

Seminar: "Ism's" in American Politics 46.310.201

Instructor: Susan E. Gallagher Susan_Gallagher@uml.edu
Time: Tuesday, Thursday 5:00 – 6:15 **Room:** 100 Coburn Hall
Faculty Page: <http://faculty.uml.edu/sgallagher> (Click on "Ism's" in American Politics.)
Office: Coburn 400
Office Hours: On campus: Thursday, 3:00 – 4:45 (or by appointment via email)
Online: Friday, 7:00-10:00pm

Note: Links to all required readings are included on the course web page.

This course utilizes documentary resources to survey major ideological movements in American politics 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 three centuries. During the second half, students will use what they have learned to explore whether the popular ideologies of previous eras continue to inform present-day political preoccupations, assumptions, and ideological trends.

Topics covered in the readings during the first half of the semester include federalism and anti-federalism, populism, abolitionism, Social Darwinism, socialism, progressivism, Keynesianism, feminism, McCarthyism, '60's radicalism, and what might be described as the "anti-governmentism" that has animated both Republicans and Democrats since the Reagan era.

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 in trustworthy library databases, mainstream newspaper archives, and other reliable sites.

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>.

When you contact me via e-mail, you must include the letters "ISM" in the subject heading of your message. If you do not include "ISM," your e-mail could be misdirected or rejected as spam. Also, you must use your UML e-mail address whenever you contact me.

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 might run a bit longer. To complete each Unit, you must provide brief answers to questions on the required readings. In most cases, you will be required to submit your answers via e-mail; in general, you will also 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 the assigned readings.

In all of your assignments, you must demonstrate your ability to write college-level prose. Consequently, all of your work must be thoughtfully composed and free of grammatical errors. I will do my best to help you solve writing problems, but if your assignments are carelessly written, or if you neglect to proofread, 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 major traditions in 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 decent 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%