

GVPT 844
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FALL, 2006
Office hours: Wed 4:00-5:30
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DEMOCRACY, AMERICAN STYLE

Slightly over a quarter of a century ago, we celebrated the bicentennial of our revolution. A little more than a decade later, the French celebrated the bicentennial of theirs. Though both revolutions started from many common aspirations – above all, a desire for self-government, freedom, and equality – they resulted in highly distinct forms of government. And they certainly had a different early history, ours being unusually tranquil. We are fortunate to have had an unusual son of the French revolution, one who was an exceptionally intelligent student of Montesquieu and Rousseau, analyze our young republic from the perspective of what it promised for democracy.

For decades, serious citizens have turned to Alexis de Tocqueville and to his *On Democracy in America* to gain insight into the American republic. The goal of this course, then, is to strive to appreciate de Tocqueville's understanding of our enterprise in self-government. We are especially fortunate in that we have at our disposal a new and most reliable translation of Tocqueville's most important writing.

Requirements for credit: Although Tocqueville's book is extraordinarily large, it can be read with profit in one semester. It will be in the best interest of students to read the assigned material, take notes, and organize on paper the general lines of argument prior to class. Such preparation will take at least 9 hours, maybe more.

Two papers are required in this course. One, to be presented or handed in at the beginning of one of class sessions 2-14, should provide a critical analysis of the material for that session in about 1750-2000 words (7-8 double-spaced pages). The other, of 3500-3750 words in length (14-15 double-spaced pages), should offer a comprehensive statement of Tocqueville's teaching or some central point that arises in it. It is due on December 20, that is, one week after the last day of classes.

Students should, by all means, take advantage of office hours both to become acquainted with me and to discuss any problems that arise.

The short paper will count for 40% of the grade, the long paper for 50%, and intelligent contribution to class discussion for 10%.

For the record:

1. The UMD Code of Academic Integrity will be enforced. In short, no cheating. See www.inform.edu/CampusInfo/Departments/po/code_acinteg.html.
2. Students with disabilities should see the instructor. Their needs will be accommodated.
3. The UMD policy of respecting the religious observances of students or their participation in university activities will be followed. I must be informed of these absences by September 13, 2006.

READING SCHEDULE

1. Aug 30 INTRODUCTION TO COURSE plus *On Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part One: Intro., pp. 3-15
2. Sep 6 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part One: Chaps. 1-4, pp. 19-55
3. Sep 13 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part One: Chaps. 5-7, pp. 56-104
4. Sep 20 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part One: Chap. 8, pp. 105-161
5. Sep 27 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part Two: Chaps. 1-5, pp. 165-220
6. Oct 4 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part Two: Chaps. 6-8, pp. 220-264
7. Oct 11 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part Two: Chap. 9, pp. 264-302
8. Oct 18 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part Two: Chap. 10, pp. 302-396
9. Oct 25 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Part One: Notice & Chaps. 1-10, pp. 399-439
10. Nov 1 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Part One: Chaps. 11-21, pp. 439-476 and Vol. II, Part Two: Chaps. 1-10, 479-508
11. Nov 8 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Part Two: Chaps. 11-20, pp. 508-532 and Vol. II, Part Three: Chaps. 1-7, pp. 535-557
12. Nov 15 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Part Three: Chaps. 8-18, pp. 558-599

NOVEMBER 22: NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

13. Nov 29 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Part Three: Chaps. 19-26, pp. 599-635
14. Dec 6 *On Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Part Four: Chaps. 1-8, pp. 639-676 and CONCLUSION TO COURSE

Required text: *Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). ISBN 0-226-80532-8 \$35.00.

The reading for each class is, admittedly, substantial. Still, it needs to be done before class so that we can accord Tocqueville's argument the careful attention it deserves. There are, nonetheless, some other readings you might want to consult so as to gain broader knowledge.

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Alexis de Tocqueville	<i>The Old Regime and the Revolution</i>
	<i>Selected Letters on Politics and Society</i> , ed. Roger Boesche
Montesquieu	<i>On the Spirit of the Laws</i>
Jean-Jacques Rousseau	<i>On the Social Contract</i>
Edmund Burke	<i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i>
François-René de Chateaubriand	<i>Voyage to America, 1827</i>

SECONDARY SOURCES:

André Jardin	<i>Tocqueville: A Biography</i>
John C. Koritansky	<i>Alexis de Tocqueville and the New Science of Politics</i>
Jean-Claude Lamberti	<i>Tocqueville and the Two Democracies</i>
Pierre Manent	<i>Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy</i>
George W. Pierson	<i>Tocqueville in America</i> (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996; orig. pub. 1938)
Marvin Zetterbaum	"Alexis de Tocqueville" in <i>History of Political Philosophy</i> , Leo Strauss & Joseph Cropsey, eds., 3rd edition.