

AMERICAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT:
THE LIBERAL TRADITION, CONSERVATIVE POWER,
AND AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

Alexis de Tocqueville famously claimed that the United States had “the great advantage” of having been “born equal instead of becoming so,” an insight that was later elaborated in Louis Hartz’s 1955 book *The Liberal Tradition in America*. Hartz believed that Tocqueville’s insight provided the key to some of the great puzzles of American political development, particularly the absence of the sort of strong socialist party that one encountered in Europe. In this course we will interrogate the liberal tradition thesis. If the United State is a distinctively liberal society, then why has the “L” word become so politically toxic over the last thirty years, and why have conservatives fared so well? If there is a liberal consensus, as Hartz claims, then why do we hear so much about a culture war and partisan polarization? And just how different is the United States from other western democracies anyways? In what ways, if any, is it exceptional? And to the extent that it is distinctive, what explains the differences between the United States and other advanced industrial societies? These are the questions that animate this course and will absorb our attention throughout the semester.

The emphasis in this course is on close reading and discussion of texts. Because the course is discussion based, it is *imperative* that you do the reading for each class session. At times the reading is heavy, so it is incumbent upon each of you to manage your time wisely so that you are able to come to every class prepared to discuss the readings. Class participation will figure heavily (30 percent) in your final grade. If you miss a class, whether excused or unexcused, you must write a 600 word paper analyzing the reading that was assigned for the day they miss. Your participation grade in the course will be lowered by 1/3 for every short paper you do not turn in within a week of your return to class. More than two unexcused absences will result in a full grade deduction from your final course grade; each additional unexcused absence will result in an additional deduction of one full grade from your final grade. Persistent lateness or failure to prepare adequately for class discussions can also result in deductions from the final grade.

The major requirements for the course are a take-home essay due October 5th (worth 15 percent of your grade) and a final paper (worth 30 percent) and presentation (worth 10 percent). Periodic, short writing assignments will also be assigned as a way of focusing reading and stimulating discussion. These will be worth 15% of your grade.

The required texts, available for purchase at the Willamette Bookstore, are:
Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman’s Crusade* (Princeton University Press, 2005)
Marie Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)
Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (Harcourt Brace, 1955)
James Davison Hunter and Alan Wolfe, *Is There a Culture War? A Dialogue on Values and American Public Life* (Brookings, 2006)
Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (Norton, 1996)

Graham Wilson, *Only in America? The Politics of the United States in Comparative Perspective* (Chatham House, 1998)

Other readings on the syllabus are available either through electronic reserve or via J-STOR or Project MUSE.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1.1 Wednesday, Aug 29 Introduction

I. Is There a Culture War? Or is There Even a Culture?

1.2 Friday, Aug 31 The Case for the Culture War

Is There a Culture War? 10-40

2.1 Monday, Sept. 3 Labor Day No Class

2.2 Wednesday, Sept 5 The Culture War Concept Debated

Is There a Culture War? 41-107

2.3 Friday, Sept. 7 Is There an American Culture?

Robert Bellah, "Is There a Common American Culture?" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (Autumn 1998), 613-25 {available on J-STOR}

II. The Liberal Tradition in America

3.1 Monday, Sept 10 The Concept of a Liberal Society

Hartz, *Liberal Tradition in America*, 3-86

3.2 Wednesday, Sept 12 The South

Hartz, *Liberal Tradition in America*, 145-200

3.3 Friday, Sept 14 The Encounter with the World

Hartz, *Liberal Tradition in America*, 259-309

4.1 Monday, Sept. 17 Debating Hartz

Studies in American Political Development (2005), 196-239 (essays by Gunnell, Nackenoff, Morone, Holland and Glenn) {available on electronic reserve}

4.2 Wednesday, Sept. 19 Building on Hartz

Huntington, "American Ideals versus American Institutions," *Political Science Quarterly* (Spring 1982), 1-37. {available on J-STOR}

4.3 Friday, Sept 21 Moving Beyond Hartz

Rogers Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* (September 1993), 549-66. {available on J-STOR}

III. The Rise of Conservative Power

5.1 Monday, Sept 24 The Making of a Grassroots Conservative
Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 1-108

5.2 Wednesday, Sept 26 The Goldwater Campaign and its aftermath
Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 109-162

5.3 Friday, Sept. 28. Confronting the Soviets
Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 163-82

6.1 Monday, Oct 1 The ERA and the 1970s
Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 183-242

6.2 Wednesday, Oct 3 The Triumph of the Right
Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 243-304

6.3 Friday, Oct. 5 Take Home Essay Due

IV. American Exceptionalism

7.1 Monday, October 8 American Exceptionalism Affirmed
Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*, 13-76

7.2 Wednesday, October 10 The Continental Divide: The U.S. and Canada
Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*, 77-109

