

Thomas Bowen  
Oakton Community College  
tbowen@oakton.edu

## **Political Science 210: American Political Thought Liberty, Equality and the American Dream**

This course is an introduction to the ideas which form the basis of our American political system and which have helped shape America's political history—equality, liberty, individualism and individual rights, and democracy.

### **Table of Contents**

The contents of this module are as follows:

- Theme
- Overview of the course
- Course requirements
- Seminar assignments
- Quick reaction papers
- Syllabus
- Sample reading and exam questions
- Web resources and secondary materials

### **Theme**

The theme of this course is “liberty, equality, and the American Dream.” The concepts of *liberty* and *equality* are deeply embedded in American political and cultural discourse and are fundamental to our self-understanding as a people and country. There appear to be few, if any, major historical events in the life of our nation that have not revolved, to some measure, around these related themes of liberty and equality: the American Revolution, the Civil War, the union struggles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the civil rights movement, women's movement, gay liberation. These ideas are so much a part of the everyday language that we speak that we hardly think too much about precisely what they mean or the way in which their meaning has changed (and been challenged) over time. It is important to investigate and explore the manner in which these concepts mark out important areas of contestation and struggle, and to understand the manner in which they influence our political institutions, legal structures, and cultural and social life.

This course is structured as an introduction to the basic political ideas and concepts that inform contemporary political discussion in the United States. Generally speaking, it is concerned both with

tracing the development of these ideas and concepts in the major theoretical models developed in American political philosophy and ideologies; and with understanding the impact these ideas have had on the institutional structure of the United States' political system. Such a class is clearly suited for a Great Books approach, since part of the aim of such a course is to involve the students in serious, probing, open, and careful discussion of current political positions and perspectives.

## Overview of the Course

### *Methods of Instruction*

This class will function as a seminar, so there will be infrequent and short lectures, but the bulk of the classroom time will be focused on discussion of the various readings, issues, and themes. Short papers (both in-class and take-home), seminar assignments, exams, and quizzes are used to ensure students have mastered the material. Some films may be shown, if time permits.

### *Texts*

Among the texts studied in this course are the following:

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*  
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*  
*Declaration of Independence*  
*Articles of Confederation*  
*The Federalist Papers*  
*Constitution of the United States*  
Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*  
Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*  
Amitai Etzioni, ed., *The Essential Communitarian Reader*  
Various writings by Iris Marion Young, Robert Nozick, John Rawls, and others

Readings from other sources will be provided by the instructor through a course-pack. Most of the readings for this class can be found online. (See the Syllabus below for details on individual works.)

### *Goals and Objectives*

1. The students will understand the perspective of the Founding Fathers and how that perspective helped shape the structures of American government.
2. The students will understand the development of American political thought, and the impact of that development on the evolution of America's political institutions.
3. The students will understand the current dominant philosophical perspectives.

### *Outline of Topics*

This course traces the development of some of the key political values that underlie American political institutions and theory, equality, liberty, individualism and individual rights, and democracy. The development of these values has not been without serious conflict and contestation, and these

conflicts and contests will form a major focus of the course. Since all of these political values begin their modern articulation under the general rubric of liberalism, our course will begin with a study of a classical elaboration of liberalism and will then proceed to trace the conflicts, contests, and development of these values throughout American history and political theory.

1. Origins of the tradition of classical liberalism: John Locke
2. Liberalism, democracy, and republicanism: The formation of U.S. political theory and institutions
  - a. The Revolutionary ideals: Paine and Jefferson
  - b. The Constitutional Convention: *The Federalist Papers*
3. Democracy and equality: Early questions of slavery and suffrage
  - a. The Dred Scott decision
  - b. Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln
  - c. The Civil War amendments
  - d. Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois
  - e. Jane Addams and Susan B. Anthony
4. Democracy and equality: The question of industrial capitalism
  - a. The early Progressives
  - b. The Supreme Court and Roosevelt's New Deal: Competing paradigms for democracy
  - c. Marxism, socialism, and unionization in America
5. Equality and freedom: Modern liberalism, a new emphasis on civil liberties
  - a. Rawls' reformulation of liberalism
  - b. Nozick's anarchic response
  - c. The civil rights movement
  - d. The feminist movement
6. The individual and community
  - a. The communitarian challenge to liberalism
  - b. The Marlboro Man vs. the Citizen
7. The United States in the world: Isolationist, police, or empire?
8. Conclusion: New directions in political theory

## Course Requirements

The assignments in this course consist of quick reaction papers (QRPs), seminar assignments, exams, and quizzes.

