

THE AMERICAN FOUNDING

PSC Graduate Program

Fall 2007

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the fundamental issues of the American founding era. These ideas and debated issues include: the nature of the federal union, the meaning of sovereignty, the problem of majority faction, the practicability of the extended republic, the basis of representation, the efficacy of separation of powers and checks and balances, the institution of slavery, the character of popular government and the need for civic responsibility. The course is divided into two parts. In the first half of the semester we will concentrate on the Federal Convention of 1787; in the second half we will focus on the issues prominent in the ratification debates over the proposed Constitution.

II. READINGS

Required:

James Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*, ed. Adrienne Koch (W. W. Norton, 1987).

Hamilton, Madison & Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter and Charles Kesler (Signet Classics, 1999).

The Essential Antifederalist, eds. William B. Allen and Gordon Lloyd (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

Friends of the Constitution, eds. Colleen Sheehan and Gary McDowell (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Press, 1998).

Recommended:

Diamond, Martin, *The Founding of the Democratic Republic* (Peacock Publishers, 1981).

Van Doren, Carl, *The Great Rehearsal* (any edition).

III. CLASS PREPARATION AND CONTRIBUTION

This class will contain a significant portion of in-class dialogue and debate. In the first part of the semester each of you will represent a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787. In the second part of the semester you will participate in debates between the Federalists and Antifederalists. You are asked to make a significant and meaningful contribution to class debates and discussions. In order to accomplish this, you will need to *attend the classes, complete the readings for each class, and spend time thinking about the issues raised in the materials you have read.* I ask you to take this responsibility with the utmost seriousness. Your own progress of learning, as well as the quality of the course will largely depend on the extent to which you do this.

IV. PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. There is no class the first week due to my being out of the country. For the second week of class a brief (three page) character sketch of the Convention delegate (or primary delegate) you are representing is due (include a bibliography with this). You will present a brief, informal, informative, summary view of your delegate to the class (either this week or in the future; we will begin with who arrived at the Convention first and proceed accordingly. Know the date of that you delegate takes his seat in the Convention). Things you might mention or discuss include the delegate's home state, age in 1787, physical description, personality traits/quirks, prior public service, philosophical and political views, particular friends or allegiances, etc.

B. One brief essay (one to two pages each) is assigned weekly throughout the first half of the semester. These should be typed, doubled-spaced. Each essay should highlight the major issues at hand for that week's reading assignment and your character's position and reasoning on those issues, whenever applicable.

C. Brief essays are also required each week for the second half of the semester. Each essay should identify, discuss **and analyze** one of the major issues in the dispute between the Federalists and Antifederalists, as contained in the readings for that week.

Note: Brief essays will not be graded in the traditional fashion. In the first half of the semester the essays will comprise a log that follows your delegate's concerns and positions throughout the Constitutional Convention; in the second part of the semester the essays will constitute a summary statement of the major issues in the Ratification Debate. The first group of essays is due midterm week in class. The second group of essays is due in class the penultimate week of the semester. It is very much in your interest to keep up on the assignments each week, however.

D. The last week of classes a longer essay (10-15 pages) is due. This paper should focus on one of the issues of the founding period, explaining and analyzing the arguments over the issue. It should involve research and endnotes. Here are two examples for this assignment: 1) If you were to choose the issue of the influence of the size of the territory on republican government, you might choose to set forth the conflicting arguments of Publius and Brutus, showing the argument of each and why they disagreed over whether republican government should be established over a small or a large territory. You would want to cite passages from the writings of Brutus and from *The Federalist*, and perhaps from other writings by Madison. 2) If you were to choose the issue of representation and the debate over this at the Constitutional Convention, you might want to discuss the difference between the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan, and the resolution of this issue in the Great Compromise. Some questions to consider might be: Was this debate primarily one between the large and the small states? Or were other issues involved? If so, what were they? Discuss and analyze.

NOTE: Be sure you are very familiar with the university policy about writing with integrity. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Also, please make and keep both a disk and a hard copy of your papers before submitting them.

V. EXAMINATIONS

There will be a final examination in this course. This comprehensive examination may include

questions on assigned readings, assigned class handouts, lectures, and class discussions. It may include written and/or oral segments.

