Interests and Ideas in the American Founding

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Mondays and Wednesdays 12:05 - 1:20 pm, 793 Kimball Tower

“It has been frequently remarked, that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country to decide, by their conduct and example, the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not, of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend, for their political constitutions, on accident and force.” —A. Hamilton

“In these sentiments, Sir, I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a general Government necessary for us, and there is no form of Government but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered, and believe farther that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in Despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic Government, being incapable of any other. I doubt too whether any other Convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution.” —B. Franklin, at the close of the Convention

Course Objectives

This class is based on the premise that there is no more vital subject for students of American politics than the creation of the Republic, and that a proper understanding of that moment is vital not only for understanding the past, but also the founding’s power in the present. This moment is the source of so much of America’s history and current events that it requires special scrutiny.

Of course, that means it is a very challenging class. The readings are dense and come from multiple traditions: historical documents, historical analysis, empirical analysis and some political philosophy. Because this array of reading comes from a truly wide range of intellectual traditions students may find the course to be unusually challenging for an elective. With that warning out of the way, if you are interested in a deeper understanding of the founding this class will reward that interest, even if it will demand your rigorous attention. Grades are not likely to be low, though effort required may be significant.

Often professors give lists of objectives for courses. This course is, in principle, no different and the list is easily offered.

Obtain a working knowledge of the American founding through a thorough consideration of each of the following.
Interests and Ideas in the American Founding

- Historical documents
- Historical treatments of the period
- Empirical models of the convention

Connect this working knowledge of the period to more modern political science questions about the nature of democracy and governance.

Improve your ability to think critically, write about, and discuss all of this material, especially as it pertains to the components of a good society.

Collaborate effectively with your classmates and fellow delegates in the process of producing a new constitution.

The list is serviceable (and obviously fits in with the department’s broader goals about critical thinking) but does not really explain what this course is about. This is a course for people who want to think deeply about the American Founding. Why did things turn out the way they did? What could have easily changed? And what motivated the individual and collective decisions?

Was it the vital interests of society that structured each founder’s thinking on key questions like slavery, commerce, national power and the role of Republican government? Or was it the potency of the ideas derived from many sources like Scottish philosophers, the British inheritance or Montesquieu? Perhaps better put, which elements of the constitution were driven by interests and which were driven by ideals?

These are not questions that are easily answered. And of course any tentative conclusions we draw will inevitably be contingent on time, place, circumstance and many other things—not the least of which will be our own interpretations of matters. The difficulty in answering the questions only makes the project more interesting.¹

The course will be conducted primarily as a seminar. This means students need to have carefully read the material before each class period (hence the quizzes—see below) and come prepared to contribute some opinions on the reading each week.

These opinions should, at least some of the time, be critical of the readings. This course will expose students to a wide variety of approaches to American politics that are not always compatible or consistent with one another. It is the nature of political science to have a diversity of models, theories and approaches. The job of the student is to learn what is useful about all of them and to discard what is not useful.

Office Hours and Consultations

Office hours are on Mondays 2:00 - 2:50 pm, Wednesdays 2:00 - 3:30 pm, and by appointment.² The best way to take advantage of your professor is to ply him with questions, before class, after class, by email (this one is especially good) and in office hours. All of this counts as class participation (as will a few other things) and so students should go to extreme lengths to get as much help as possible.

Prerequisites

This course has no technical prerequisites in the course catalog. This is to encourage participation in the course, but there are classes that one would be very wise to have taken already. POLI 200 and

¹Or so I believe
²I strongly encourage you to take advantage of these hours.
328 expose students to the quantitative reasoning necessary for some of the readings. Students without
this background will find those readings and at least one assignment very difficult, but probably not
impossible.\textsuperscript{3} POLI 202 is highly recommended, but also not technically required.