### ***Quick Reaction Papers***

A quick reaction paper (QRP) is usually 1-2 pages long (if typed), and is either assigned as an in-class (solo or group) assignment or as a take-home assignment. There is no predetermined number of QRPs, nor is there a predetermined schedule for them. QRPs ask the student to respond to some aspect of the readings or issues or topics under discussion. QRPs are graded on a letter scale: A, B, C, and F.

- A: The student (or students) show a strong understanding of the material and are able to ask useful and critical questions about the reading, suggest interesting possibilities or avenues of investigation, and are able to combine different aspects of the material together in interesting and new ways.

B: The student (or students) show a competent understanding of the material and can ask interesting questions about the reading. They are able to compare and contrast different aspects of the material.

C: The student (or students) are having real difficulty understanding and articulating their understanding of the material.

F: The assignment is not done, or the assignment is totally wrong.

Quick reaction papers will be assigned as they are needed—since there is no predetermined schedule for QRPs, it is incumbent upon the student to make sure that they know when they are due and what they are about. The best way to figure all of this out, by the way, is to come to class regularly. *QRPs are worth 20 percent of the final grade.*

### ***Seminar Assignments***

Since discussion is of extreme importance for this class, each student will be required to *lead and direct* discussion twice during the semester. These “seminar assignments” will involve the following:

The student will be expected to turn in a “seminar handout” that is designed to facilitate discussion and understanding of the material. The “handout” can take many different forms, from a solid outline of the material to a visual representation of the main themes and ideas contained in the material. The only thing it must include is a series of 5–7 questions that the seminar leader wishes to pose to the class. These questions should be oriented towards generating discussion of the material.

The student will be expected to *lead and direct* discussion. This involves the ability to present the basic ideas of the material clearly and succinctly, ask interesting and provocative questions about the material, relate the material to the broader themes of the course and the broader scope of American political thought, and answer questions posed either by the class or instructor about the material. This means that the student should have read and thought a great deal about the material under consideration.

*Each seminar assignment will count for 10 percent of the final grade, for a total of 20 percent.*

### ***Quizzes***

There will be six quizzes given over the course of the semester (one every three or four weeks). Each quiz will be based primarily on the readings and discussions and will consist of short-answer questions. Each quiz will take approximately 15–30 minutes to complete. *The quiz average will account for 20 percent of the final grade.*

### ***Exams***

There will be two exams given in this class: the midterm and the final exam. These exams will require the students to write one to two essays. The precise format of the exams is to be determined. *Each exam will count for 20 percent of the final grade, for a total of 40 percent.*

### ***Grading***

To summarize, the grade constituents in this course are as follows:

Quick reaction papers	20 percent
Seminar assignment	20 percent
Quizzes	20 percent
Exams	40 percent

The grading scale is as follows:

91–100 percent	= A
81–90 percent	= B
71–80 percent	= C
61–70 percent	= D
Below 61	= F

### ***Attendance***

This class will function primarily as a seminar. This requires that students take an active part in beginning, shaping, and developing the content of the course. Thus, student participation is a significant component of this class. Useful discussion requires at least two essential factors. First, students need to be present in class. Second, students must be conversant with the material. Third, students are expected to have completed all of the readings on the date they are due and be read to discuss them. While I do not have an official attendance policy, regular attendance, classroom participation, and coming prepared to deal with the course material are essential to getting a good grade in the class. Class time is an opportunity for you to try out your understanding of the material, ask questions, formulate theories, and put forward possible readings of the texts. Participating in class discussions greatly enhances the likelihood that students will pass the course with an A or a B. Those students who never or rarely participate in class discussion generally do not receive above a C in class.

