## American Political Thought 46.307.201

Instructor:	Susan E. Gallagher Susan_Gallagher@uml.edu	
<b>Course Page:</b>	http://faculty.uml.edu/sgallagher (Click on American Political Thought)	
Time:	Tuesday, Thursday, 5:00 - 6:15 Room: Dugan 207	
Office:	Coburn 400	
<b>Office Hours:</b>	On campus: Thurs, 4:00–5:00 (or by appointment)	
	Online: Friday, 7:00-10:00pm	

Note: The assignment schedule and other details are included on the course web page.

This course utilizes documentary resources to survey major milestones in American political thought from the Founding Era to the present. During the first half of the term, we will study selections from leading contributors to social, economic, and political discourse over the past two centuries. During the second half, students will use what they have learned to explore how eighteenth and nineteenth-century approaches to politics and government have influenced social and political developments in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Topics covered in the readings during the first half of the semester include the crafting of the U.S. Constitution, the rise of abolitionism, the struggle for woman suffrage, the response to industrialization, and the political and legal consequences of the spread of mass communications. Drawing from these materials, students will make presentations on the ways in which earlier conceptions of democracy, equality, freedom, justice, and the rule of law fueled more recent debates about civil rights, gender equality, free speech, environmental problems, the scope of government, and other political issues.

All required readings and supporting materials will be drawn from public domain collections that are freely available on the Internet. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to conduct research for papers and presentations by locating relevant images, texts, and other documents on trustworthy sites such as Digital Commonwealth, the Library of Congress, and Google Books.

## Requirements

You must have regular access to the Internet in order to take this course. You are not required to purchase any books. All course materials, including required readings and assignments, are available at http://faculty.uml.edu/sgallagher. Click on American Political Thought in order to access the course page.

When you contact me via e-mail, you must include the initials APT in the subject heading of your message. If you do not include "APT," your e-mail could be misdirected or rejected as spam.

If you need to miss a session, please e-mail a valid excuse beforehand if you can or as soon as possible after that session. If you miss more than three sessions without providing a valid excuse, you will receive an "F" for the course.

You must not plagiarize. If you copy from any outside source without providing proper attribution in any of your assignments, you will receive an "F" for that assignment. If you copy

from any outside source without providing proper attribution on either the midterm or the final exam, you will automatically fail the entire course.

## Assignments

The first half of the course is divided into seven Units. We will generally spend a week covering each Unit, but a few will run a bit longer. To complete each Unit, you must provide brief typewritten answers to questions on the required readings. In some cases, you will be required to submit your answers via e-mail; in others, you will be required to print out your answers and bring them with you to class. Please follow the instructions included with each set of reading questions and always arrive in class prepared to show that you have completed your work.

In all of your assignments, you must demonstrate your ability to write college-level prose. Consequently, all of your assignments must be thoughtfully composed and free of grammatical errors. I will do my best to help you solve writing problems, but if your work is carelessly written, or if you neglect to proofread your assignments, or if you submit work late without a valid explanation, you will not do well in this class.

During the second half of the term, you will work with other students to prepare and give presentations on specific issues related to American political thought. On the date of each presentation, each of the students involved will be required to submit a summary of the main points made.

## Exams

For your midterm exam, you will be required to write two two-page essays on specific aspects of the required readings. In order to help you complete the exam, I will supply a list of thesis statements that you may use as the opening paragraph for each of your midterm essays.

Your work will be graded according to your ability to write college-level prose. Consequently, like your answers to the reading questions, your midterm must be carefully written and proofread. If your essays do not conform to the basic rules of college-level composition, you should not expect to receive a passing grade.

For your final exam, you must choose one of the following options:

- 1. You may write a five-page paper on a topic chosen from a list that I will supply well in advance.
- 2. If you already possess the required technical skills, you may create a web page on a specific aspect of one of the major issues covered in class.
- 3. If you would like to conduct further research on a topic related to issues raised in class, you may make an in-class presentation of your findings near the end of the term. Note: choose this option only if you are prepared to carry out significant extra research.

No matter which of these options you choose, you must submit a thesis statement on your topic approximately two weeks before the work is due. In order to help you complete this task, we will discuss possible thesis statements in class well in advance of the due date for the final exam.

Grade Formula:	Weekly Assignments and Class Participation = 30%
	Midterm = $30\%$
	Final Paper/Presentation = 40%