Course Texts

This course has several texts, all outlined below. Five texts in particular should be purchased and kept for
reference. \textcite{Beard} is one of the oldest available social science accounts of the Convention. Though
he does not hold the same kind of power that he once did, it is no exaggeration to say that Beard initiated
the study of the Constitution from a social science perspective. Writing around the same period, \textcite{Farrand}
takes us through the actual debates, the language, the arguments and the details. This is the text we will rely on for
a simple historical account of the Convention. \textcite{Jillson} wrote one of the first treatments of the Convention
using really modern social science techniques and provides an analysis that is social science, but not about interests. \textcite{Rakove} gives a much more interpretive account, but one that is far more informed by modern political science. Rakove, more than any of the other authors, blends the best of history and social science into both a narrative and an analysis of the Convention and its outcomes. \textcite{Wood} serves as our reference on the American Revolution. That conflict is not our focus, but the period cannot be understood without reference to those events.

All other texts for this course can either be found either through the Lee Library’s course reserve system
or from embedded hyperlinks in this syllabus.

Course Outline

\textit{January 8: Course Introduction}

Why study the Constitution? And if we do study it, how should we study it? To begin, we will read
Washington’s \textit{Circular Letter to the States}—his “less famous” farewell address (1783). Washington had
definite ideas about what was necessary to safeguard liberty, but even at this stage (with a world war
successfully concluded and a new government already running) he did not understand what would be
required to finish founding the country. By the time students finish this course they will understand the
process far better than Washington ever could have when he wrote this letter to his country.

\textit{January 10: The Road to Revolution}

It is impossible to really understand the Constitutional Convention without some study of the events
that led up to it. In principle, this discussion could probably extend to England’s Glorious Revolution,
the Magna Carta, or even some pre-Hellenic philosophers. The reading list for that course would be
substantial indeed. Beginning a bit closer to the Convention, \textcite{Wood}, chapters 1 - 4 provides a
condensed historical discussion of the causes and events of the American Revolution.

\textsuperscript{3}Please see me before continuing if you do not have that experience.
January 17: Republicanism

During the American Revolution, the states had to develop new theories of government that went beyond the English system. As part of that thinking the Americans developed a keen sense of their own “republican” quality. Wood (2003, chapters 5 - 6) gives us an account of how these ideas developed and played out in the American Revolution. In one of his earliest essays, Wood (1966) describes a model of historical thinking on the revolution and how that thinking would change in the late twentieth century. Though the progressive historians had emphasized economics and class, the “modern” kind of historians (like Wood) would move in a different direction and focus on the ideas of the American founding. Wood’s essay is a classic example of one way to think about the past.

January 22: Declaring Independence

The former colonists did not declare independence lightly. In 1765 the conflict between the mother country and the no longer quite fledgling colonies began in earnest. And though the ideas would important, the conflict began because of a fight over taxes. So we start by reading the Stamp Act (Parliament, 1765). Britain needed revenue after a series of costly world wars around the globe. Though American trade had been restricted in various ways before this, the Stamp Act was the first piece of legislation that directly taxed a good or service. While reading it, please think about how people would react to it. We will then turn to James Otis’s essay, The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved (1763). Though he later went mad, James Otis was, in many respects, the first American revolutionary. Though this pamphlet appeared before the Stamp Act it became very influential in Colonial thinking about taxation. By the time Thomas Paine published Common Sense (Paine, 1776), the idea of liberty was already very much in the air. In July of that year the United States Congress (no longer the Continental Congress) published the Declaration of Independence (Congress, 1776).

To many the work of the government seemed finished—but for the small matter of the war, that is. However, John Adams realized that the work of forming a new government would require more than simply declaring independence. His short pamphlet Thoughts on Government (Adams, 1776), was not widely read at the time (at least by comparison with some other similar documents) but was eventually recognized for its prescience. Forming a new government would be a very difficult task, but Adams argues that republican government is not merely possible but is the best form of government—as long as the government is carefully designed.

January 24: Class Constitutional Debate

While the focus of this course is really in the eighteenth century, we study that period because of its importance for today. To better understand the stakes of the Convention students in this course have a collective assignment: to produce a Constitution. This Constitution is not for the past but for today and will reflect the values and opinions of the students in the course. Grading for this assignment is discussed below. Though the assignment cannot be carried out completely within the boundaries of class time (at least not well), several periods will be set aside for formal debate and discussion of the document. The final product is due at the end of the semester.