### ***Participation***

Every class day, each student is required to come in to class with three questions related to the reading material due for that day, the topic under discussion, or the material that was discussed in class on a previous day. The questions should be “real” questions—things that you disagreed with, did not understand, etc. The instructor will periodically ask students to read or ask their questions in class and will often ask other students to respond to those questions.

## **Seminar Assignments**

The purpose of the seminar assignments is twofold. First, they will provide you with the opportunity to develop your understanding of the issues and materials of this course in discussion with the other students. Second, it will directly engage you in the process of generating an in-depth and focused discussion of the issues and readings in this course.

This assignment is not, I repeat, *not* the same as giving a "presentation" on the material. The idea here is for you to develop and direct a discussion of the important issues, topics, questions, etc., that arise from the material.

## ***Requirements***

1. You must let me know at least two weeks in advance when and on what reading you wish to do your seminar assignment(s). You can choose any day or reading that you want, but it is strongly recommended that you pick your first seminar assignment to fall somewhere in the first half of the semester, and your second seminar assignment to fall in the latter half of the semester.
2. Days and readings will be assigned on a first come first served basis—so unless you are careful, you may not get what you want.
3. I strongly urge you to set up an appointment to meet with me during my office hours (or whenever you and I can find a mutually convenient time) to discuss your assignment before it is due.
4. When you are the “seminar leader” your job will involve the following:
  - a. You should prepare a careful reading of the material assigned for the day you are seminar leader.
  - b. You should be able to provide a summary and overview of the material to be discussed during that class (this should focus on what you take to be the main issues, theses, topics, etc.). Note that if you did not understand all of the material, this is not necessarily a problem if you can locate those areas that were proving problematic—raising questions about the material is a key part of the assignment.
  - c. Present an analysis of the material and your own considered and argued position on the material. In other words, you must show me that you can and have thought about the material seriously.
  - d. Develop some questions, issues, or points that arise out of the readings and which can be the focus for a classroom-wide discussion. You should prepare at least 5–7 questions about the material—*these should be written out and a copy provided to the instructor and to the whole class.*
  - e. You should provide the class with some handouts to aid their study, exploration, and examination of the material. Examples of these include outlines of the main points of the texts; diagrams of conceptual systems being discussed; and suggestions for movies, novels, or plays that incorporate or explore some of the conceptual issues being discussed. *The handout should be written out and provided to the instructor and to the whole class.*
  - f. You should also be prepared to answer questions about the material—to the best of your ability. This will be a function of how seriously you have thought about the material.
5. This is a key point: As a seminar leader, your work must be tied directly to the readings we are working on in class. However, *you cannot merely provide a summary and exposition of those readings.* You must also attempt to go beyond the readings, either through direct disagreement; or by extending the arguments and positions you agree with; by using the readings to highlight issues that are not directly or adequately covered by the readings; by working out a theme that extends through more than one philosopher we are covering, etc. The possibilities for working through this material are huge.
6. This may seem like an odd thing to say now, but you should try to have some fun with this assignment. This is not a “test” or a “crucible” for winnowing out the weak. Rather, this is an opportunity for you to explore aspects of the material covered in this course in a manner and direction in which you are interested.

## Quick Reaction Papers

There are two basic types of quick reaction papers:

