POLITICS IN AMERICA: LIBERTY AND EQUALITY

This course considers both normative and empirical questions about American politics; that is, we will ask both how the system should work and how it does work. Questions we'll address include: What were the Founders' goals in creating the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and have these been achieved? Did the Founders' politics rest on an accurate conception of human nature? Does the American political system, two hundred years later, work well? How do we judge whether it is working well, what should our standards be? How do we achieve both liberty and equality? And what exactly do we mean by these terms? Is liberty primarily the liberty to act in one's own self-interest, or does it also involve working for the common good? Does equality go beyond equality before the law and equal opportunity? Are Americans too preoccupied with individual rights? How much do we participate in politics? Is the level or nature of American political participation problematic? What about the dangerous aspects of participation? Of non-participation?

Readings:

The following required texts are available at the bookstore:


George McKenna & Stanley Feingold, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues* (10th ed.)

Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism*

Peter Bachrach & Aryeh Botwinick, *Power and Empowerment: A Radical Theory of Participatory Democracy*

Additional required readings (marked "R" in the syllabus) are on reserve at the library. Students are also required to read the New York Times Monday through Friday, as we will be discussing articles in class. Subscriptions can be purchased at the bookstore, individually or in groups. The Times is available at the library and on the Web as well, at www.nytimes.com.

Course Requirements:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm (Tues. Oct. 13)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; Discussion Leadership</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responses to Readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper (due Thurs. Nov. 12, 8-10 pp.)</td>
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<td>Final Exam (Thurs. Nov. 19, 8:30 a.m.)</td>
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All students are expected to come to class having closely read the day's assignment; you may sometimes be called on in class. Active participation in class discussion is expected.
You are also required to e-mail me a response to each day's assigned readings by 9:00 a.m. of the day the assignment is due. What I am looking for is a thoughtful and reasoned but informal response--several paragraphs will be adequate--to what you have read. It's important that you do more than summarize the argument(s) being made in the readings, although this is a good place to start; what I'm most interested in is your reaction. You may be asked in class to discuss your response to the day's readings. While I will not be able to read all the responses on any given day, I will always read some of them. Note: Feel free to comment on any New York Times articles which have struck you. (This would be in addition to your several paragraphs on the assigned readings.)

The class will be regularly breaking up into small groups for discussion. Each member of the class will lead a small group discussion of about half an hour once during the term.

There will be one paper and two exams. Naturally, you are expected to do your own work. When writing a paper, if you're not sure whether you need to footnote a particular passage, talk to me or go ahead and footnote it just to be safe. Carleton's policy on academic honesty is found in the Student Handbook. Late papers will be penalized: your grade will be lowered one notch (e.g., from A- to B+, or B+ to B, is one notch) for each day it is late.

I'll be away on Sept. 22, Oct. 6, and Oct. 13 because of Jewish holidays. However, the class will meet on those days. On the 13th a midterm will be given. There will also be videos on campaign finance and the civil rights movement, and a tape on hate speech. If you are not observing these holidays yourself, this is a good time to read ahead. If you are observing any of these holidays, please see me about making up the work.

Office Hours: W 10:00-11:30 & 2:30-4:30, Th 4:30-5:00

Feel free to come see me in my office should you have any questions or difficulties with the course, or if you just want to pursue a topic we've touched on in class or in the readings. I'll be glad to set up an appointment if you can't make my regular office hours. I can be reached at home at (651) 699-6242, though please do not call after 9 p.m. My e-mail address is scohen@carleton.edu.

I. FOUNDATIONS

Th Sept. 10

Introduction

Tu Sept. 15

Lowi & Ginsberg (hereafter "L&G"), chs. 1-2

Taking Sides (hereafter "TS"), #1 (America a success?)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart" (R)

Declaration of Independence and Constitution, L&G, A3-A21

Th Sept. 17

Federalist 10 and 51, L&G, A22-A28

Michael Parenti, "The Constitution as an Elitist Document,"

in How Democratic Is the Constitution? (R)
Martin Diamond, "The American Idea of Equality," in As Far as Republican Principles ... (R)

Tu Sept. 22 (Rosh Hashanah)

video: "So You Want to Buy a President?"

Th Sept. 24

L&G, ch. 3

McCulloch v. Maryland (R)

Walter Berns, "The Meaning of the Tenth Amendment," in A Nation of States (R)

Tu Sept. 29

Marbury v. Madison (R)

TS, #8 ("original intent")

from Judges on Judging:

William Rehnquist, "The Notion of a Living Constitution" (R)

William Justice, "A Relativistic Constitution" (R)

Richard Posner, "What Am I, a Potted Plant?" (R)

II. CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

Th Oct. 1

TS, #16 (abortion)

Naomi Wolf, "Our Bodies, Our Souls" (R)

Tu Oct. 6 (Sukkot)

video: "Eyes on the Prize"

Th Oct. 8

Brown v. Board of Education (R)

Patricia Williams, "The Death of the Profane," in The Alchemy of Race and Rights (R)

G. Kindrow, "The Candidate," in Debating Affirmative Action (R)

TS, #12 (affirmative action)

TS, #13 (hate speech)

Michael Sandel, Democracy's Discontent, 3-8 and 71-90 (R)

David P. Redlawsk, "'We Don't Need No Thought Control': The Controversy over Multiculturalism at Duke," in Hate Speech on Campus (R)
Carleton Statement on Discrimination & Academic Freedom (R)

Tu Oct. 13 (Simchat Torah)

**MIDTERM**

tape on hate speech

### III. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Th Oct. 15

L&G, chs. 8-10

Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, & Henry Brady, *Voice and Equality*, chs. 1 & 17 (R)

Tu Oct. 20

L&G, ch. 11

TS, #3 (PACs)

*Canarsie*, Introduction, chs. 1-3

Th Oct. 22

*Canarsie*, chs. 4-5

Tu Oct. 27

*Canarsie*, chs. 6-8

Patricia Williams, "Teleology on the Rocks," in *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (R)

Th Oct. 29

*Power and Empowerment*, Preface and chs. 1-3

Tu Nov. 3

*Power and Empowerment*, chs. 6-9

### IV. INSTITUTIONS

Th Nov. 5

L&G. chs. 5 and 7

TS, #5 (term limits)


Tu Nov. 10
L&G, ch. 6

TS, #6 (presidency)


**V. CONCLUSIONS**

Th Nov. 12

**PAPER DUE**

Mark Edmundson, "On the Uses of a Liberal Education: I. As Lite Entertainment for Bored College Students" (R)

Earl Shorris, "II. As a Weapon In the Hands of the Restless Poor" (R)

Th Nov. 19

**FINAL EXAM** at 8:30 a.m.