

GVPT 100: Principles of Government and Politics
Autumn Semester, 2008
7:30-8:45, Tydings 1132

Instructor: B. Newton

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Office Hours: 6:30-7:15, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Tydings 3104D

"An Enlightened Argument in Action"

This course introduces students to the principles of government and politics, is a required course for majors of Government and Politics and counts as a core course for university requirements. GVPT 100 cannot be a comprehensive course--political science is an exceedingly large discipline and any such attempt would mean sacrificing quality for quantity. Thus we will be working thematically, analyzing what is general and applying it to what is particular.

We will be focusing on the following themes: the modern political project generally, the American experiment specifically, constitutionalism, democratic theory, practice and critique. The "principles of government and politics" are first introduced in an analysis of modernity, being the general aims of the Enlightenment project (Part One). These aims are then narrowed specifically to the American experiment, observing how Enlightenment arguments were interpreted and applied in practice over time to their contemporary form (Part Two). Finally, we consider the future of democratic practice, both in the creation of an imaginary republic and from the critique of democracy's discontents (Part Three).

Course Requirements:

Evaluation for credit will be based on three short essays (750-1000 words or 3-4 double-spaced pages), two in-class essay examinations and intelligent classroom participation. Essays and examinations count for 90 percent of the student's grade; the remaining 10 percent from classroom discussions.

Short essay topics will be given the class before they are due, essays being handed in on September 23, October 9 and November 18. Late essays will be penalized 1/3 a letter grade (e.g., from A to A-) each day late. Essays handed in more than seven days late will not be accepted.

The first in-class examination will be on October 30, the second, a final examination, December 16. No make-ups will be permitted.

Classroom conduct as well as academic honesty is strictly enforced as per UMD policy. The UMD policy respecting religious observances is

followed; students are to report their intended absence no later than October 1. To be excused for any other absence, illness or otherwise, written documentation is required. More than three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

Course Books:

Kramnick, *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*
Hamilton, Madison and Jay, *The Federalist Papers*
Storing, *The Anti-Federalist*
Ackerman, *We the People: Transformations*
Murphy, *Constitutional Democracy*
Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*
Rosen, *The Supreme Court* (recommended)

Reading Schedule:

Note bene: Students are to have prepared reading selections before each class. Expect to be called on in class frequently.

Introduction

Sept. 2: Syllabus and Course Overview

Part One: An Enlightened Argument

Book: *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*

Sept. 4: An Overview of the Enlightenment Spirit

Kramnick, Introduction, pgs. ix-xxiii
Kant, What is Enlightenment?
Diderot, "Encyclopedie"
Condorcet, The Future Progress of the Human Mind

Sept. 9: Reason and Nature

Condorcet, The Utility of Science
Franklin, Letter to Joseph Priestly
The Economist, "Nothing to lose but their chains" (to be distributed)

Sept. 11: Reason and God

Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration
Montesquieu, "If there is a God..."
Voltaire, Reflections on Religion
Jefferson, "Religion...my views on it..."
Franklin, "Something of my religion..."
The Economist, "Flags veils and sharia"; "A narrow scrape for
democracy" (to be distributed)

Sept. 16: Reason and Society I

History and Progress:

Bolingbroke, The Utility of History
Turgot, On Progress
Rousseau, A Critique of Progress
Voltaire, In Defense of Modernity

The Economy and Markets:

Addison, The Royal Exchange
Smith, The Wealth of Nations

Sept. 18: Reason and Society II

Politics and the State:

Locke, The Second Treatise of Civil Government
Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws
Voltaire, Political Essays
Paine, Common Sense
The American Declaration of Independence
The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen

First Essay Topic Given

Sept. 23: Review

First Essay Due

Part Two: The American Experiment

Sept. 25: Proponents of the Constitution I

The Articles of Confederation
The Constitution of the United States
The Federalist, Nos. 1, 6, 9, 10, 15, 23

Sept. 30: Proponents of the Constitution II

The Federalist, Nos. 39, 47, 51, 63, 68, 70, 78

Oct. 2: Opponents of the Constitution I

The Anti-Federalist, Essays of Brutus, Nos. 1-7

Oct. 7: Opponents of the Constitution II

The Anti-Federalist, Essays of Brutus, Nos. 11-16

Second Essay Topic Given

Oct. 9: Review

Second Essay Due

Oct. 14: Higher Lawmaking

We the People: Transformations, Chapters to be Announced

Oct. 16: The Federalists

We the People: Transformations, Chapters to be Announced

Oct. 21: Reconstruction

We the People: Transformations, Chapters to be Announced

Oct. 23: The New Deal

We the People: Transformations, Chapters to be Announced

Oct. 28: Review

Oct. 30: **First Examination**

Part Three: Democracy and Its Discontents

Nov. 4: Creating a Constitutional Democracy I

Constitutional Democracy, Chapter 1

Nov. 6: Creating a Constitutional Democracy II

Constitutional Democracy, Chapter 2

Nov. 11: Creating a Constitutional Democracy III

Constitutional Democracy, Chapter 3

Nov. 13: Creating a Constitutional Democracy IV

Constitutional Democracy, Chapter 4

Third Essay Topic Given

Nov. 18: Review

Third Essay Due

Nov. 20: A Theory of the Democratic Process I

Democracy and Its Critics, Chapters 6-7

Nov. 25: A Theory of the Democratic Process II

Democracy and Its Critics, Chapters 8-9

Nov. 27: Thanksgiving, No Class

Dec. 2: Problems in the Democratic Process I

Democracy and Its Critics, Chapters 10, 14

Dec. 4: Problems in the Democratic Process II

Democracy and Its Critics, Chapters 12-13

Dec. 9: The Limits and Possibilities of Democracy

Democracy and Its Critics, Chapters 20-21

Dec. 11: Review

Dec. 16: **Final Examination**