1. *In-class QRPs*. As the name indicates, these are QRPs that are completed by students in class, either working singly or in small groups. Generally speaking, in-class QRPs are used to help students work through a difficult concept or idea in class. They will sometimes be used to help get discussion going, or they will be used to aid students in the application of a concept to a specific situation or problem. In-class QRPs are weighted exactly the same as take-home QRPs.
2. *Take-home QRPs*. Again, as the name indicates, these are QRPs that the student must complete outside of class and turn in on the following class date (or as otherwise indicated). Take-home QRPs *must be typed* and they must follow basic guidelines for short papers (proper quoting, structure, grammar, etc.). Take-home QRPs are usually assigned in order to facilitate a slightly more in-depth or sustained analysis of an issue, concept, argument, or idea that the class is examining. Please bear this in mind: a QRP is an opportunity for you to really try and work through the important and difficult ideas and problems with which this class deals. If you wish to get an A on these QRPs, then you must actually do this.
3. The basic criteria by which QRPs will be graded are the following:
  - a. The student (or students) show a strong understanding of the material and are able to ask useful and critical questions about the reading, suggest interesting possibilities or avenues of investigation, and are able to combine different aspects of the material together in interesting and new ways.
  - b. The student (or students) show a competent understanding of the material and can ask interesting questions about the reading. They are able to compare and contrast different aspects of the material.
  - c. The student (or students) are having real difficulty understanding and articulating their understanding of the material.
  - d. The assignment is not done, or the assignment is totally wrong.
4. There are two further points that you must bear in mind:
  - a. There is no predetermined number of QRPs or a predetermined schedule for them. They will be assigned as they are needed or as they are appropriate. On the whole, however, you can expect to complete at least 10 QRPs throughout the semester (some mixture of take-home and in-class ones).
  - b. QRPs cannot be turned in late, nor can they be made up. If you miss an in-class QRP, or if you fail to turn in a take-home QRP, they you will simply lose those points.
  - c. All take-home QRPs must be typed. They will not be given credit if they are not typed.

### ***General Paper Guidelines***

This is a college course, and so, of course, I expect the papers to be of college-level quality. For the sake of clarity, I will spell out as precisely as possible what I mean by this.

First, the papers must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Your name, date, etc. should appear *on a title page*. Further, your papers should be within the page limits set for the assignment. No less than the minimum, no more than the maximum number of pages. Title pages and “works cited” pages *do not count* as part of the page requirements. *This means that your work should be clear, precise, and concise.*

Second, you should only use quotes very sparingly. If you do quote, you cannot allow the quote to stand by itself, but must also show that you understand and can explain what the quote means. Finally, if you do quote, you must cite properly (in MLA format). Note that improper citation or lack of citation may result in a charge of plagiarism. If you are found to have plagiarized in your paper, the minimum result is to fail that assignment; the maximum is to fail the course. Make sure that you know what plagiarism is.

Third, papers must be clear and grammatically correct. I urge you to use spell-check and to edit your work carefully. Poor grammar and misspellings will result in a 20-point deduction from the paper grade. Further, if I cannot understand what you are saying (because of poor grammar or a lack of clarity in presentation), then you have effectively not said anything. This will also, obviously, affect your grade.

Finally, and most importantly, the papers should address the assigned question(s) or topic(s) clearly. Your paper should always have a clear thesis statement, and this thesis should always be elaborated and defended with solid evidence and well-organized, careful argumentation.

## Syllabus

(Note: Many of the materials we are reading in class can be found online, so it is not necessary for you to buy all of the books. You can find links to the online material from my web page (<http://servercc.oakton.edu/~tbowen/> then go the class’s home page). *You absolutely must bring a hard copy to class*: we will often refer to the reading material during class and you will need to have this material in front of you. It may seem like a hassle to print the material out, but it is definitely cheaper (particularly if you do it at school), and it is essential that you have a hard copy for class discussion.

### **Week 1:** Introduction: Classical Liberalism and the Dilemmas of American Political Theory

Read: Locke, *Treatise on Government*, part 2, chapters 1–4. This can be found online at: <http://www.class.uidaho.edu/mickelsen/ToC/Locke%202nd%20ToC.htm>. It is organized into chapters so it is rather easy to navigate.

When reading this, carefully examine Locke’s arguments as well as his conclusions. Pay particular attention to how he derives the “natural rights” of humans, and what spurs the impulse to form a government.

### **Week 2:** The Origins of Classical Liberal Theory (continued)

Read: Locke, *Treatise on Government*, part 2, chapters 5–19. See above for source.

Also read the brief passage from John Winthrop’s *On Liberty* which can be found at: <http://www.constitution.org/bcp/winthlib.htm>. This is very short. Compare Winthrop’s conception of liberty to that of Locke.

Here, watch the formation of the civil society that Locke envisions. Pay particular attention to the argument against monarchy, the argument for the separation of powers, the limits of the governmental authority (as well as its fundamental source), and the right of revolution (if it can be called that).

