their civil society claims
The Saints and the State, 203-241
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 2-28 *class debate: do democratic majorities have the right to enforce norms beyond the harm principle?*
The Saints and the State, 245-264

II: Dilemmas of American majoritarianism today

A: African Americans in the majority White racial order

- 3-2 The death of slavery and the rebirth of caste
Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 1-50
- 3-6 MICRO-ESSAY #3 DUE AS A GOOGLE DOC BY 4PM
- 3-7 The war on drugs and the role of police discretion
Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 50-137
- 3-9 The result: Mass incarceration of People of Color
Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 137-211
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 3-10/3-20 SPRING BREAK
- 3-21 Jim Crow anew: Gangsta rap and the minstrel show
Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 211-273
- 3-23 *class debate: is the crack/powder cocaine distinction merely misguided or is it racist?*
Kennedy, *Race, Crime, and the Law*, 351-386
Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 275-325
- 3-27 MICRO-ESSAY #4 DUE AS A GOOGLE DOC BY 4PM

B: Miners in an industrialist age: the problem of the isolated, powerless minority

- 3-28 Democracy meets the three dimensions of power
Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, v-xi; 3-32
- 3-30 Industrialism comes to America
Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, 33-68

- 4-4 Electoral democracy in the coal camps
Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, 125-164
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 4-5 Matewan screening: 7pm Ames Beckman
- 4-6 **class debate: does the devolved power of federalism help or hinder the coal mining minority?**
Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, 165-226
- 4-10 MICRO-ESSAY #5 DUE AS A GOOGLE DOC BY 4PM
- C: Female citizens: Class and power in a Christian republic**
- 4-11 Walmart and the creation of Christian free enterprise
Moreton, *To Serve God and Walmart*, 1-48
- 4-13 The politics and economics of the yeoman's wife
Moreton, *To Serve God and Walmart*, 49-124
- 4-18 Evangelizing free enterprise
Moreton, *To Serve God and Walmart*, 125-172
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 4-20 Evangelizing college students
Moreton, *To Serve God and Walmart*, 173-221
- 4-25 **class debate: is Walmart's claim to be "empowering people" (customers and employees) justified?**
Moreton, *To Serve God and Walmart*, 222-271
- 4-26 MICRO-ESSAY #6 DUE AS A GOOGLE DOC BY 4PM
- 4-28 FINAL EXAM 1:15-3:15

Course requirements

The following texts, required of all students, are available at the IWU Bookstore:

- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010)
- Danielle Allen, *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014)
- John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982)
- Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Walmart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2009)

Selections from the following briefs, articles, and books can be found on the class Moodle page.

- Richard J. Ellis, *American Political Cultures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)

John Hart Ely, *Democracy and Distrust: A Theory of Judicial Review* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1980)
Michael Kammen, *The Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986)
Randall Kennedy, *Race, Crime, and the Law* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997)
Moore v. Harper (Common Cause and Republican Redistricting amicus briefs)
Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles* (New York: Basic Books, 2002)

The following text will be handed out as a free of charge rental in February:

James Simeone, *The Saints and the State: The Mormon Troubles in Illinois* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2021)

Social contract

Students are required to complete six micro-essays (2-3 pages). **All assignments and the final exam will be posted on my homepage: see the menu page, below the list of classes, click on ASSIGNMENTS.**

60% micro-essays (10% each)
25% final exam
15% class participation

To avoid disrupting class discussion, please empty your bladder before class. Obviously you will not be docked points for leaving class in cases of dire need. After three absences (in person or zoom), your class participation grade will be impacted.

Because this is a writing intensive class, students are strongly encouraged to revise at least one micro-essay. I will circulate a persuasive essay rubric with the third essay. In addition, students have the opportunity to revise all but the last two micro-essays. ***To receive revision credit, students must visit me during office hours with their essay, and must submit their original draft along with their revision.*** Revision grades will be averaged with the original grade for the final grade on the assignment. Final deadline for all revisions is the last day of class, April 25. **Do your own work:** Writings copied from a friend, purchased on Google, or generated by AI will not be accepted for credit.

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