THE PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE

This course—the first of a two part sequence in American Political Thought—will explore the American polity and the ideas that animated its creation and subsequent development through the period of great crisis culminating in the Civil War. Rather than attempt a brief survey of every political perspective that surfaced during this period of time, we will attempt to delve a little deeper into the thought of the most important statesmen (and other political observers and participants), as their genius was called forth by the greatest challenges of the nation’s early history.

The course will be conducted as a seminar with frequent class discussion. You should come to every class prepared to participate in and contribute to an engaging conversation.

Required Texts - Note: It is necessary that every student has print copies of the assigned readings in this course and brings them to class. This includes both the major texts listed below and the individual linked readings. As electronic devices are not allowed in this class, students must print out any material that comes in an electronic format. The bookstore at ASU is very poorly managed, so students may need to find another vendor for the required texts if they run out of copies.

- Herbert Storing, What the Anti-Federalists Were For, University of Chicago Press, ISBN: 0226775747 (hereafter, Storing)
- Miscellaneous Readings individually linked in the Course Schedule (or in Announcements) on Blackboard

Optional Texts
- Nicholas Buccola, ed., The Essential Douglass: Selected Writings and Speeches,
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance
Good attendance is expected and rewarded in this class. “Good attendance” requires students to come to class on time and prepared. Being prepared means bringing all the assigned readings with you to class, coming ready to discuss them, and bringing a notebook and writing utensil to take notes with. Please do not come to class late as this is disrespectful and disruptive to the class. Good attendance will be reflected in your participation grade.

Participation
Students who regularly attend class, come on time and prepared, and intelligently engage in the class discussions will receive the highest grades in this area. Unexplained absence, lateness, lack of preparation, lack of attention, and failure to engage in class discussion will each have a negative effect on your participation grade. More than 5 absences will result in a zero for this grade.

Blogs
This assignment entails writing one blog “entry” and two “responses” every week (at a minimum of 1200 words total each week). The class will be divided into groups of three blog partners. Every Tuesday, prior to coming to class, students must post an entry of 600 words or more on the readings assigned for that week. Every Thursday, students must post 2 responses, each 300 words or more (i.e. one to each of your two partners). Students will have access to the blogs of each of their fellow students. No late work will be accepted.

Important: This assignment is not for the purpose of summarizing the readings, cheerleading your partners, or simply repeating what has already been said elsewhere. Do not do these things.

The idea behind this assignment is to be both a spur to and a continuation of the class discussions. The goal is to use this written conversation with your partners to advance the course in a meaningful way, while exercising and developing your ability to write and think clearly. To do this you may find some question or idea in the reading that you wish to explore further. You may make connections or draw distinctions between various readings, or between the ideas of the past and the ideas/practice of the present, or between your opinions and your classmates (or professor’s) opinions—just as long as there is a clear connection to the readings.

Exams
There will be a midterm exam and a final exam composed of short answer identifications and essays. All your answers will be written down in bluebooks, and all tests will be administered in our regular classroom. The midterm is scheduled for Thursday, October 14th, at the normal class time. The final is scheduled for December 9th at 10:30am in the classroom

GRADING
Participation 25%
Blogs 25%
Midterm 20%
Final 30%

Grading Scale: A = 90 and above, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-60, F = anything below 60

POLICIES

Electronic Devices: Use of electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops is strictly prohibited. If you possess such devices and carry them with you to class, they should not be seen or heard by anyone, including (especially) yourself. Students are to stow these away prior to entering the classroom. If you need to use it before class begins, you step out into the hallway to do so. Using your cell phone in class is a good way to have all your participation points taken away. Flagrant violators of this rule will be asked to leave and counted absent.

Students with Disabilities: If you have particular learning needs that are documented with the university’s Student Life Office, please contact let me know so arrangements for testing can be made in advance. See http://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14216-op-1015-providing-accommodations-for-students-with. If not yet documented, please contact them at: Rm 112 University Center, (325) 942-2126, Student.Life@angelo.edu

Honor Code: Cheating, plagiarism, and other violations of the honor code will not be tolerated. Any all violations will result in failure for the entire course, and the violator will be reported to the Office of Student Affairs. See ASU’s policies at http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf