

“The foundation of our empire was not laid in the gloomy age of Ignorance and Superstition, but at an Epoque when the rights of man were better understood and more clearly defined, than at any former period; the researches of the human mind, after social happiness, have been carried to a great extent; the Treasures of knowledge, acquired through a long succession of years, by the labours of Philosophers, Sages, and Legislatures, are laid open for our use, and their collected wisdom may be happily applied in the Establishment of our forms of Government; the free cultivation of Letters, the unbounded extension of Commerce, the progressive refinement of Manners, the growing liberality of sentiment, and above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation, have had a meliorating influence on mankind and increased the blessings of Society. At this auspicious period, the United States came into existence as a Nation, and if their Citizens should not be completely free and happy, the fault will be intirely their own.”

-- George Washington, *Circular to the States* (1783)

“In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of Governments, as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing Constitution of a country; that facility in changes upon the credit of mere hypotheses and opinion exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypotheses and opinion: and remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a Government of as much vigour as is consistent with the perfect security of Liberty is indispensable.”

-- George Washington, *Farewell Address* (1796)

**Political Science 7980**  
**Seminar in American Political Thought**  
**Fall 2006**

**Instructor:** James Stoner, Stubbs 208B  
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**Office Hours:** Mondays, 3:00-4:00  
Wednesdays, 3:00-4:00, and by appointment

**Books available for purchase:**

- Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (Vintage) [ISBN: 0679736883]
- Michael Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic* (Notre Dame) [ISBN: 0268014876]
- David C. Hendrickson, *Peace Pact: The Lost World Of The American Founding* (Kansas) [ISBN: 0700614931]
- Bernard Cohen, *Science and the Founding Fathers* (Norton) [ISBN: 039331510X]
- Daniel Dreisbach, Mark Hall, &, Jeffrey Morrison, eds., *The Founders on God and Government* (Rowman & Littlefield) [ISBN: 0742522792]

- Adrienne Koch, ed., *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention Reported by James Madison* (Norton) [ISBN: 0393304051]
- Hamilton, Madison, Jay, *The Federalist* (Liberty Fund) [ISBN: 0865972893]
- Herbert Storing, ed., *The Anti-Federalist* (Chicago) [ISBN: 0226775658]
- Morton Frisch, ed., *Selected Writings and Speeches of Alexander Hamilton* (AEI) [ISBN: 0844735515]
- W. B. Allen, ed., *George Washington: A Collection* (Liberty Fund) [ISBN: 0865970602]
- Jean Yarbrough, ed., *The Essential Jefferson* (Hackett) [ISBN: 0872207471]
- Marvin Meyers, ed., *The Mind of the Founder: Sources of the Political Thought of James Madison* (Brandeis) [ISBN: 0874512018]
- Lester Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* (North Carolina) [ISBN: 0807842303]

**Course requirements:**

- Attendance at all class sessions and participation in discussions
- 2-page papers on three of the first five books, due in class (and sometimes to be read)
- Research paper, 15-20 pages, on a topic approved by the instructor (due December 15)

**SYLLABUS:**

Mon., 8/28 Introduction  
 James R. Stoner, Jr., "Is There a Political Philosophy in the Declaration of Independence?" *Intercollegiate Review*, vol. 40, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2005), pp. 3-11

**I. Five Perspectives on the Founding**

Mon., 9/11 Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*  
 Mon., 9/18 Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic*  
 Mon., 9/25 Hendrickson, *Peace Pact*  
 Mon., 10/2 Cohen, *Science and the Founding Fathers*  
 Mon., 10/9 Morrison, Hall, & Dreisbach, *The Founders on God and Government*

**II. Writing the Constitution**

Mon., 10/16 *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*, May 14-June 28, pp.1-211  
 Mon., 10/23 *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*, June 29-August 11, pp. 211-437  
 Mon., 10/30 *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*, August 13-September 17, pp. 437-659  
 Mon., 11/6 selections from *The Federalist* and Storing, ed., *The Anti-Federalist*

### **III. Establishing the New Republic**

Mon., 11/13 selections from *Selected Writings and Speeches of Alexander Hamilton*,  
ed. Frisch  
selections from *George Washington: A Collection*, ed. Allen

Mon., 11/20 selections from *The Essential Jefferson*, ed. Yarbrough  
selections from *The Mind of the Founder*, ed. Meyers

Mon., 11/27 selections from the Constitutional Conventions in Massachusetts, New  
York, and Virginia, in Merrill Peterson, ed., *Democracy, Liberty, and  
Property: The State Constitutional Conventions of the 1820s*

### **IV. Reflections on the Coming of Democracy**

Mon., 12/4 *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, pp. 283-614