

**Princeton University
Department of Politics**

**POL 321 – American Political Thought
Spring 2021**

Keith E. Whittington
113 Fisher Hall, 258-3453
kewhitt@princeton.edu

M 10:00-10:50 live Zoom
Weekly recorded lectures on Canvas
office hours: by appointment

This course explores the recurring themes and problems in American political thought. The course will draw on primary sources relating to the ideas and actions that have shaped the American conception of freedom, democracy, community, and nationhood. It will consider these works as contributions to political theory, but it will also focus on the relationship between political ideas and political and social events. The course will make a broad survey of American history and the debates that have driven, shaped and surrounded American political and social events from the colonial era through the late twentieth century.

Precepts

Precepts are a required component of the course, and you must sign up for and regularly attend a precept. Regularly attending a precept is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a passing grade in participation. Participation in the class constitutes 15% of your grade in the class.

Given our current pandemic situation, the lecture portion of the class will consist of recorded lectures. These lectures will provide new information as well as discuss assigned texts. Viewership of the lectures will be monitored, and you will be expected to take into account lecture materials as well as the written materials in your written assignments. Both the lectures and the readings (other than what is in the book) will be available on the Canvas course website.

I will hold open, drop-in office hours during the Wednesday lecture time for the course. I will be happy to have a live conversation about the topics and readings of the week with as many students who wish to join the zoom during that session. A zoom link will be posted on the Canvas website.

The daily schedule provides a list of readings for each class and precept session. Note that the precepts are designed as stand-alone sessions with their own set of readings on a distinct set of issues to be discussed.

Unless otherwise announced, the first meeting of the precepts will be in week 2 (the week of February 8).

Materials

All readings for the class will consist of excerpts from primary documents with introductory materials. They are available in a book and a companion website. The book is Keith E. Whittington,

American Political Thought: Readings and Materials (Oxford University Press, 2017). The book is available both for purchase and from the library reserve.

Additional materials are drawn from the companion site. They are accessible either through the hyperlink to the companion site or to the Canvas course website. The general companion site address is <https://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199338863/>

Students will be expected to have access to the relevant readings during both lectures and precepts. There will be roughly 50 pages of readings for each class session.

Requirements

The requirements of the course include both written and oral components. To obtain a passing grade for the course, a student must fulfill all course requirements. Thorough preparation for, and faithful attendance at, lectures and precepts is among these requirements. In particular, you will be expected to arrive at precepts fully familiar with the assigned material and prepared to discuss the issues and concepts covered that week. Participation in precept and engagement with the recorded lectures will constitute 15% of your final grade.

You will be required to complete four written assignments. The first short paper will constitute 10% of your grade. Each subsequent paper will constitute 25% of your grade.

The first short paper is due by 5:00pm on February 19. It should be no longer than 5 double-spaced pages. It must answer the following question associated with the readings for the first precept: Why does John Cotton oppose religious toleration, and how persuasive is he that we should worry about the consequences of wide-open debate over the truth?

The second paper is due by 5:00pm on March 5. You will be provided with two writing prompts during the week of February 22. Your second paper must answer one of those two questions in a paper that is 6-8 double-spaced pages.

The third paper is due by 5:00pm on April 2. You will be provided with two writing prompts during the week of March 24. Your third paper must answer one of those two questions in a paper that is 6-8 double-spaced pages.

The fourth paper is due by 5:00pm on April 27. You will be provided with two writing prompts during the week of April 19. Your fourth paper must answer one of those two questions in a paper that is 6-8 double-spaced pages.

Late penalty. Unless otherwise indicated, papers are due by 5:00pm eastern on the due date. Papers will be penalized half a letter grade if they are received after 5:00pm on the due date but before 5:00pm on next calendar day. A half grade penalty will accumulate for each 24-hour period until the paper is submitted.

You may appeal any written grade within two weeks of receiving it. In order to appeal a grade, submit to me by email a copy of the paper. Your paper will then be graded from scratch (by a

different preceptor, if possible). The new grade may be **either higher or lower** than the original, and will be final.