### **Week 3:** The Fundamental Liberal Values: Liberty, Equality, and Democracy

Read: Paine, *Common Sense* (all). Can be found at: <http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Paine/CS-Frame.html>. Consider carefully how Paine's view of basic human political society is different and similar to Locke's. How Lockean is Paine?

Read: *The Declaration of Independence*. Can be found at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/1.htm>. Again, consider this document as incorporating (or not) doctrines of political liberalism; in particular, consider Locke's rationale for revolution and that given (such as it is) by Jefferson in the *Declaration*.

### **Week 4:** The Constitutional Revolution: A Democratic Republic?

Read: *The Constitution of the United States* (with first 10 amendments) and the *Articles of Confederation*. The *Constitution* can be found at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/1.htm>. The *Articles* can be found at: <http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/artconf.html>. When reading these, again, consider them from the perspective of the liberal tradition—is either more true to that tradition? How *democratic* is the U.S. *Constitution* (particularly in comparison with the *Articles*)?

Read: *The Federalist Papers*, numbers 40 and 10. These, and a great deal of other materials, can be found at: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed.htm>. Scroll down and the numbers for all of the *Federalist Papers* are presented as links (there are 85 of them). Simply click on the numbers that are to be read for this week.

### **Week 5:** Early American Political Thought: The Constitutional Revolution (Republic vs. Democracy)

Read: *The Federalist Papers*, numbers 23, 39, and 47. These and a great deal of other material can be found at: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed.htm>. Scroll down and the numbers for all of *The Federalist Papers* are presented as links (there are 85 of them). Simply click on the numbers that are to be read for this week.

Read: Dahl, "Madisonian Democracy," in *A Preface to Democratic Theory* in the course-pack.

[By this point in the course, we should have some basic understanding of the underlying values and concepts of liberal political theory. We should also have some sense of the manner in which those values and concepts are realized in U.S. political institutions and culture. Finally, we should have some sense of the way in which these values and concepts are problematic; that is, the way in which their precise meaning and application can be and have been challenged, and the manner in which they may lead to conflicts within and

between these values and concepts. Thus, we are ready to begin thinking through these concepts in the light of further historical and theoretical developments in liberal politics.]

### **Week 6: Democracy and Liberty: Liberty from Government**

Read: *Civil Disobedience* by Thoreau. Can be found at:  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/19.htm>.

Read: *Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom* (Jefferson). Can be found at:  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/42.htm>.

Read: *Right to Privacy* (Warren and Brandeis, 1890). Can be found at:  
<http://www.louisville.edu/library/law/brandeis/privacy.html>.

Read: Iris Marion Young, “Democracy and Justice,” in course-pack. (Make sure you read this! Compare Young’s conception of democracy with that of Madison and Dahl’s reading of Madison).

All four of these readings deal in some way with the concept of liberty and how that is best understood within the setting of a democracy. What you should do here is try to piece out an understanding of liberty as such from these texts. What is the most important component of liberty? How is it best understood?

### **Week 7: Democracy and Liberty: Slavery and Suffrage**

Read: Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query 14. This can be found at:  
<http://www.pbs.org/jefferson/archives/documents/ih199641.htm>. At the top of the page you can find a series of page numbers (from 229 to 239); click on each individually to read the page.

Read: *Dred Scott v. Sanford*. This can be found at:  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/21.htm>. Read the whole thing; it’s not too long.

Read: American Anti-Slavery Society, *Declaration of Sentiments* (1833). This can be found at:  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/18.htm>.

Read: Frederick Douglass, *An Address to the Colored People of the United States* (1848), and *The Present and Future of the Colored Race in America* (1863). Both of these can be found on reserve in the library in the text: *African-American Philosophy*. Make photocopies and bring to class.

All of these readings deal with the particular relation of African-Americans to the political culture and institutions of the United States. How do we see the concepts of liberty and democracy being articulated in these writings? What is at stake in this question?

### **Week 8: Democracy and Liberty: Slavery and Suffrage**

Read: *Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls* (1848). Can be found at: <http://www.closeup.org/sentimnt.htm>.