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4 You’re going to love reading this.
5 Focus on the sections “Of the Origin and Design of Government in General, with Concise Remarks on the English Constitution” and “Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs.”
6 Though you should take this assignment seriously, I should warn you that there is every chance this Constitution will not be adopted by the Republic.
7 Please note that I will be away at a conference today. There will be no formal substitute (though I will leave instructions). I strongly suggest students use this as an organizational meeting to get started quickly. I recommend some division of labor (via
January 29: Interests or Ideas?

There are at least two models of thinking running throughout this class: historical reasoning and social science reasoning. With Wood (1966) we dipped into a very historical approach to thinking about the founding. Though he was also a historian, Charles Beard’s mode of thinking about the Constitution was much more like social science. Beard (1913, chapter one), presents a very direct and parsimonious view of the Federal Convention. For Beard, the only thing that matters is interest, typically an economic interest. Few people accept this raw claim today. Jillson (2002, chapters one and two), for instance, offers an account of the Convention that emphasizes interests, but gives a more prominent place to the role of culture and virtue. Both Beard’s and Jillson’s explanations may be “social science,” but they are not terribly similar and their assumptions and underlying motivations lead to very different accounts of the Convention.

Wherever one comes down on the continuum of interests v. ideas in the founding, one interest simply must be grappled with for its importance to the Constitution: slavery. Waldstreicher (2009, prologue) offers an account of how deeply slavery shaped the Constitution. Though the prologue9 can only give a flavor of the whole book it helps set the stage for the most important interest at the Convention.

January 31: Towards Philadelphia

Today’s discussion will begin with reference to the Articles of Confederation (Congress, 1778). That document gives us a sense of how the former colonists began creating a government. It did not go well. Had the Articles of Confederation succeeded there would never have been any need for a Convention in Philadelphia. But the original plan of government failed. Jillson and Wilson (1987) provide a very clear account of how institutional design can be the downfall of the best intentions. Rakove (1996, chapters one through three) offers a useful introduction to “originalism”10 as an interpretive tool for the Constitution. However, he is really writing an intellectual history of the Convention. His opening chapters tell the story of how the country reached the need for a Convention and how Madison persuaded the key player—George Washington—to attend.

Recommended: Jillson (2002, chapter three) also gives a very sympathetic account of Madison’s thinking as he prepares for the Convention. Madison (drafted in 1787, republished in 1999) offers up Madison’s private thinking (it was never published in his lifetime) on the state of American government in the early spring of 1787. Madison is a complicated fellow and Bailey (2015) provides a novel perspective on Madison’s thinking. The argument is that while Madison may have prized stability in government we overestimate how much he did so. According to Bailey, Madison was far more willing to permit experimentation than people realize. Finally, Beard (1913, chapters two and three) also presents some background on the calling of the Convention and how American thinking was shifting at this moment.

8Actually, there is clearly a third model—philosophy—that is running through this course, but is not quite as prominent as the other two models.

9Note that this reading can be found on course reserve (along with a few others where I am unable to provide a hyperlink). The password for these readings will be given out in class.

10In a speech at the New York ratifying convention Alexander Hamilton said that “Constitutions should consist only of general provisions. The reason is that they must necessarily be permanent and that they cannot calculate for the possible changes of things.” Ever since the Constitutional Convention Americans have been debating just what the Constitution could mean. Originalism is not a formal topic of this class, but will be a backdrop to much of what we study.
February 5: Calling and Organizing the Convention

Max Farrand’s *The Framing of the Constitution of the United States* will seem a bit dated, but is really the best one-volume account of the Convention’s activities. Farrand (1913, chapters one through four) describes the background and the opening days of the Convention. Chapter four, in particular, is useful for its explanation of how they organized themselves. In this and the subsequent few sessions of class discussion will focus entirely on the debates and the people who attended them. The next few sessions will alternate between reading Farrand’s account and that of other historians (like Beard or Rakove) who do more than describe the debates; they interpret them. In this sense the classes will be a bit repetitive since the two sets of readings will cover roughly similar material, but the goal is to find new insights into the debates by looking at it from different perspectives.