The grading is standardized across precepts. Your final grade will not be affected by which precept you attend, though your preceptor has first responsibility for grading your work.

Daily Schedule:

1. Introduction – Ideas in American Politics (Feb. 1)
 - a. Keith Whittington, *American Political Thought*, ch. 1 (hereafter “APT”)
2. Liberty and Duty in Colonial Thought (Feb. 3)
 - a. APT, pp. 13-19, 26-32, 40-41
 - b. Massachusetts Body of Liberties ([web](#))
 - c. John Winthrop, Arbitrary Government Described ([web](#))
 - d. John Winthrop, A Defense of an Order of the Court ([web](#))
 - e. John Winthrop, Defense of the Negative Vote ([web](#))
 - f. John Cotton, Letter to Lord Say and Seal ([web](#))
 - g. William Penn, Letter to Roger Mompesson ([web](#))
3. Wealth and Charity in Colonial Thought (Feb. 8)
 - a. APT, pp. 57-66
 - b. Thomas Tryon, The Planter’s Speech to His Neighbors ([web](#))
 - c. Robert Cushman, The Sin and Danger of Self-Love ([web](#))
 - d. Cotton Mather, Bonifacius ([web](#))
 - e. Benjamin Franklin, Positions to be Examined, Concerning the National Wealth ([web](#))
 - f. Benjamin Franklin, On the Laboring Poor ([web](#))
 - g. Jacob Duche, The American Vine ([web](#))
4. Revolutionary Ideas (Feb. 10)
 - a. APT, pp. 33-38, 41-47, 49-57, 70-80
 - b. John Adams, Letter to James Sullivan ([web](#))
 - c. Address to the Mechanics of New York ([web](#))
 - d. Charles Inglis, The True Interest of America ([web](#))
 - e. James Otis, Rights of the British Colonies ([web](#))
 - f. Patrick Henry, Give Me Liberty Speech ([web](#))
 - g. Samuel Adams, To the King’s Commissioners ([web](#))
 - h. John Adams, Novanglus ([web](#))
 - i. Thomas Paine, African Slavery in America ([web](#))
 - j. Prince Hall, Petition to the Massachusetts Legislature ([web](#))
5. Precept 1 – Liberty of Conscience (week of Feb. 8)
 - a. APT, pp. 19-26, 92-94, 170-171
 - b. John Cotton, The Bloody Tenent Washed ([web](#))
 - c. Roger Williams, The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody ([web](#))

- d. Elisha Williams, The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants ([web](#))
 - e. Nathaniel Ward, The Simple Cofler of Aggawam (web)
 - f. George Washington, Letter to the Society of Quakers (web)
 - g. George Washington, Letter to the Jews of Newport (web)
 - h. John Leland, The Rights of Conscience Inalienable (web)
6. Confederation (Feb. 15)
- a. APT, pp. 82-92, 126-128, 151-158
 - b. George Washington, Letter to Governor Benjamin Harrison ([web](#))
 - c. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to William S. Smith (web)
 - d. Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (web)
 - e. Pelatiah Webster, First Essay on Free Trade and Finance (web)
 - f. Pelatiah Webster, Fifth Essay on Free Trade and Finance ([web](#))
7. Federalists (Feb. 17)
- a. APT, pp. 94-110, 129-131, 142-145
 - b. James Madison, Public Opinion (web)
 - c. John Adams, Letter to Thomas Jefferson (web)
 - d. George Washington, Letter to James Madison (web)
 - e. Noah Webster, Bills of Rights (web)
8. Precept 2 – Anti-Federalists (week of Feb. 15)
- a. APT, pp. 111-125
 - b. Dissent of the Pennsylvania Minority ([web](#))
 - c. Robert Yates and John Lansing, Letter to Governor George Clinton ([web](#))
 - d. Samuel Adams, Letter to Richard Henry Lee (web)
 - e. Melancton Smith, Speech to the New York Ratification Convention (blackboard)
 - f. Centinel, Letter No. 1 (blackboard)
9. Hamiltonian Democracy (Feb. 22)
- a. APT, pp. 159-164, 168-170, 204-216, 220-222
 - b. John Thornton Kirkland, Phi Beta Kappa Oration ([web](#))
 - c. Robert Harper, An Address to the People of South Carolina ([web](#))
 - d. Timothy Ford, The Constitutionalist ([web](#))
 - e. Alexander Hamilton, Tully Essays (web)
 - f. William L. Smith, Independence Day Oration ([web](#))
 - g. George Logan, Letter Address to the Yeomanry of the United States ([web](#))
10. Jeffersonian Democracy (Feb. 24)
- a. APT, pp. 165-167, 176-177, 186-190, 217-219
 - b. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Elbridge Gerry (web)
 - c. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John B. Colvin (web)
 - d. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Taylor (web)
 - e. John Taylor, Letter to Thomas Jefferson (web)
 - f. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Thomas Cooper (web)
 - g. Joseph Priestley, Maxims of Political Arithmetic ([web](#))