Read: *Bradwell v. Illinois* (holding that women can't be lawyers). Can be found at: <http://faculty.uml.edu/sgallagher/supremecourt.htm>.

Read: Sanger, *Woman's Error and Her Debt* (at: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/wmn/wnr/wnr03.htm>), and *Woman's Struggle for Freedom* (at: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/wmn/wnr/wnr04.htm>)

Read: Goldman, *The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation* (at: [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/goldman/aando/emancipation.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/goldman/aando/emancipation.html))

Again, consider these readings from the perspective of the nature of liberty and democracy in the liberal political context.

### **Week 9: Contemporary Theories and Challenges to Liberalism**

Read: Rawls, in course-pack.

We will spend this whole week on John Rawls. His work, in the early 1970s, revitalized political theory in the United States in important ways. So it is important to consider his connections to and differences from early theoretical articulations of liberalism.

[At this point, the course will begin to focus on contemporary theoretical paradigms and discussions of liberalism as a political theory and its application in the United States. The main focus here will be on the conversation that has been taking place recently between three basic parties: new liberals (not the same as neoliberals or neoconservatives, though there are similarities), libertarians, and communitarians. Not everyone we read in this section can be easily assimilated into this division, but the main lines of the conversation can be maintained. While working through this material, we want to focus on the main questions under discussion—i.e., the fundamental basis for principles of social justice, the nature and extent of individual (civil) rights and the proper way to secure and realize these rights, the role of culture and cultural identity in liberal theories of justice, and how liberalism can deal adequately with questions of difference.]

### **Week 10: Contemporary Theories and Challenges to Liberalism**

Read: Nozick, in course-pack.

Read: Spragens, "The Limits of Libertarianism" (parts 1 and 2), in *The Essential Communitarian Reader* on reserve in the library.

Robert Nozick's response to Rawls' basic formulation of the basic principles of a just society is a classic libertarian position. Spragens responds to the libertarian position advocated by Nozick from a "communitarian" perspective (not at all Rawlsian). So make sure you keep a comparison running between all three thinkers here.

**Week 11:** Contemporary Theories and Challenges to Liberalism

Read: Dworkin: in course-pack.

Read: Goodin, “Permissible Paternalism: In Defense of the Nanny State,” in *The Essential Communitarian Reader* on reserve in the library (OCC).

Dworkin’s formulation of the seriousness of rights offers yet another important conception of liberalism. Again, Goodin offers an interesting (perhaps scary?) reinterpretation of the nature of rights.

**Week 12:** Contemporary Theories and Challenges to Liberalism

Read: Iris Marion Young, *City Life and Difference*, in course-pack.

Read: Elshtain, “Democracy and the Politics of Difference,” in *The Essential Communitarian Reader* on reserve in library.

**Week 13:** Contemporary Questions and Issues

Issues of race in contemporary society—readings to be announced.

**Week 14:** Contemporary Questions and Issues

Issues of sex and sexuality in contemporary society—readings to be announced.

**Week 15:** Contemporary Questions and Issues

Issues of the United States’ role in global society—readings to be announced.

**Week 16:** Conclusion and Summation

## Sample Reading and Exam Questions

The texts for this course are all *primary source* materials. Generally speaking, the texts all serve to fulfill two functions: to trace the historical development of the concepts of liberty and equality within American political discourse and institutions; and to elaborate specific themes, questions, or struggles about the meaning and applicability of these concepts. For example, Locke’s *Second Treatise*, *The Federalist Papers*, and the writings of Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and John Dewey, among others, all serve to trace out specific historical developments and struggles about the meanings of liberty and equality and their interrelation.

Below you will find examples of questions that I have used for some of these texts. These questions can also serve as the basis for papers, exams, and quizzes.