Approximately the last fifteen minutes of this class will be set aside for some formal votes in Convention (if necessary).

February 7: The Politics of the Debates

The central feature of the debate was the argument over representation. Rakove (1996, chapter 4) gives very close attention to how the bargain came about, and does so with special attention to both the interests and ideas at the Convention. A clear focus of this session’s discussion will be to figure out which of those two motivations appears stronger and for which issues?11

Recommended: Rakove (1996, chapter 8) is a careful account of the delegates’ reasoning about representation and is a very useful companion chapter to the politics described in chapter four.

February 12: Debating the Plans

Farrand (1913, chapters five through eight) cover the debates described by Rakove, specifically focused on representation, by far the most contentious issue of the Convention. Though it will be in the background, slavery is lurking as a key issue with respect to this debate and this is a good time to recall its importance. This day will also see a debate over whose interpretation of the debates is the most compelling? The “large state” interpretation or the “small state interpretation”?12

Recommended: Pope and Treier (2011) discusses some of the issues surrounding the “Great Compromise.” Though some of the discussion is technical, much of the paper’s substance can be gleaned without a strong background in voting models.12 Wood (2003, chapters 7) presents a succinct discussion of the Convention and would be a useful supplemental reading around this point in the course. Finally, (Jillson, 2002, chapters 4 and 5) describes how Jillson’s theories about culture cover the question of representation in Philadelphia.

Students of the Convention should bear in mind that there is debate about the quality of Madison’s notes. Bilder (2015) argues that Madison’s notes, at best, cannot be taken at face value, and that, at worst, are quite self-serving in spots. Though a tricky problem to resolve, the warning not to take the notes at face value is important.

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11It is unlikely that all of the Convention or the Constitution can be explained by one or the other. Actually, it is not just unlikely, it is impossible.

12I am always reluctant to assign my own work (none if it is required for this course), but it seems foolish to keep students from my written opinions about specific topics—especially when I am imposing verbal opinions on you twice a week.
February 14: Economic Motivations in the Debates

Turning to the question of the motivation of the delegates, Beard’s (1913) account of delegate selection (see chapters four and five) argues that only men of a certain class participated in these debates. His opinions and findings are not without dispute, but they are a useful place to begin analysis. Chapter five is of paramount importance for our discussions. It is where Beard really lays out the case that that this economic class impacted the document. How convincing is his argument about the delegate backgrounds and interests? Does it match up well against Farrand’s account of the debates?

February 20: Class Constitutional Debate

Just as the delegates in Philadelphia had to make progress on their document, so do the students in this class. So, now armed with some knowledge of the arguments and debates in Philadelphia, this session will be devoted to the class production of a Constitution.

February 21: Concluding the Details

Farrand (1913, chapters nine through thirteen) describes the end of the Convention. By this point in the Convention the delegates were tired and the debate are not nearly as crisp, or documented as well. However, as can be seen in Farrand, this period made many important decisions that continue to reverberate through American history.

February 26: Interests in the Constitution

Beard (1913, chapters 6 - 7) argues for a very specific interpretation of the Constitution. These chapters are his argument that the document has an embedded philosophy of protecting wealth and economic interest at the expense of the democratic masses. This session’s discussion will be devoted to asking where his argument is strong and where it is weak.

Recommended Holton (2007) is a more modern version of a very similar thesis. He argues that democracy was nearly stunted by the Constitution and only through the concerted efforts of the anti-federalists and other forces of democracy was the republic saved.

Note: The midterm essays (take-home and, obviously, open-book and open-note) will be distributed at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, February 27. The essays will be due under my door seventy-two hours later at 5:00 pm on Friday, March 2 (this deadline will be quite hard, so do not plan on exceeding it).

February 28: Arguments Against Economic Models

Beard’s claims of economic parsimony were dominant (at least among scholars) for several years. But, by the mid-twentieth century scholars were beginning to question him. Forrest McDonald provided a particularly compelling inquiry into the economic motivations of the founding delegates concluding that the economics arguments were overblown (McDonald, 1958). How strong is his argument? Class discussion will focus on his summation in chapter ten. Gibson (2010, chapter one)\textsuperscript{13} lays out the full historiography\textsuperscript{14} of the arguments for and against Beard’s claims.

\textsuperscript{13}Note that this can be found at the course reserve website mentioned above.

\textsuperscript{14}Look the word up.
Recommended: Obviously all of both McDonald’s work and Gibson’s work are worth investigation. Students are encouraged to do a bit of research on their own to find what they have to say. This is an excellent opportunity to find voting explanation paper topics.

March 5: Class Constitutional Debate

This class period will be set aside for class constitutional debate

March 7: Justifying a New System

Alexander Hamilton and James Madison (with a bit of assistance from John Jay) wrote the classic argument in favor of the Constitution that came to be called The Federalist. All of the book is worth the time of anyone interested in American politics.\footnote{It’s fascinating to see the ways in which they were prescient and the other ways in which they missed the mark completely.} Their opening essays—we will focus on essays 1, 9 & 10—set the stage for their broader argument justifying the new system (Hamilton, Jay and Madison, 1788). The essays can be found in many resources, one good one online is the library of Congress’s website, colloquially known as Thomas (after America’s third president).

March 12: Modern Economic Models

McGuire and Ohsfeldt (1986) went beyond the work of Beard and McDonald to argue that there should be more attention to the economic variables and their influence on the Convention and the Constitution. Though it is not the same kind of economic argument, Robertson (2005) argues that the Constitution ended up the way that it did just as much because of the opponents (like Roger Sherman) as it did the enthusiasts like James Madison.

Recommended: McGuire and Ohsfeldt began their work in a nice paper from two years earlier. It lays out the argument and the future ideas (McGuire and Ohsfeldt, 1984). And McGuire (2003) goes much further investigating the patterns of economic variables related to ratification. The book is one of the best available on the subject.

Dougherty and Heckelman (2006) point out some of the other reasons that Robertson’s arguments in favor of the importance of Sherman may be flawed (he responded in the same issue of the journal). And they went on to write a series of excellent papers on some of the economic issues surrounding the Convention (Dougherty and Heckelman, 2008; Heckelman and Dougherty, 2011). Pope and Treier (2015) lays out a different set of ideas about economic influence on the Convention.

March 14: Class Constitutional Debate

This day will be set aside for additional deliberations about the class constitution.

March 19: A Cultural Model of the Convention

Part of the heart of Jillson’s argument (Jillson, 2002, chapters six through nine) is that regionalism helped create the Constitution. He goes further and argues that this happened after the great small state / large
state debate. Though Jillson places great emphasis on a quantitative and technical account of the Convention, he fundamentally argues that the debate was about culture and principles rather than economics. This is an important discussion to have, because it goes to the heart of what motivated voting (which may well have been different on various votes).

March 21: Explaining Separation of Powers

The Federalist made many arguments in favor of the new system. Some of the key arguments about the institutional design of the new government can be found in the key papers of 39, 47 - 51 and 78 (Hamilton, Jay and Madison, 1788). In many respects the new national government’s design, with clear separation of powers, was the greatest innovation of the Convention. This novelty required a robust defense. The work of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton was a crucial piece of that defense.

Recommended: Rakove (1996, chapter 9) is an excellent of discussion of how the presidency was created.

March 26: The Process of Ratification

Rakove (1996, chapters five and six) offers an introduction to the two key strands of ideas regarding ratification: how did the delegates think about ratification (chapter five) and how did the people voting think about ratification and the document facing them (chapter six). This is arguably the most crucial election in American history, so it is worth taking time to discuss the ideas and concepts.

Recommended: The fullest account of ratification is found in Pauline Maier’s Ratification (2010). Though it is far beyond the scope of what we can read in a single class it is the best day by day account of ratification. It is not, however, terribly theoretical. In contrast, Riker’s novella, “Why Negative Campaigning is Rational: The Rhetoric of the Ratification Campaign of 1787-1788” (1991) is far less readable, but perhaps a better theoretical account of strategy surrounding the election.

