

INTELLECTUAL WORLD OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDERS

Political Science 2450H
University of Missouri

Fall 2018
MW 11am-12:15pm
Jesse Hall 410

“We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability.”
King, Letter from Birmingham Jail

INTRODUCTION

Welcome and overview

Putney Debates [excerpt](#) **
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* **
John Adams, *Thoughts on Government* **

DELIBERATION AND ACTION IN THE WORLD OF THE GREEKS

Aeschylus, *Oresteia* *
Plato, [The Apology of Socrates](#) **
Aristotle, [Nicomachean Ethics](#), Books I, II, III, V, VIII, X *
Aristotle, [Politics](#), Books I, III, IV, VII *

COVENANT AND EXODUS IN HEBREW NARRATIVE

Genesis (Creation, Garden, and Fall; Babel) in *The Five Books of Moses* *
Exodus in *The Five Books of Moses* *
John Winthrop, [Model of Christian Charity](#) **
John Witherspoon, [The Dominion of Providence](#) **
Benjamin Franklin, [Appeal in Madison's Notes of the Convention](#) **
[Preamble](#) to U.S. Constitution 1787 **
Texts on Proposed and Adopted U.S. Seals **

REPUBLIC IN ROMAN IMAGINATION

Cicero, [On the Commonwealth](#), Book I **
Madison, [Federalist 10](#), [Federalist 51](#) **

PERSON AND LAW IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Augustine, [City of God](#), Preface; 12.3, 8, 22-27; 14.28; 19 **
Roger Williams, *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience Discussed: and Mr. Cotton's Letter Examined and Answered* (1644, in FGM) **
John Cotton, *Limitation of Government* (1646, in FGM) **

INDIVIDUAL AND STATE IN ENLIGHTENMENT ASPIRATION

Hobbes, [Leviathan](#), Introduction, V, VI, VIII, XI, XIII-XVIII, XXI **
Locke, [Second Treatise](#), I-V, VIII, IX, XII, XIX **
John Wise, *A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches* (1717, in FGM) **
Jonathan Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers* (1750, in FGM) **
[Declaration of Independence](#) **
Jefferson, [Letter to Henry Lee](#), May 8, 1825 **

CONCLUSIONS

Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail **

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

While it is worthwhile to think *about* the American Founders and their world, the more meaningful challenge is to think *with* them as well as those who shaped their world. An invitation to enter the Intellectual World of the American Founders is an opportunity to think with the Founders. In this course, our aim is to understand key sources that shaped the world they shared, the world that supported their deliberation and gave context to their disagreements. We will examine works they would have known, and consider connections with texts contemporary to their own moments.

Specifically, we will attend to themes such as the meaning of human persons, political community, action, power, as well as institutions that might restrain and balance that power. We approach these themes by a journey through key texts. To start, we survey texts that highlight early American endeavors in revolution and then in founding; these texts prompt us to ask: What next? What sources are available in these tasks? Next, we examine by turns Greek, Hebrew, Roman, and Christian sources, along with some examples of how the American Founders make use of those texts. With this context in mind, we examine the Enlightenment turn as well as its influence. Finally, we close our study by looking along with Martin Luther King, Jr. as he considers the need for revolution in his own moment in light of the sources that shaped the Founders.

Note also that this course serves as an introduction to the series' interdisciplinary approach to studying American constitutional democracy. We will address the disciplines one might examine to gain

a comprehensive understanding of America’s intellectual heritage as well as the importance (and rewards) of placing these disciplines in critical conversation with one another.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Essay 1	25 %
Essay 2	30 %
Final Research Paper <i>or</i> Final Exam Essay	30 %
Quality of Contribution	15 %

Grading Scale

A+ = 97-100
A = 93-96
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76
C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69
D = 63-66
D- = 60-62
F = <60

MU has a plus/minus grading scale for final course grades. Your course grade is based on two essays (25% and 30%, respectively), a final research paper or exam (30%), and the quality of your contributions in the course (15%). I will provide further instruction on the expectations for writing. Late material will be penalized. I reserve the right, and make no guarantee, to offer bonus assignments.

OPPORTUNITIES: *Constitutionalism & Democracy Honors College Series and the Certificate or Minor in American Constitutional Democracy*

Successful completion of this course counts towards full completion of the 4-course *Constitutionalism & Democracy Honors College Series*. Students who complete all four courses in the series will earn the Kinder Institute’s Certificate in *American Constitutional Democracy*. Students who go on to complete three hours of approved experiential credit will be eligible to apply for the Kinder Institute’s Minor in *American Constitutional Democracy*. For more information on these programs, please visit the homepage for the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy’s undergraduate programming: <https://democracy.missouri.edu/programs/undergraduate/>

PRESENCE, INTEGRITY, READING

Your success in this class depends upon your presence. The point of University is to think about what matters and about who you want to be. Those are difficult tasks, but tasks more than worth the effort. University life invites us to prepare, to think, and to be present. Presence is about more than simply showing up to class. It is about sharing in the task of understanding and analysis. That said, showing up to class is an important prerequisite for success.

Before each class period, you should read the assigned materials and thoughtfully consider their significance for our study. You will find a **weekly reading schedule** attached to this syllabus. Our task is to read sympathetically in order to read critically—that is, to understand what each author is asking and arguing, and then to thoughtfully evaluate the work. Of course, you should bring your copy of the text to class.

In University, all you have is your integrity. All forms of cheating, including plagiarism and turning in work not your own, diminish what we are here to do. Each of us needs integrity to accomplish the work at hand. If you fail to act with integrity, you will have to face yourself. You may also meet additional appropriate consequences. Persons representing the University of Missouri have promulgated a Code of Student Conduct (https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/programs/ch200/200.010_standard_of_conduct).

CONDUCT AND ELECTRONICS IN CLASS

Class time is set apart for a special purpose. Meaningful participation in University life requires that we respect one another in word and in deed. **The use of laptops, tablets, and phones is not allowed in class**, except when approved for official note-taking exceptions. If you require an exception for the purposes of note-taking, see me. If you have an emergency and need to have your device nearby, let me know before class. Otherwise, put it away and enjoy a space free of distraction, in which you put on hold competing demands for your attention. When you use pen and paper, you avoid the distractions an electronic device would present to you and your neighbor. In addition, studies show that using pen and paper improves your ability to learn.

COURSE CONTENT AND PRIVACY

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under Section 240.040 of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

REQUIRED TEXTS/COURSE PACKET

Texts marked above with a double asterisk (**) are available on Canvas. Texts marked above with a single asterisk (*) are available on Amazon and in the Mizzou Bookstore.

Purchase these books:

Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, University of Chicago Press
ISBN 978-0226307787

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Pearson
ISBN 978-0023895302

Aristotle, *Politics*, Penguin
ISBN 978-0140444216

Moses, *The Five Books of Moses*, Schocken
ISBN 978-0805211191

CANVAS

Login to Canvas to access certain course materials as well as your grades.

RESOURCES

Office Hours. These are for you. Come by during advertised hours, or email to arrange a time.

Group Study. I encourage you to organize your own group study, as it facilitates your understanding of the material and challenges you to think about the major questions and arguments of the texts.

University Writing Center. For tutoring in writing, schedule an appointment at: <https://writingcenter.missouri.edu/>. The writing service can help writers of all levels.

Students with Disabilities. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the Disability Center (disabilitycenter.missouri.edu), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696. Next, notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, see "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

MU Intellectual Diversity. The University of Missouri community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions concerning the quality of instruction in this class may -address concerns to either the Dean or Director of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (<http://osrr.missouri.edu>). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor at the end of this course.