

**Political Science 308 – American Political Theory****OVERVIEW**

In this course we will examine some of the issues and ideas central to the founding of America and contemporary American politics. Our approach will be thematic, considering the ways in which history and theory have intertwined to inform and influence both American government and broader social/political relations. We will view American history, society and politics as the context through which flows the differing content of theoretical perspectives and constructions. It is the dialogue of context and content which produces what is uniquely American in the realm of political theory.

**REQUIREMENTS**

1. Students are expected to attend all classes, to have read the assigned materials and to participate in class discussion. An excused absence requires written documentation. All medical documentation must be given to me (not merely shown to me) and must include the student's name as well as the name of a medical doctor or clinic with a verifiable phone number. Students who do not regularly attend class will receive an "F" for their class participation grade. Students who miss classes or assignments with a valid excuse should consult with me in order to make up their work in a timely fashion.
2. Written work will consist of two papers and a final exam.
  - **First Paper** – 3-4 pages (topic to be assigned)
  - **Second Paper** – 3-4 pages (topic to be assigned)
  - **Final Exam** – is cumulative; will focus on all the theorists and materials we have read in class. Exam will be open book, open notes

Papers do not require outside research. They are to utilize the course readings and materials com we have considered in class.

*The last chance to hand in a paper is with your final exam. If you hand in a viable paper, the lowest grade will be a D, even with deductions. If you do not hand in a paper, the grade is F.*

Late papers will not be accepted without a grade reduction except for viable medical reasons or death in the family. Absences due to official University activities should be cleared in advance. Written documentation will be required.

Though you should already know the following, it always bears repeating. *Do not plagiarize.* Do not utilize outside sources, even those that supposedly offer merely objective information. Plagiarism will be dealt with severely.

**Students are not allowed to use computers during class lectures and discussions.**

The procedures for withdrawal from this course will conform to university policies.

Students requiring accommodation for university verified disabilities must notify me in advance.

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**GRADING**

- 20% Class participation and attendance  
Participation includes attendance. Excellent participation is when, in the instructor's judgment, the student contributes regularly in ways that demonstrate both an *understanding* of the reading materials *as well as* thoughtful *consideration* of and *reflection* on the issues and themes that are addressed in readings and in class discussion.
- 20% First paper
- 30% Second paper
- 30% Final Exam

**CONTACT**

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- HOURS:
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**COURSE MATERIALS**

**TEXT**

American Social and Political Thought, ed. Andreas Hess  
(New York: New York University Press, 2002)

Additional readings are on BeachBoard.

## Political Science 308 – American Political Theory

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Students should have completed the assigned readings by the date indicated

<u>INTRODUCTION - American Social and Political Thought</u>	<u>WEEK 1</u>
<b>WEEK 1:</b> 1/20 Introduction	
<u>GENERAL AND EXCEPTIONALISM</u>	<u>WEEK 2</u>
<b>WEEK 2:</b> 1/25, 1/27 ASPT: 5-44	
<u>POLITICAL THEOLOGY</u>	<u>WEEK 3</u>
<b>WEEK 3:</b> 2/1, 2/3 ASPT, 45-96	
<u>REPUBLICANISM</u>	<u>WEEK 4</u>
<b>WEEK 4:</b> 2/8, 2/10 ASPT: 97-152	
<u>LIBERALISM</u>	<u>WEEKS 5-6</u>
<b>WEEK 5:</b> 2/15, 2/17 ASPT: 153-178	
<b>WEEK 6:</b> 2/22, 2/24 ASPT: 179-198	
<u>PRAGMATISM</u>	<u>WEEK 7</u>
<b>WEEK 7:</b> 2/29	<b>BeachBoard:</b>
	C.S. Peirce: <i>The Fixation of Belief</i> (107-126)
	Robert Talisse: <i>Peirce, Inquiry, and Politics</i> (54-75)
	John Dewey: <i>Context and Thought</i> (3-21)
	Marion Smiley: <i>Pragmatism as a Political Theory</i> (1-9)
3/2	ASPT: 199-233
<b>*1ST PAPER DUE 3/9*</b>	
<u>DEMOCRACY &amp; POWER</u>	<u>WEEKS 8-9</u>
<b>WEEK 8:</b> 3/7, 3/9 ASPT: 237-269	
<b>WEEK 9:</b> 3/14, 3/16 ASPT: 270-284	
<u>PLURALISM &amp; MULTICULTURALISM</u>	<u>WEEKS 10-12</u>
<b>WEEK 10:</b> 3/21, 3/23 ASPT: 311-331	
<b>WEEK 11</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<b>WEEK 12:</b> 4/4, 4/7 ASPT: 332-352	
<u>CIVIL SOCIETY</u>	<u>WEEKS 13-14</u>
<b>WEEK 13:</b> 4/11, 4/13 ASPT: 353-378	
<b>WEEK 14:</b> 4/18, 4/20 ASPT: 379-400	
<b>*2ND PAPER DUE 4/20*</b>	
<u>...AT THE DAWN OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY</u>	<u>WEEK 15</u>
<b>WEEK 15:</b> 4/25, 4/27 ASPT: 401-461	
<b>WEEK 16:</b> 5/2, 5/4	<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b>
<b>WEEK 17:</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>