Beard (1913) offered his own view of ratification in chapters eight, nine and ten. It is important to draw a distinction between the two stages of the Convention: drafting and ratification. They do not always match up well. Beard introduces the idea of thinking about the groups separately, though his analysis remains similar to his earlier work.

March 28: Arguments Against Ratification

Having studied some of the major Federalist arguments in favor of the constitution. It is imperative to read the best arguments of the Anti-Federalists. Centinel, in Letter I, takes on directly the argument of the Federalists that rights will be protected by this new government. On the contrary he sees it as a great danger to people’s natural rights. And he is not at all impressed with the idea of checks and balances as a safeguard (Centinel, 1787). Brutus—almost certainly the Convention delegate Robert Yates of New York—argued in a series of letters that the new government would usurp the powers of the people and the states (consistent with his views at the Convention). In this essay he particularly points out specific clauses that would eventually make the new government tyrannical (Brutus, 1787). Finally, Federal Farmer, in Letter III, strikes very similar notes to the other two essays in the reading. He believes the Constitution will not protect rights and that it will eventually mean that common people are not represented (Farmer, 1787). To

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16 His true name was probably Samuel Brian, a leader of the Pennsylvania Anti-Federalists.
17 It remains a bit more uncertain who wrote these. Traditionally they are attributed to Richard Henry Lee, but in more recent years some have argued that Melancton Smith was the true author. In either event, we are more concerned with the arguments than the authorship.
some modern ears, influenced by the deification of that document and the process that produced it, that sounds heretical, but their arguments should be taken seriously. Many modern issues were anticipated by these essays. And one can believe that the Constitution is a great achievement, but still believe that the anti-federalists had many good arguments.

April 2: Class Constitutional Debate

This class period will be set aside for class constitutional debate.

April 4: The Founders and Religion

Because the bill of rights specifically protects religious liberty, and because such liberty is central to the mission of Brigham Young University, we also take up the question of how members of the founding generation thought about religious liberty. Munoz (2009, chapter 7) specifically addresses the question of religious liberty and how three very important founders thought about the idea. Students will note that they were not entirely consistent with each other or, certainly, with many modern sets of ideas. The key question is what version of religious liberty appeals most (or least?) to us?

April 9: The Bill of Rights

The story of the bill of rights is complex, but Rakove (1996, chapter 10) provides all of the key details into one of the most interesting stories of the Founding. James Madison, initially a firm opponent of the bill of rights, became one of its greatest champions. In fact, he actually drafted the language for what would become the bill of rights—though in his own writings what we now know as the First Amendment was really just the Third Amendment.

April 11: Class Constitutional Debate

This will be the second to last session where students work on the class’s constitution. Time grows short at this time, so it is essential that the delegates begin putting final touches on the document.

April 9: Forming the First Parties

The Constitution does not mention parties, but there is no denying their importance to the American system. And, in many respects, the founding was not complete until the parties had been created. Slez and Martin (2007) write about the ways in which the party system was an outgrowth of the Constitutional debates. Dougherty (2015) takes a wider look at how the party system unfolded, arguing that social networks formed creating the eventual parties.\(^{19}\)

Recommended: Aldrich and Grant (1993) take a position similar to Slez and Martin in that they see a great deal of continuity between the Convention and the founding of the new party systems. Clinton and Meirowitz (2004) is a technical but interesting discussion of the famous dinner party between Hamilton, Jefferson and Madison. Supposedly it launched their opposition to one another. This paper examines the argument for the voting in Congress as evidence of a bargain.

\(^{18}\)This reading can be found on course reserve.

\(^{19}\)This reading will be distributed as a working paper later the semester.
April 16: The Class Constitution

The Convention in Philadelphia had no firm deadlines, although there was no real possibility it could extend into the fall. Unlike the Convention, this course has a fairly clear deadline of the end of the semester. To that end, this session is the final session devoted to producing the class constitution. Students still have some time for details after this as the final draft of the Constitution will be due (signed by those who wish to do so) no later than 5:00 pm on April 18.

