

**COURSE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:**

The purpose of this course is to better understand the ideas that animated American political life from the time of the American Founding to the Civil War. This is essentially a course on the Constitution, which means it is about the fundamental principles of self-government. We will focus, first of all, on how early Americans attempted to frame a Constitution that is compatible with those principles; we will also investigate questions and issues that arose (between 1790 and 1860) over what the Constitution means and how it should work in practice. We will discuss such constitutional issues as the nature of executive power, federalism, state sovereignty and national supremacy, limited government, and foreign policy, among others – all of which continue to be debated today. By understanding how Americans in the pre-Civil War years of the Republic understood these ideas, we can gain a better perspective on how we think of American political principles and the Constitution today.

**CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR:**

Students are encouraged to meet with me outside of class to discuss any aspect of the materials or topics we cover in the course.

Office: Andrews 213

Office Phone: (419) 289-5686

Email: ccburkett@ashland.edu

Office Hours: MW 1:00 – 2:30 PM and by appointment

**STUDENT RESOURCES:**

Students are encouraged to visit my personal website at [www.ashland.edu/~cburket1/](http://www.ashland.edu/~cburket1/). Occasionally I will post course materials online, and there are also other valuable links and resources for students posted at this website.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Clinton Rossiter, ed., *The Federalist* (Signet, 2003, ISBN 0451528816)
- Ralph Ketcham, ed., *The Anti-Federalist Papers* (Signet, ISBN 0451528840)

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

- Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, sixth ed. (University of Chicago, 1996, ISBN 0226816273)
- Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*, fourth ed. (Longman, 2000, ISBN 020530902X)

**OTHER REQUIRED READINGS:**

- Other assigned readings will be included in a readings packet, which will be distributed by the professor during class.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

### 1. Reading quizzes (roughly 25% of the final grade)

Reading quizzes over assigned materials may be given on occasion without prior notice.

### 2. Class preparation and presentation (roughly 25% of the final grade):

This portion of the grade includes class preparation, quality participation, memory of assigned readings, attendance, and in-class reports. The preparation portion of the grade may also be influenced by the reading quiz grades. **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DO THE READINGS BEFORE CLASS.** Discussion is highly encouraged in this course. I will call on students from time to time to explain the main points in the assigned readings. I will also address questions to the class generally, to which students should volunteer answers. This part of the grade will be affected by excessive absences as well as by failure to speak up from time to time with correct answers, whether called on or not. The best way to prepare for class is to read the assignments and make a brief outline of the main points. Then memorize your outline.

### 3. Seminar Paper (roughly 25% of the final grade):

Students will write a paper (approximately 9-12 pages) on a topic selected from a list provided by the professor, and will present their material to the class on a date selected by the professor. The paper must be typed and double spaced, stapled (no binders), Times New Roman 12-point font, with footnotes or endnotes for every citation. Footnotes should be in the Chicago format as indicated in Kate L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers*. Be sure to include a cover page with the title of your paper, your name, and the course number and title.

The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that you have grasped the importance and complexity of the question or topic. You should be as concise and specific as possible in your essays, presenting a reasoned argument in support of or against a particular aspect of American political thought. Every paper should begin with a paragraph laying out your thesis, and in the body of the paper you should present evidence that supports your thesis. This is not an opportunity for you to simply give your own opinions on matters (no "I feel" this or "I think" that); rather, you should make observations and reasoned arguments and support them with evidence from the readings assigned for the course. You may also use outside sources, but the emphasis should be placed on the primary source documents assigned for class. Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source, and you should avoid using this in your paper. **PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN HARD-COPY FORM – NO EMAILED PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

**See also tips for writing papers at the end of this syllabus**

### 4. Final exam (roughly 25% of the final grade):

The exam will consist of a short answer section and an essay section. In writing your exam essays, you should demonstrate that you have a good grasp of the topics we have covered in class or that are contained in the assigned readings. The exam essay should cover general themes to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge, but you should also include many specific examples from the readings to back up your claims. You should demonstrate that you have been participating intellectually in and out of class and thinking seriously about the topics we have discussed.