## ***John Locke, Second Treatise on Government***

1. What is the “state of nature”? (What are the basic characteristics of human beings in the state of nature?)
2. Why does Locke say that liberty in the state of nature is not the same as *license*? What prevents this?
3. What is the “law of nature” or “law of reason”?
4. What are the basic commandments of this law?
5. What are the basic rights that derive from the law of nature? (Start with the most basic right we have, and you can proceed to deduce, more or less, all the other rights that Locke says we have—these are our basic natural rights.)
6. How does Locke derive a right to private property beginning with the fact of common property?
7. How is political or civil society distinct from other forms of society?
8. How does Locke argue against the possibility of absolute monarchy?
9. What is the only legitimate means of either entering or being subject to a particular civil society?
10. Why would people leave the state of nature to join civil society?
11. How does Locke justify majority rule?
12. What are the basic rights we give over when joining civil society, and what rights do we retain? Are there any substantive limits on these rights?
13. What is the basic end (or goal) of civil society?
14. What are the basic powers of civil society? How are they arranged?
15. What is the definition of tyranny?
16. What are the two ways that a government (civil society) is dissolved from within? How does Locke respond to the problem of rebellion and revolution?

## ***Thomas Paine, Common Sense***

1. How does Paine distinguish between society and government?
2. What are the basic rights that Paine articulates?
3. How does government become necessary? Consider here the basic story that Paine tells of the formation of governments per se.
4. What are the basic schema that Paine sets out as the proper form of government (near the end of the story he tells in part 1—the process of representation)?
5. What do the “*strength of government and the happiness of the governed*” depend on?
6. What is Paine’s basic critique of the English constitution?
7. What are at least three of the basic reasons why monarchy (absolute) and primogeniture are fundamentally flawed forms of government?

## **Declaration of Independence**

1. What are the triad of rights that are laid out in the *Declaration*?
2. What are at least some of the basic charges leveled at King George?
3. What are the self-evident truths listed in the *Declaration*?

## **Articles of Confederation *and* the Constitution of the United States**

1. What are the major points of difference between the *Articles* and the *Constitution*?
2. Who authored the *Constitution* and for what purpose (this is a trick question)?
3. What does it mean to say that the *Constitution* is an enumerated document?
4. What are the various branches of government (easy one)?
5. Why were the first ten amendments felt to be necessary?

## **The Federalist Papers 40 *and* 10**

1. Who is Publius?
2. What is the thesis of *Federalist* 40?
3. How does Madison defend against the charge that the Constitutional Convention overstepped its authority in drafting and proposing the *Constitution*?
4. What is the primary thesis of *Federalist* 10?
5. How does Madison define “faction?”
6. What are the causes and the evils of faction?
7. What are the possible ways of countering the evils of faction (which way works)?
8. How might the proposed constitutional system alleviate the evils of faction?
9. What is the distinction between a pure democracy and a republic (i.e., the relative value of the latter in dealing with faction versus the former)?

## **Thoreau, Civil Disobedience**

1. What are Thoreau’s basic complaints about government?
2. Identify the basic structure of Thoreau’s *individualism*—how does this square with the conceptions of “democracy” we see laid out in Young and Madison?
3. What does an individual owe the government, according to Thoreau?
4. What does an individual owe him/herself?
5. What was Thoreau jailed for? Why did he do it—i.e., what was his rationale?
6. How does Thoreau define a “peaceable revolution”?
7. How, in the end, does Thoreau attempt to justify his position?

## Web Resources and Secondary Materials

Almost all of the primary source materials for this class can be found on the Web, and just about all of it is in the public domain.

You can find:

1. *The Federalist Papers* at the Avalon Project from Yale Law School:  
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed01.htm>.
2. *Anti-Federalist Papers* as part of the Liberty Library of Constitutional Classics:  
<http://www.constitution.org/afp/afp.htm>.
3. A useful collection of slave narratives is at American Studies Hypertexts at the University of Virginia: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/wpa/wpahome.html>.
4. A very broad general collection of American political writings can be found at American Political Thought on the Web: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Fields/9206/welcome.html>.
5. John Locke's *Two Treatises on Government, Book 2*, can be found through this website:  
<http://www.class.uidaho.edu/mickelsen/ToC/Locke%202nd%20ToC.htm>.

There are also a large number of online syllabi and other course-related materials that can be found through any search. Most of these are transitory, so it does not make sense to post their addresses here.