- h. Albert Gallatin, Reports on Public Roads and Canals (web)
11. Precept 3 – Early Struggles over Egalitarianism (week of Feb. 22)
- a. APT, pp. 131-140, 197-203
 - b. James Dana, Sermon on the African Slave Trade ([web](#))
 - c. Noah Webster, Effects of Slavery, on Morals and Industry (web)
 - d. Timothy Dwight, Oration for the Promotion of Freedom ([web](#))
 - e. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Edward Coles (web)
 - f. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Holmes (web)
 - g. Thomas Skillman, The Weightier Matter of the Law (web)
 - h. Robert Goodloe Harper, Letter to the American Colonization Society (web)
 - i. Thomas Paine, An Occasional Letter on the Female Sex ([web](#))
 - j. Charles Brockden Brown, Alcuin: A Dialogue ([web](#))
 - k. Hannah Mather Crocker, Observations on the Real Rights of Women ([web](#))
 - l. Judith Sargent Murray, On the Equality of the Sexes ([web](#))
 - m. William L. Smith, Independence Day Oration ([web](#))
12. Jeffersonian Reform (March 1)
- a. APT, pp. 174-176, 178-185, 188-190
 - b. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Adams on Parties (web)
 - c. James Madison, A Candid State of Parties (web)
 - d. Martin Van Buren, Letter to Thomas Ritchie ([web](#))
 - e. Lyman Beecher, Six Sermons on Intemperance (web)
 - f. Robert Owen, Two Discourses on a New System of Society ([web](#))
 - g. Noah Webster, Remarks on Manners (web)
13. Jacksonian Democracy (March 3)
- a. APT, pp. 231-237, 252-264, 284-308
 - b. Horace Greeley, Why I am a Whig ([web](#))
 - c. Abraham Lincoln, Speech to the Young Men's Lyceum at Springfield (web)
 - d. Abraham Lincoln, Speech to the Springfield Washington Temperance Society (web)
 - e. Samuel Busey, Immigration ([web](#))
 - f. Louis F. Schade The Immigration into the United States of America ([web](#))
 - g. John Bigler, Message on Chinese Immigration ([web](#))
 - h. Norman Assing, To His Excellency Gov. Bigler ([web](#))
 - i. William Heighton, Address to the Mechanics of Philadelphia (web)
 - j. John McVickar, Introductory Lecture to a Course in Political Economy ([web](#))
 - k. Albert Gallatin, The Free Trade Memorial ([web](#))
 - l. Calvin Colton, The Junius Tracts No. 7 ([web](#))
14. Precept 4 – Jacksonian Egalitarianism (week of March 1)
- a. APT, pp. 265-283
 - b. David Walker, Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World (web)
 - c. Henry Clarke Wright, Resistance to Slaveholders (web)
 - d. Maria W. Stewart, Address Delivered at the African Masonic Hall (web)

- e. Abraham Lincoln, Speech at Peoria on the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise ([web](#))
- f. William West, Wages Slavery and Chattel Slavery ([web](#))