**See also "The Meaning of Grades" at the end of this syllabus**

## **GENERAL POLICIES:**

**PLAGIARISM:** Any willful plagiarism on papers or cheating on exams will result in an “F” for the course. You should read the Academic Integrity Policy in the student handbook or catalog. Also see the link on plagiarism at my website, [www.ashland.edu/~cburket1/](http://www.ashland.edu/~cburket1/).

**ATTENDANCE:** You should make every effort to attend every class. Even if you have what you think is a good reason for missing a class, the professor retains the discretion to decide whether to count it as an excused or unexcused absence. An unacceptable number of absences will result in a deduction from the final grade for the course.

**Contents of this syllabus are subject to change.**

## **READING PLAN**

### **WEEK 1 (8/27, 8/29) Origins of American constitutional thought**

- M:** Declaration of Independence, 1776 (packet)  
Abraham Lincoln, "Fragment on the Constitution and Union" (pkt.)  
Woodrow Wilson, "The Author and Signers of the Declaration" (pkt.)
- W:** Town of Boston, "Rights of the Colonists," 1772 (pkt.)  
Declaration of Rights of Virginia (pkt.)  
Declaration of Rights of Massachusetts (pkt.)

### **WEEK 2 (9/5) The Articles of Confederation**

#### **MONDAY, 9/3 – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY**

- W:** Articles of Confederation (in back of *The Federalist Papers* and *The Anti-Federalist Papers*)

#### **PAPER TOPICS ASSIGNED**

### **WEEK 3 (9/10, 9/12) Why was a new Constitution necessary? Federal Convention of 1787**

- M:** Gouverneur Morris to John Jay, 1 Jan. 1783  
George Washington to James Warren, 7 Oct. 1785  
Rufus King to Elbridge Gerry, 30 April 1786  
George Washington to John Jay, 15 August 1786  
John Jay to Thomas Jefferson, 27 October 1786  
*The Federalist:*  
No. 1 (first paragraph only)  
No. 15 (all)  
No. 21 (paragraphs 1-5 only)  
No. 22 (last 6 pars. only, starting with "A circumstance which crowns...")  
Madison, Vices of the Political System of the United States, 1787 (pkt.)
- W:** Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention:*  
May 29-31 (Virginia Plan; question of authorization) (pkt.)  
June 6-7 (selection of representatives) (pkt.)  
June 9 (question of authorization) (pkt.)

#### **WEEK 4 (9/17, 9/19): Federal Convention of 1787**

- M:** Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*:  
June 15-16 (New Jersey Plan) (pkt.)  
June 18 (Hamilton Plan) (pkt.)  
June 19 (New Jersey Plan continued) (pkt.)  
June 21 (selection of representatives) (pkt.)
- W:** Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*:  
June 11 (Sherman's compromise proposal) (pkt.)  
June 28 (Franklin calls for a prayer) (pkt.)  
June 29 (Connecticut Compromise offered) (pkt.)  
July 2, 5, and 14 (Connecticut Compromise debated) (pkt.)  
July 16 (Connecticut Compromise accepted) (pkt.)  
July 17 (powers of national government and executive) (pkt.)  
*The Federalist* No. 62 (pars 3-4 only, starting with "II. It is equally unnecessary...")

#### **WEEK 5 (9/24, 9/26) The Constitution and its critics and defenders**

- M:** U.S. Constitution (all)
- W:** George Mason, "Objections to This Constitution of Government," in *The Anti-Federalist Papers*, pp. 173-175  
"Centinel," Number I, 1787, in *The Anti-Federalist Papers*, pp. 227-237  
James Wilson, "State House Speech," 6 October 1787 (pkt.)