April 18: Concluding Comments

This class has given students the opportunity to study a single political event with the depth rarely achieved in an undergraduate program. Rakove (1996, chapter 11 and the Coda) presents Rakove’s final thoughts on the Constitution. Jillson (2002, chapter 10) concludes with a similar set of thoughts about what can be learned. Similar to these authors, this final session will begin with Prof. Pope’s short summary comments on what the most important lessons of the Convention are and will segue into a discussion of what the students feel they have learned.

Recommended: Beard (1913, chapters ten and eleven) closes out his account of the Convention with an appeal to pay attention to the interests.

Grade Policy

The course has several assessment components. Each is listed below along with its total number of points.

- Class participation & quizzes ........................................ 50 points
- Delegate Biography paper ............................................. 50 points
- Midterm short essays .................................................. 50 points
- Voting explanation paper proposal .................................. 25 points
- Voting explanation paper ............................................. 75 points
- Class Constitution ...................................................... 50 points
- Final examination .......................................................... 100 points

Participation and Quizzes: Six quizzes on the readings will be randomly given throughout the semester. The quizzes will be completely focused on the readings and consist of five short answer questions. Quizzes cannot be made up or given late. Participation points will be assigned at the end of the semester based on student contributions to the seminar and the quiz scores. The quizzes largely serve as a check on whether or not student preparation of the readings is adequate. In calculating a participation grade, the lowest quiz score will be dropped completely.

Students who do a good job of participating in the discussions on a regular basis (or talking over readings with the professor) will receive a large number of participation points. Students whose participation is not of the same quality will receive proportionally fewer points. Quantity of comments is not the only (or even the strongest) consideration. Thoughtful comments will receive the greatest reward. Some students are not as comfortable participating in class. That is why the two components are linked. A perfect score on the quizzes with relatively little participation will still earn a very high score on this component. Missing a few quizzes, but with excellent participation will also score well. Skipped quizzes and little participation will mean a relatively low grade on this score.

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20So, no doubt, some of you are tired of it.
21To be as clear as possible, I will assign the total points based on your quiz scores and my personal assessment of your participation at the end of the course. Students interested in their grade may inquire before the end of the semester.
Delegate Biography paper: Every student will be assigned one delegate for a short biography paper (five pages, excluding tables, figures and a title page). This should be an even balance of summary and analysis focusing on their background, ideas and contribution to the Convention. It must be no longer than five pages excluding references, tables and figures. Students should consult as many outside sources as they can find. This will vary quite a bit between delegates and that will be taken into account on the grading. The paper is due on February 5.

Midterm Essays: In lieu of a formal midterm examination the class will receive a take-home short essay assignment. This will be open book and open note. The assignment will be distributed at 5:00 pm on February 27 and a hardcopy will be due under my door seventy-two hours later on March 2 at 5:00 pm.

Voting explanation paper: The central bit of work in the course will be a short analysis of the voting at the Convention (no more than seven pages, excluding tables, figures and a title page). Students will explain something about the voting at the convention. It could be a series of votes that the student analyzes. It could be a statistical analysis of one of the sixteen key votes discussed by McDonald and develop a theory to explain that vote (presumably rooted in some mixture of interests or ideas). It could be a broad pattern about how voting was influenced by the agenda. Students merely need to agree with Prof. Pope on a strategy. More details on this assignment will be available later on. It is the key component of grading as the proposal (due on March 21) is worth twenty-five points and the final draft (due on April 18) is worth seventy-five points. The best projects will be substantial at the proposal phase. A proposal that does not include a table, figure, some key piece of analysis, or a very clear plan will not receive a very good grade.

Final examination: This is worth one hundred points and will be given on April 24. Please bear in mind that it cannot be given early and can only be given late under circumstances for an incomplete grade. Events in your control will not count as a valid reason for rescheduling. The examination will be open book and open note.

Class Constitution: The centerpiece assignment of this course is to produce a class Constitution. Students must come up collectively with a Constitution that they believe would fit today’s circumstances. Grading will be weighted as follows. Twenty points will be Prof. Pope’s assessment of the overall document (and will not vary by student). Fifteen points will be Prof. Pope’s assessment of the individual participation that he was able to observe. The final fifteen points will be based off of the private comments of the other classmates regarding participation.