15. Jacksonian Utopianism (March 8)

- a. APT, pp. 238-242
- b. Thomas Skidmore, The Rights of Man to Property! ([web](#))
- c. T.W. Dyott, Exposition of the System of Moral and Mental Labor ([web](#))
- d. Horace Greeley and Henry J. Raymond, Associate Discussed ([web](#))
- e. Vote Yourself a Farm ([web](#))
- f. Albert Brisbane, Concise Exposition of the Doctrine of Association ([web](#))
- g. Lyman Beecher, Lectures on Political Atheism ([web](#))
- h. Miles Sanford, The True Elements of National Greatness and Prosperity ([web](#))
- i. Aldin Ballou, Christian Non-Resistance ([web](#))
- j. Elihu Burritt, Peace Papers for the People ([web](#))

16. Jacksonian Constitutionalism (March 10)

- a. APT, pp. 243-251
- b. John C. Calhoun, Fort Hill Address ([web](#))
- c. Memorial of the Non-Freeholders of the City of Richmond ([web](#))
- d. John R. Cooke and Abel Parker Upshur, Debate at the Virginia Constitutional Convention ([web](#))
- e. Rufus Choate, The Position and Functions of the American Bar ([web](#))
- f. William Lloyd Garrison, No Compromise with Slavery ([web](#))
- g. Abraham Lincoln, Speech on Dred Scott Decision at Springfield ([web](#))
- h. Abraham Lincoln, House Divided Speech at Springfield ([web](#))

17. Precept 5 – Secession (week of March 8)

- a. APT, pp. 309-317, 321-330, 352-356
- b. Alexander H. Stephens, A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States ([web](#))
- c. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Taylor on Secession ([web](#))

Spring Break – No class on Monday, March 15

18. The Meaning of the War (March 17)

- a. APT, pp. 330-342, 357-358
- b. Abraham Lincoln, Letter to Albert G. Hodges ([web](#))
- c. Sidney George Fisher, The Trial of the Constitution ([web](#))
- d. William H. Furness, A Word of Consolation ([web](#))
- e. Robert Green Ingersoll, Speech to the Veteran Soldiers at Indianapolis ([web](#))
- f. Frederick Douglass, Speech at Decoration Day ([web](#))

19. Precept 6 – Reconstruction (week of March 15)

- a. APT, pp. 318-320, 343-346
- b. Andrew Johnson, Veto of the Freedman's Bureau Bill ([web](#))

- c. Charles Sumner, Equal Rights ([web](#))
 - d. Albion W. Tourgee, A Fool's Errand ([web](#))
 - e. Robert E. Lee, Letter to John Letcher (web)
 - f. Benjamin H. Hill, Speech to the House on Amnesty for Jefferson Davis (web)
 - g. Susan B. Anthony, Address to the National Democratic Convention (web)
20. The Gilded Age (March 22)
- a. APT, pp. 347-351, 363-365, 398-412
 - b. John Ferguson Hume, The Five-Hundred Majority ([web](#))
 - c. Henry Adams, Democracy: An American Novel ([web](#))
 - d. Theodore Roosevelt, What Americanism Means ([web](#))
 - e. Ben E. Green, The Irrepressible Conflict Between Labor and Capital ([web](#))
 - f. Edwin L. Godkin, The Moral of the Credit Mobilier Scandal ([web](#))
 - g. Lester Ward, Plutocracy and Paternalism ([web](#))
 - h. Henry Gladden, Applied Christianity ([web](#))
21. Race and Gender in the Gilded Age (March 24)
- a. APT, pp. 374-378, 386-397
 - b. George Washington Cable, The Freedman's Case in Equity (web)
 - c. Henry W. Grady, In Plain Black and White: A Reply to Mr. Cable (web)
 - d. George Washington Cable, The Silent South (web)
 - e. John T. Morgan, Shall Negro Majorities Rule? (web)
 - f. Albert W. Tourgee, Shall White Minorities Rule? (web)
 - g. Ida B. Wells, Self Help (web)
 - h. Archibald Grimke, Open Letter to President McKinley (web)
 - i. Anna Julia Cooper, Has America a Race Problem? ([web](#))
 - j. Francis Parkman, The Woman Question ([web](#))
 - k. Julia Ward Howe, The Other Side of the Woman Question ([web](#))
 - l. Anna Bowman Dodd, The Republic of the Future ([web](#))
22. Precept 7 – Democracy and Populism (week of March 22)
- a. APT, pp. 366-373, 379-385
 - b. B.O. Flower, Pure Democracy versus Vicious Governmental Favoritism ([web](#))
 - c. James H. Davis, A Political Revelation ([web](#))
 - d. Thomas E. Watson, The People's Party Campaign Book ([web](#))
 - e. Ignatius Donnelly, Caesar's Column ([web](#))
 - f. William Jennings Bryan, Cross of Gold Speech (web)
 - g. Populist Party, Omaha Platform
 - h. Thomas M. Cooley, Labor and Capital Before the Law ([web](#))
 - i. William Graham Sumner, Republican Government ([web](#))
 - j. John F. Dillon, Address of the President to the American Bar Association (web)
 - k. Frederick Douglass, Self-Made Men (web)
23. Imperialism and Its Discontents (March 29)
- a. APT, pp. 413-424
 - b. Albert J. Beveridge, For the Greater Republic, Not for Imperialism (web)