#### **WEEK 6 (10/1, 10/3) The Anti-federalist arguments**

- M:** "Brutus," Essay I, in *The Anti-Federalist Papers*, pp. 269-280
- W:** "Brutus," Essay IV, in *The Anti-Federalist Papers*, pp. 324-331  
Patrick Henry, 5 June 1788, in *The Anti-Federalist Papers*, pp. 199-208

#### **WEEK 7 (10/8, 10/10) The Federalist defense of the Constitution**

- M:** *The Federalist* response to Anti-federalists:  
No. 37 (all)  
No. 38 (pars. 6-9 only, starting with "A patient...")
- W:** *The Federalist* response to Anti-federalists:  
No. 44 (pars. 9-16 only, starting with "The sixth and last class...")  
No. 84 (first 12 paragraphs only)  
No. 85 (first 8 paragraphs only)

### **WEEK 8 (10/15, 10/17) *The Federalist* on “auxiliary precautions”**

- M:** *The Federalist* on the need for virtuous citizens and rulers in republics  
No. 9 (paragraphs 1-3 only)  
No. 31 (last paragraph only)  
No. 33 (par. 6 only, starting with “But it may be again asked...”)  
No. 39 (paragraphs 1-5 only)  
No. 51 (par. 4 only, starting with “But the great security...”)  
No. 55 (last paragraph only)  
No. 57 (pars. 3 and 12-13 only, starting with “I will add, as a fifth...”)
- W:** *The Federalist* on controlling faction:  
No. 10 (all)  
No. 51 (par. 10 only, starting with “*Second*. It is of great importance...”)  
No. 63 (paragraph 8 only, starting with “It may be suggested...”)

### **WEEK 9 (10/22, 10/24) *The Federalist* on “auxiliary precautions”**

- M:** *The Federalist* on separation of powers/checks as “auxiliary precautions”  
No. 31 (par. 11 only, starting with “This mode of reasoning...”)  
No. 45 (paragraph 2 only)  
No. 47 (paragraphs 1-3 only)  
No. 48 (paragraphs 1-6 only)  
No. 51 (paragraphs 1-5 and 9 (starting with “*First*. In a single republic...”)) only
- W:** *The Federalist* on “balances” against the House of Representatives as an “auxiliary precaution”  
No. 51 (par. 6 only, starting with “But it is not possible...”)  
No. 52 (pars. 3-5 only, starting with “The qualifications of the elected...”)  
No. 62 (pars. 2, 6-11, 15-18, starting with “I. The qualifications proposed...”)  
No. 63 (pars. 4-7 only, starting with “I add, as a *sixth* defect...”)  
No. 70 (pars. 1-7 and 13 (starting with “Upon the principles...”)) only  
No. 71 (pars. 1-4 only)

### **WEEK 10 (10/29, 10/31) Constitutional issues: Executive power**

- M:** Washington, Proclamation of Neutrality (pkt.)  
Helvidius and Pacificus letters (pkt.)  
John Locke, *Second Treatise*, §§ 143-148, 159-160 (pkt.)
- W:** Thomas Jefferson to John B. Colvin, 20 September 1810 (pkt.)  
Lincoln, Message to Congress in Special Session, 4 July 1861 (pkt.)  
Lincoln, Letter to Albert Hodges, 4 April 1864 (pkt.)

### **WEEK 11 (11/5, 11/7) Constitutional issues: powers of the national government**

- M:** Thomas Jefferson, Opinion on the National Bank, 15 February 1791 (pkt.)  
Alexander Hamilton, Opinion on the National Bank, 23 February 1791 (pkt.)
- W:** *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 1819 (pkt.)  
Andrew Jackson, “Veto of the Bank Bill,” 10 July 1832 (pkt.)

**WEEK 12 (11/12, 11/14) Constitutional issues: powers of the national government**

**M:** Andrew Jackson, "Veto of the Maysville Road Bill," 27 May 1830 (pkt.)

**W:** Abraham Lincoln, Speech on Internal Improvements, 20 June 1848 (pkt.)

**WEEK 13 (11/19) Constitutional issues: "State Rights" and the nature of the Union**

**M:** Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*:  
June 19, 27 and 29 (relation of states to Union) (pkt.)  
Webster-Hayne debates, 1830 (pkt.)

