

The American Founding
PSC 5340
Professor David K. Nichols

Course Goals and Objectives:

This course will provide an in depth examination of the debates surrounding the American Revolution and the creation and ratification of the Constitution. It will look at the various strands of political thought that led to the American Revolution and informed the debates over the proper structure of government in the new republic. Special focus will be on primary source material in order to provide students with direct encounter with the competing strains of thought that played a role on the creation of the American political system. Students will also be encouraged to examine the process of coalition building at the Constitutional Convention and the role of particular leaders in the creation and ratification of the Constitution. The course will also address the major scholarly debates regarding the study of the founding period.

The principle objectives of the course are to:

1. Familiarize students with the major theoretical debates at the time of the founding
2. Develop a deeper appreciation of the political process by which the Constitution was created
3. Encourage thought about the relation between ideas and interests, as well as the relationship between leadership and consensus politics at the time of the Founding
4. See the origins of contemporary political debates in the Founding period
5. Develop the skills necessary to undertake primary research in this field

Required Texts:

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay. *The Federalist* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999)

Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner, eds. *The Founders' Constitution: Major Themes, Volume 1* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2000) (Also available online)

James Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1987)

Herbert J. Storing, *What The Anti-Federalists Were For*, (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago Pr., 1990), ppr. 0-226-77574-7

M. Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic: Studies in the Foundation of the American Political Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1999) ISBN: 0268014876

Supplemental Materials:

The following books provide a background for the issues that will be discussed in class:

Douglas Adair, *Fame and the Founding Fathers* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1974)

Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992)

Lance Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995)

Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (New York: Macmillan, 1913)

Robert A. Goldwin and William A. Schambra, eds. *How Democratic is the Constitution* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1980)

Calvin C. Jillson, *Constitution Making: Conflict and Consensus in the Federal Convention of 1787* (New York: Agathon Press, 1988)

Forrest McDonald, *We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958)

Wilson Carey McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in American* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973)

Karl-Friedrick Walling, *Republican Empire, Alexander Hamilton on War and Free Government* (Lawrence, KA: University of Kansas Press, 1999)

Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Williamsburg, VA: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998)

Requirements:

Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. A research paper focusing on the political thought or political leadership of a major figure in the creation of the American Constitution (30%)
2. A research paper focusing on a particular provision of the Constitution, its importance, the debates surrounding it and its implications for the Constitution as a whole (30%)
3. A final examination (30%)
4. Class attendance and participation (10%)

Grades:

The following grading scale will be employed: A = 90-100%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; F = Below 60%.

Topics and Readings

1. Philosophical Foundations of the American Founding

Zuckert, Chapters 4-6
Calvin, "Institutes of the Christian Religion" (1536) FC
Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630)
Wise, "Vindication of the Government of New England Churches" (1717)
<http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/wise.html>

2. The Declaration and the Right to Revolution

Louis Hartz, "American Political Thought and the American Revolution" in *APSR*, 46 no 2. (June 1952) 321-342
Paine, "Common Sense" (1776) FC
Zuckert, Chapters 1-3, & 7

3. The Articles of Confederation and Its Demise

"Articles of Confederation" (1781) FC
Hamilton, "Letter to George Clinton" (1778) FC
Gouverneur Morris, "Letter to John Jay" (1783) FC
Robert Morris, "Letter to the President of Congress" (1783) FC
Washington, "Letter to James Warren" (1785) FC
"Proceedings of the Annapolis Convention" 1786) FC
King, "Letter to Elbridge Gerry" (1786) FC
Madison, "Letter to Edmund Randolph" (1787) FC
Madison, "Vices of the Political System of the United States" (1787) FC
Madison, *Notes*, May 14 & 28

4. The Virginia Plan Debated

Madison, *Notes*, May 29-31, June 1-2, 4-9, 11-14

5. The New Jersey Plan and the Hamilton Plan

Madison, Notes, June 15-16 & 18

6. Stalemate and Compromise

Madison, Notes, June 19 - July 16

7. Creating the Institutions of Government

Madison, Notes, July 17 - 31

8. Report of Committee of Detail Debated

Madison, Notes, August 6 - September 11

9. Report of the Committee on Style Debated

Madison, Notes, September 12 - 17

10. Anti-Federalists I

Federal Farmer, 7(1787) FC

Brutus, "1, 11, & 15" (1787-88) FC

Cato, "3" (1787) FC

John Smilie, "Remarks in Pennsylvania Ratifying Convention" (1787) FC

Samuel Adams, "Letter to Richard Henry Lee" (1787) FC

Agrippa, "4" (1787) FC

Luther Martin, "Genuine Information" (1788) FC

Impartial Examiner, 1 & 2 (1788) FC

George Mason, "Remarks in Virginia Ratifying Convention, June 4" (1788) FC

Patrick Henry, "Remarks in Virginia Ratifying Convention, June 4, 5, & 12" (1788) FC

George Clinton, "Remarks in the New York Ratifying Convention, July 11" (1788) FC

Storing, Chapters 1-5

11. Anti-Federalists II

Centinel, "1 & 2" (1787) FC

William Penn, "2" (1788) FC

Federal Farmer "2, 7, 8, 9, & 11" (1788) FC

Patrick Henry, "Remarks in Virginia Ratifying Convention, June 9"(1788) FC

Storing, Chapters 6-7

12. Federalists on Federalism

The Federalist, 1-40

13. Federalists on Separation of Powers

The Federalist, 41-66

14. Federalists on Executive and Judiciary

The Federalist, 67-85

15. Bill of Rights

James Wilson, Remarks in Pennsylvania Ratifying Convention, November 28, December 4" (1787)
FC

Richard Henry Lee, "Letter to George Mason" (1787) FC

Federal Farmer, "16" (1788) FC

Maryland Farmer, "1" (1788) FC

Madison, "Letter to Jefferson" (1788) FC

Madison, "Speech in the House of Representatives, June 8" (1789) FC

"Debate in the House of Representatives on the Bill of Rights" (1789) FC

Storing, Chapter 8