- c. Albert J. Beveridge, Speech in Support of American Empire (web)
 - d. Theodore Roosevelt, Washington's Forgotten Maxim ([web](#))
 - e. Andrew Carnegie, Americanism versus Imperialism ([web](#))
 - f. Carl Shurtz, Manifest Destiny ([web](#))
 - g. Richard Olney, The Growth of our Foreign Policy (web)
24. Progressive Democracy (March 31)
- a. APT, pp. 425-445
 - b. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Natural Law ([web](#))
 - c. Walter Lippman, Drift and Mastery ([web](#))
 - d. Walter E. Weyl, The New Democracy ([web](#))
 - e. Arthur Twining Hadley, The Relation Between Freedom and Responsibility ([web](#))
 - f. Paul Elmer More, Property and Law ([web](#))
 - g. Irving Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership (web)
25. Precept 8 – Race and Gender in the Progressive Era (week of March 29)
- a. APT, pp. 453-464
 - b. George H. White, Farewell to the House of Representatives (web)
 - c. W.E.B. Du Bois, The Talented Tenth ([web](#))
 - d. Niagara Movement, Declaration of Principles ([web](#))
 - e. Oscar Underwood, The Negro Problem in the South ([web](#))
 - f. John Jay Chapman, Coatesville ([web](#))
 - g. James Elbert Cutler, Lynch-Law ([web](#))
 - h. National Woman's Party, Declaration of Principles (web)
 - i. Emma Goldman, The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation (web)
26. Toleration and Dissent (April 5)
- a. APT, pp. 165-167
 - b. Timothy Dwight, The Duty of Americans ([web](#))
 - c. Fisher Ames, The Dangers of American Liberty ([web](#))
 - d. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Self-Reliance ([web](#))
 - e. Frederick Douglass, A Plea for Free Speech in Boston ([web](#))
 - f. Gerrit Smith, The Crime of the Abolitionists ([web](#))
 - g. Rufus Choate, American Nationality (web)
 - h. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Free Speech ([web](#))
 - i. Robert Green Ingersoll, Individuality (web)
 - j. Henry Adams, Shall We Muzzle the Anarchists? ([web](#))
 - k. Robert G. Ingersoll, Frederic R. Courdet, and Stewart L. Woodford, The Limitations of Tolerance ([web](#))
 - l. Thomas M. Cooley, A Treatise on Constitutional Limitations ([web](#))
 - m. Zachariah Chafee, Jr., Freedom of Speech ([web](#))
 - n. Voltairine de Clyre, On Liberty ([web](#))
 - o. Thomas Schroeder, The Meaning of Unabridged "Freedom of Speech." ([web](#))
27. Immigration and Nationalism (April 7)
- a. APT, pp. 446-452