**WEDNESDAY, 11/21 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**WEEK 14 (11/26, 11/28) Constitutional issues: "State Rights" and the nature of the Union**

**M:** John C. Calhoun, *A Disquisition on Government*, c. 1830s (pkt.)

**W:** John C. Calhoun, "Fort Hill Address," 26 July 1831 (pkt.)  
Andrew Jackson, Proclamation Regarding Nullification, 10 December 1832 (pkt.)

**WEEK 15 (12/3, 12/5) Constitutional issues: "State Rights" and the nature of the Union;  
Conclusion**

**M:** Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1861 (pkt.)  
Lincoln, Message to Congress in Special Session, 4 July 1861 (pkt.)

**W:** Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom*, 1913 (pkt.)  
Democratic and Republican Party Platforms of 1856 (pkt.)  
Progressive Party 1912 Platform (pkt.)  
Democratic Party Platform of 1964 (pkt.)

**LAST DAY OF CLASS WEDNESDAY, 12/5**

## **The Meaning of Grades:**

“A”: Excellent work demonstrating unusually thorough preparation, genuine comprehension and synthesis, insight and even originality. It is remarkably well-written and presented. The grade signifies not simply very good work but exceptionally fine work.

—in a word, MASTERY.

“B”: Very good, thorough work. The work demonstrates thorough preparation, a grasp of the subject matter and thorough command of the materials of the course. It may not show any special insight or originality, but it demonstrates clear understanding of the material with answers presented in a clear and logically correct style.

—in a word, COMPETENCE.

“C”: The work is acceptable for degree credit. It does not mean “poor” work because we should not award degrees for poor work. The work demonstrates an adequate, though not comprehensive, grasp of the subject matter. Significant information might be overlooked. The work may not display a full appreciation of the meaning or implication of a question. Answers might be too brief to allow sufficient development. An essay might read like a list of facts rather than a well-developed argument. It might appear to be wholly derived from the lecture material, ignoring relevant readings or references to the readings. Though imperfect, the work is, on the whole, of a quality that is acceptable in the sense that the award of the degree for this level of work is warranted.

—in other words, ACCEPTABLE or SATISFACTORY.

“D”: Work that barely qualifies for academic credit. The student has clearly learned something from the course, but the work is shoddy and shows poor or inconsistent preparation. The general impression is of an examination or essay that is inadequately prepared or understood or poorly presented. A student who performs consistently at this level should not expect to be awarded a college degree.

—in other words, POOR BUT PASSING.

“F”: Work that shows little or no preparation or comprehension. Many facts or references are missing or are misunderstood. There is little or no analysis, and the style is poor, confused or incomprehensible. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT NO WORK HAS BEEN DONE, NO CLASSES WERE ATTENDED, NO ESSAYS WERE WRITTEN OR NO LEARNING HAS TAKEN PLACE. A student can attend classes (or at least some or most of them), do the reading (perhaps inconsistently), and hand in the required work and yet receive an “F” if the product does not reflect some minimal command of the materials of the course.

—in a word, UNACCEPTABLE.

### **Guidelines for writing papers**

1. Papers should be double spaced, with 1” margins at the top and bottom and 1 ¼” margins on each side. Use 12 point, Times New Roman font or equivalent.
2. *Always* number your pages.
3. Check spelling, punctuation and capitalization. These should be *perfect*.
4. Correctly cite your sources, even if you paraphrase an author. You may use footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations.

Example: “A wise prince, therefore, has avoided these arms and turned to his own” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 86).

Example: Machiavelli wrote that wise princes rely on their own resources rather than relying on the arms of other men (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 86).