Grade Updates: The best way to find out how you are doing in this course is simply to ask the professor. Grades will be updated on Learning Suite as quickly as possible, but this will always be an incomplete indicator. The course is designed to work as a complete unit and so many important projects do not take place until later in the semester, and estimating a student’s final grade is difficult until around April. That is why students should take the feedback on early assignments and the midterm essays very seriously. This is the best indicator of performance until later in the semester.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is at the heart of academic life and the honor code at this university. Some students who would never think of a violation of the Word of Wisdom will not hesitate to cheat on an exam or

Note that these papers can, sometimes, be strong contenders for the department’s journal Sigma which usually collects papers in the fall semester some time. Please see me if this interests you. This is not the only outlet. Out of last year’s course two students have either co-authored a paper with me or have

Please see me if these requirements are unclear to you.

The specific voting procedures will be discussed in class at the appropriate time.

After all you have a lot more experience than did the delegates in 1787. You should use it.

I will be as transparent and forthright as I can be, and even give estimates of what you may be able to get in the future.
plagiarize a paper. See the section of the BYU homepage devoted to the honor code for details on the academic honesty policy. Assume that clear cases of dishonesty will result in a failing grade in the course.

Counseling

Many students at BYU struggle with stress, depression, and other emotional challenges. BYU’s office of Counseling and Psychological Services offers a variety of helpful services to deal with these very common issues. Counseling is available to full-time students with concerns such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, interpersonal conflict, marital problems, self-esteem, social relationships, and stress management. All of these services, consistent with the highest standards of professional psychology, are provided in a confidential manner. For example, the university’s Stress Management Services can help students identify sources of stress and learn how to cope with its physical and emotional effects. Students learn how to relax, restructure stressful thinking, and become more effective in dealing with stress and pressure. Counseling and Psychological Services is located at 1500 WSC and by phone at 801-422-3035. Visit their website at https://caps.byu.edu/ for more information or to make an appointment, for more immediate concerns please visit http://help.byu.edu.

Disabilities

Brigham Young University and its faculty are committed to providing a learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, you are responsible for making your needs known to us and seeking available assistance from the university in a timely manner. In addition to notifying us, you must contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC) at 422-7065, 1520 WSC. The UAC reviews requests for reasonable academic accommodations for all students who have qualified documented disabilities, and any accommodations for this class must be coordinated with the UAC office. See http://uac.byu.edu/ for more information.

Sexual Misconduct

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Brigham Young University prohibits unlawful sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. The university also prohibits sexual harassment—including sexual violence—committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of “Sexual Misconduct” prohibited by the university.

University policy requires all university employees in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report all incidents of Sexual Misconduct that come to their attention in any way, including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Incidents of Sexual Misconduct should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at t9coordinator@byu.edu or (801) 422-8692. Reports may also be submitted through EthicsPoint at https://titleix.byu.edu/report or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours a day).

BYU offers confidential resources for those affected by Sexual Misconduct, including the university’s Victim Advocate, as well as a number of non-confidential resources and services that may be helpful.
Additional information about Title IX, the university’s Sexual Misconduct Policy, reporting requirements, and resources can be found at http://titleix.byu.edu or by contacting the university’s Title IX Coordinator.

Incompletes:

This course adheres to University policy on “incompletes,” which is that an incomplete (I) is given only when circumstances beyond the student’s control make it impossible to complete the required work within the prescribed time. Arrangements must be made between the professor and the student prior to the end of the semester. The “I” is never given when a student is failing or has failed the course.

Important Dates

- Martin Luther King Holiday .......................... January 15
- Add deadline ........................................ January 16
- Biography Paper ........................................ February 5
- Monday Classes ......................................... February 20
- Midterm Essays ........................................ February 27 - March 2
- Withdrawal Deadline ................................. March 20
- Voting Explanation Paper Proposal ......... March 21
- Discontinuance deadline ............................. April 4
- Reading day ........................................... April 18
- Final examination ...................................... April 24

References


McDonald, Forrest. 1958. We the People. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.


Last updated: January 8, 2018
http://scholar.byu.edu/jcpope/classes/pl-sc-422-interests