VI. GRADING FOR THIS COURSE

Grading in this course is based on your class preparation and contribution to class debates and discussions, delegate presentation, paper, brief essays and final examination. Each of these responsibilities is of critical importance.

VII. SCHEDULE

Part I: Framing the Constitution

Week 1: August 27-31: No Class

September 3: Labor Day: No Class

Week 2: September 4-7

Character Sketch Presentations

Week 3: September 10-14

Character Sketches, continued

Readings 1: *NOD* 23-81

Issues include: The Virginia Plan, representation, the executive, Ratification, the small versus the large republic, nationalism versus federalism

Readings 2: *NOD* pp. 81-129

Issues include: representation, New Jersey plan, authority of the Convention, federalism versus nationalism

Week 4: September 17-21

Character Sketches, continued

Readings 1: *NOD* 129-180

Issues include: Virginia Plan versus New Jersey Plan, sovereignty, monarchy versus democracy versus republicanism, representation

Readings 2: *NOD* 181-231

Issues include: equality versus class distinctions, general versus state governments, representation, majority injustice, rival interests

Week 5: September 24-28

Readings 1: *NOD* 231-256

Issues include: rival interests, representation

Readings 2: *NOD* 256-297

Issues include: representation, slavery, rival interests

Week 6: October 1-5

Readings 1: *NOD* 297-347

Issues include: Great Compromise, national negative on state laws, the

executive, separation of powers, impeachment
Readings 2: *NOD* 347-385
Issues include: ratification, the executive, Committee of Detail, qualifications of voters and office holders, location of the capital

Week 7: October 8-12

Readings 1: *NOD* 385-485
Issues include: Report of Committee of Detail, suffrage, qualifications and eligibility of office holders, slavery and representation, money bills, division of powers and checks and balances, taxation

Readings 1: *NOD* 485-659
Issues include: treason, taxation, slavery, representation ratio, general vs state governmental powers, division of powers among the branches of the general government, rival interests, Committee of Style, the executive, representation ratio, bill of rights, dissent, signing of the Constitution, adjournment *sine die*

Log Due

Fall Break: October 13-21

Part II: The Ratification Debates

Week 8: October 22-26

Readings: *The Essential Antifederalist* (Hereafter *EA*) Section 1. *The Federalist Papers* (Hereafter *FP*) #s 1, 20, 39. *Friends of the Constitution* (Hereafter *Friends*) 1-5, 65-70, 71-87, 88-92, 250-256.
Issues include: The nature of the union, sovereignty

Week 9: October 29-November 2

Readings: *EA* Section 2. *FP* # 9. *Friends* 183-195, 332-336, 340-344, 345-348, 349-354, 491-497, 52-56.
Issues include: parties, factions, the proper size of a republic

Week 10: November 5-9

Readings: *FP* #s 10, 14. Readings and Issues continued from previous week.

Week 11: November 12-16

Readings: *EA* Section 3. *FP* #s 47-51. *Friends* 179-182, 217-226.
Issues include: representation, separation of powers, checks and balances, liberty, justice and the general good

Week 12: November 19-20

Readings and issues continued, plus Handouts. Additional issues include: What is Madison's conception of justice and the general good? Is he a modern

pluralist? Or a classical republican? Or a hybrid of the two (if this is possible)?
What is his view of the role of the citizenry in the new republic?

November 21-23: Thanksgiving Break

Week 13: November 26-30

Readings: *EA* Section 4. *FP* #s 35, 57, 62, 63, 71, 78. *Friends* 196-200, 201-216, 322-327.

Issues include: representation of the people

Week 14: December 3-7

Readings: *EA* Section 5. *FP* #s 11, 12, 54, 55, 84. *Friends* 366-372, 441- 449, 450-456, 457-458, 484-486, 410-413, 421-424, 477-479, 487-491.

Issues include: the nature of popular government, bill of rights, liberty, property, slavery, civic virtue

Log Due

Week 15: December 10-13

Longer paper due

Summary Review

December 14: Reading Day

Final Examination: TBA