### **General reminders on style:**

5. Vague and unclear writing is the product of vague and unclear thinking. If you are having a difficult time conveying an idea, it is because you are unclear about that idea.
6. Read your essay aloud several times before you submit it. If it sounds awkward or unclear, rewrite your essay until it becomes clear. Remember, the reader does not know what you are trying to say, only what you *are* saying.
7. Organize your ideas in paragraphs; avoid huge leaps from one idea to another between paragraphs. Each paragraph should have some thematic relation to the preceding and following paragraphs.
8. Eliminate wordiness, flowery language, and overly complex or run-on sentences.
9. Avoid pusillanimous phrases such as “I believe,” “I think,” or “In my opinion.”
10. Always strive for clarity. Try to avoid vague words such as “thing,” “stuff,” “this,” and “that.”  
Bad: The main thing that Churchill disliked was this.  
Good: Churchill most disliked inactivity.
11. When quoting another author, make sure the reader knows who is speaking. Never simply drop a quote into your paper.  
Bad: “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”  
Okay: As James Madison wrote, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”  
Better: “If men were angels,” James Madison wrote, “no government would be necessary.”
12. Never introduce a new paragraph with a conjunction; never introduce a sentence with “however” or “therefore.”  
Unacceptable: However, the evidence suggests that he is wrong.  
Acceptable: The evidence, however, suggests that he is wrong.
13. If you quote another author, and the quote is more than four lines in length, use a block quote: single space, full justify, and indent the text an additional ½ inch on each side. For example:  
In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions (Madison, 232).
14. For further advice, consult William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*. It has gone through many editions, is short, inexpensive, lively and invaluable.

**Common grammatical mistakes:**

15. *Never* write in sentence fragments.
  - ALL sentences must have a subject and a verb:
    - Fragment: The extreme hostility toward those against the measure.
  - Prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses can not stand alone without a main clause:
    - Fragment: Although he could not go to class.
16. Make sure nouns and verbs agree in number and tense:
  - Incorrect: He had went to class early.
  - Incorrect: Cindy, along with most of her friends, believe that it was unfair.
17. Never use “he or she” or “they” to indicate a single person; use “he.”
  - Incorrect: If a person (singular) decides to write, they (plural) should write well.
18. Avoid comma faults.
  - Incorrect: She was able, to understand the economy.
19. In a series of three or more terms, use a comma after each (except the last).
  - Correct: red, white, and blue
  - Correct: He baked the cake, iced it, and ate it after supper.
20. Enclose parenthetical expressions between commas.
  - Incorrect: The executive, as Hamilton envisioned should hold a very long term of office.
  - Correct: The executive, as Hamilton envisioned, should hold a very long term of office.
21. Use “that” and “which” correctly. “Which” introduces a subordinate clause and must follow a comma.
  - Incorrect: He sat on the chair which was empty.
  - Correct: He sat on the chair that was empty.
  - Correct: He sat on the chair, which was not being used by anyone.
22. Whenever possible, use active verbs.
  - Passive: The problem was understood by him.
  - Active: He understood the problem.
23. Avoid contractions, such as don’t, can’t, wouldn’t, doesn’t, she’s
24. Use “being” correctly; it is not a substitute for “as,” “since,” or “because.”
  - Incorrect: Although he did not win, Tom accepted the praise, being that he had raced well.
  - Correct: Although he did not win, Tom accepted the praise, as he had raced well.
25. Use apostrophes correctly.
  - Incorrect: Sharons car is red.
  - Incorrect: I solved three problem’s.
26. The possessive of “it” does not use an apostrophe; “It’s” means “it is.”
  - Incorrect: It’s paw was stuck in the rocks.
  - Correct: Its paw was stuck in the rocks.
27. Beware of homonyms (words that sound the same but have different meanings).
  - Incorrect: Their were two problems to be red.
  - Incorrect: There car was read.
  - Incorrect: He lead the others in the fight.
  - Incorrect: The society excepted him as a new member.
28. Do not confuse “than” and “then.” “Than” indicates comparison; “then” indicates time.
  - Incorrect: If he does, than I will go with him.
  - Incorrect: His wisdom is greater then mine.
29. Keep related words together.
  - Incorrect: He noticed a large stain on the rug that was right in the center.
  - Correct: He noticed a large stain right in the center of the rug.
30. Use “second, third,” etc., rather than “secondly, thirdly,” etc.