H.V. Nelles, "American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword," *American Historical Review* (1997), 749-57 {available on J-STOR}

7.3 Friday, October 12 The U.S. and Japan
Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*, 211-63

J. Victor Koschmann, "The Nationalism of Cultural Uniqueness," *American Historical Review* (1997), 758-68 {available on J-STOR}

8.1 Monday, October 15 Is America Really That Different?
Graham Wilson, *Only in America?* 1-59

8.2 Wednesday, Oct. 17 The Size of Government
Graham Wilson, *Only in America?* 60-85

Christopher Howard, "Is the American Welfare State Unusually Small," *P.S.: Political Science and Politics* (2003), 411-16 {available on J-STOR}

8.3 Oct. 19 Midsemester Day

9.1 Monday, Oct 22 Why no National Health Insurance in the United States?

Ichiro Kawachi, "Why the United States is Not Number One in Health," in James Morone and

Lawrence Jacobs, ed., *Healthy, Wealthy, and Fair: Health Care and the Good Society* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 19-36 {available on electronic reserve}

Jill Quadagno, "Why the United States Has No National Health Insurance: Stakeholder Mobilization Against the Welfare State, 1945-1996," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* (2004), 25-44. {available on J-STOR}

9.2 Wednesday, Oct 24 Why does the United States have Affirmative Action?

Robert C. Lieberman, "Weak State, Strong Policy: Paradoxes of Race Policy in the United States, Great Britain, and France," *Studies in American Political Development* (Fall 2002), 138-61. {available on electronic reserve}

9.3 Friday, Oct 26 Institutions

Graham Wilson, *Only in America?*, 103-131

10.1 Monday, Oct 29 Constitutions

Cass Sunstein, "Why Does the American Constitution Lack Social and Economic Guarantees," in Michael Ignatieff, ed., *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights* (Princeton University Press, 2005), 90-11. {available on electronic reserve}

Frederick Schauer, "The Exceptional First Amendment," in Michael Ignatieff, ed., *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights* (Princeton University Press, 2005), 29-56. {available on electronic reserve}

10.2 Wednesday, Oct 31 Why is the United States so Religious?

Wilbur Zelinsky, "The Uniqueness of the American Religious Landscape," *Geographical Review* (2001), 565-85 {available on J-STOR}

David Hollinger, "The 'Secularization' Question and the United States in the Twentieth Century," *Church History* (2001), 132-43. {available on J-STOR}

10.3 Friday, Nov 2 Is American Foreign Policy Exceptional?

Joseph Lepgold and Timothy McKeown, "Is American Foreign Policy Exceptional? An Empirical Analysis," *Political Science Quarterly* (1995), 369-384 {available on J-STOR}

11.1 Monday, Nov 5 Why so many Prisons and Prisoners in the United States?

Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows*, 1-76

11.2 Wednesday, Nov 7 Why so many Prisons and Prisoners in the United States?

Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows*, 77-114

11.3 Friday, Nov 9 Why so many Prisons and Prisoners in the United States?

Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows*, 115-64

12.1 Monday, Nov 12 Capital Punishment

Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows*, 197-235

12.2 Wednesday, Nov 14 The Future of the Carceral State
Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows*, 236-64

12.3 Friday, Nov 16 Soccer
Andrei Markovits and Steven Hellerman, *Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism*
(Princeton University Press, 2001), 7-98 {available on electronic reserve}

13.1 Monday, Nov 19 Smoking
Jessica Flint's senior thesis on smoking policies in the U.S., France, and Germany {available on
electronic reserve}

13.2 Nov. 21 No class

Thanksgiving

14.1 Student Presentations:

14.2 Student Presentations:

14.3 Student Presentations:

15.1 Student Presentations:

15.2 Student Presentations:

15.3 Student Presentations:

Topics for student presentations might include Guns and Gun Control, Abortion and
Contraception, Gay Marriage and Gay Rights, the Right to Die, Dress Codes in Public Schools,
Zero Tolerance, the War on Drugs, Obesity and Public Health, Education, Immigration,
Multiculturalism, the Environment, Genetically Modified Foods, Energy Policy, Vacation Time,
Public Transportation.

Final paper assignment will consist of the following parts. It should be between approximately 3,000 and 4,000 words.

1. Annotated Bibliography with between 6 and 8 items. Each annotation should summarize argument and evidence of the book/article/chapter in 150-200 words. Total length should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words.
2. One to two figures or tables that visually illustrate the differences and/or similarities between the United States and at least one other country
3. A 500-750 word description of the differences and/or similarities between the United States and at least one other country
4. 1000-1,500 word section that identifies at least three possible explanations that might account for the observed differences. Identify the explanation that you think provides the best fit with the data you have gathered.
5. A 250-300 word abstract of the thesis