- b. Pierton W. Dooner, Last Days of the Republic (web)
- c. James Freeman Clarke, The Crusade Against the Chinese (web)
- d. Yan Phou Lee, The Chinese Must Stay ([web](#))
- e. Samuel Gompers, Schemes to Distribute Immigrants ([web](#))
- f. Jeremiah W. Jenks and W. Jett Lauck, The Immigration Problem ([web](#))
- g. Henry Pratt Fairchild, The Melting-Pot Mistake (web)
- h. Franklin K. Lane, What America Means ([web](#))
- i. Theodore Roosevelt, America for Americans ([web](#))
- j. Woodrow Wilson, Address to the Naturalized Citizens at the Convention Hall (web)

28. Precept 9 – Progressive Political Economy (week of April 5)

- a. APT, pp. 465-483
- b. James J. Davis, Humanity in Government ([web](#))
- c. Samuel Gompers, Abolish Unemployment ([web](#))
- d. Jack London, Iron Heel ([web](#))
- e. Industrial Workers of the World, Manifesto and Preamble (web)
- f. Thomas Nixon Carver, How Ought Wealth to be Distributed? ([web](#))
- g. Arthur Twining Hadley, Economic Problems of Democracy ([web](#))

29. Isolationism, Militarism, and War to End All Wars (April 12)

- a. APT, pp. 220-222, 225-230, 484-498
- b. Richard Olney, Letter to Thomas Bayard ([web](#))
- c. William James, The Moral Equivalent of War ([web](#))
- d. Woodrow Wilson, Address before the Southern Commercial Congress (web)
- e. Robert M. LaFollette, Speech to the Senate Opposing the War ([web](#))
- f. Woodrow Wilson, War Message ([web](#))
- g. Woodrow Wilson, Address on the League of Nations (web)
- h. Charles Evans Hughes, Address to the Conference on Limitations of Armaments ([web](#))

30. New Deal Democracy (April 14)

- a. APT, pp. 499-534
- b. Adverse Senate Report on the Reorganization of the Federal Judiciary ([web](#))
- c. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Four Freedoms Speech ([web](#))
- d. American Civil Liberties Union, Policy Guide (web)
- e. Congressional Debate over Poll Taxes ([web](#))
- f. Joseph McCarthy and His Enemies (web)

31. Precept 10 – Cold War (week of April 12)

- a. APT, pp. 546-562, 622-634, 687-696
- b. J. Edgar Hoover, Testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee ([web](#))
- c. Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks at Johns Hopkins University ([web](#))
- d. American Friends Service Committee, Speak Truth to Power ([web](#))
- e. Jimmy Carter, Remarks at Notre Dame University ([web](#))

- f. Ronald Reagan, Address to the British Parliament ([web](#))
 - g. George Bush, Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations ([web](#))
- 32. New Deal Political Economy (April 19)
 - a. APT, pp. 535-545
 - b. Franklin Roosevelt, The Forgotten Man Speech ([web](#))
- 33. The Fracturing of the New Deal Consensus (April 21)
 - a. APT, pp. 563-594, 616-621
- 34. Precept 11 – Postwar Civil Rights (week of April 19)
 - a. APT, pp. 595-615
 - b. Nathan Margold, Preliminary Report to the Joint Committee ([web](#))
 - c. Harry Truman, Special Message to Congress on Civil Rights ([web](#))
 - d. President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, Whom We Shall Welcome ([web](#))
 - e. The Southern Manifesto ([web](#))
 - f. Dwight Eisenhower, Address to the Nation on the Introduction of Troops in Little Rock ([web](#))
 - g. Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks at Howard University ([web](#))
 - h. The Report of the U.S. President's Commission on the Status of Women ([web](#))
- 35. Concluding Thoughts (April 26)
 - a. APT, pp. 635-686