Course Description

As its title suggests, this course considers progressives and conservatives in American political thought. We will treat “progressive” and “conservative” as contested terms. We will disagree among ourselves about what those terms mean, and we will find various political actors and writers having similar disagreements. Some of the thinkers we consider don’t use the language of progressive or conservative at all—and we will want to think about whether the terms are useful in those cases. Our overall aim is to gain some historical perspective on terms that the left and right often use to describe themselves in American politics today.

As you know, PS 100 is part of a first year interest group (FIG). The FIG is designed to ensure thematic connections across the three courses. I encourage you to think both about links between the courses and about differences in approach across academic disciplines. Sometimes, you may find yourselves continuing a conversation in our seminar that started in one of the other courses. That’s great – even if I occasionally feel out of the loop!

Course Objectives

1. Students will gain knowledge of different political arguments and ideologies in American political thought.
2. Students will hone their skills in critically reading and evaluating political rhetoric.
3. Students will hone their skills in written and oral communication.
4. Students will become more critical and reflective citizens.

Course Materials

I have ordered the following books for our course. They should be available at the University Bookstore. Additional materials will be available on the course’s Learn@UW site.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

This is a seminar, which means we will spend our sessions discussing the assigned readings in considerable depth and will often focus upon specific passages. Given this, it is absolutely essential that you complete the assigned readings before class and come to class ready to think about them. It is also important that you bring the relevant text(s) with you to each course meeting. Part of your grade depends upon your participation in our discussions; you cannot participate if you do not attend.

Your course grade will also depend on various sorts of writing. A first essay will ask you to analyze a contemporary piece of political rhetoric according to your own understanding of progressivism or conservatism. Essays in the middle of the term will ask you to analyze writings from the founding era and speeches of Abraham Lincoln. A final project (which may or may not take the form of an essay—I will give you some choice) will involve reflecting upon conservatism and progressivism in American political thought and contemporary politics.

Course grades will be calculated approximately as follows, though I reserve the right to change assignments and weightings as I deem necessary:

- Analysis of Political Rhetoric Essay 10%
- Founding Essay 20%
- Lincoln Essay 25%
- Final Essay/Project 35%
- Attendance & Participation 10%

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:**

- Students needing special accommodations to enable full participation in this course should contact the instructor as early as possible. All information will remain confidential. You also may contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 1305 Linden Drive, (608) 263-2741 regarding questions about campus policies and services.

- You must complete all assignments to pass the course.

- Papers must be turned in on the due dates listed on the course schedule below. Late papers will be penalized one half letter grade (e.g., A to AB; B to BC) for each day they are late.

- I will not discuss grades on papers for 24 hours after they have been returned. If, after 24 hours’ reflection, you have a concern about a grade, please approach me with a brief written explanation of your concern. Any concerns about grading must be raised no later than two weeks after the assignment has been returned.

- Any instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be dealt with in full accordance with University policy and will result in a grade of “F” for the course.

**Course Schedule**

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<tr>
<td><strong>T Sept. 3</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>R Sept. 5</strong></td>
<td>Reading Political Rhetoric</td>
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<td><strong>T Sept. 10</strong></td>
<td>Progressives Today</td>
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R Sept. 12        Conservatives Today

T Sept. 17        James Otis, *Rights of the British Colonists Asserted and Proved* (1762) (Learn@UW)
                  Analysis of Political Rhetoric Essay Due

R Sept. 19        John Adams, *Thoughts on Government* (1776) (Learn@UW)

T Sept. 24        Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

R Sept. 26        Edmund Burke, selections from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Learn@UW)

T Oct. 1          Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, pp. 266-320


T Oct. 8          Selected federalist and anti-federalist writings (Learn@UW)

R Oct. 12         Selected federalist and anti-federalist writings (Learn@UW)

T Oct. 15         Selected federalist and anti-federalist writings (Learn@UW)

R Oct. 17         Concluding Discussion of Founding
                  Founding Essay Due

T Oct. 22         Lincoln, *Speech to the Young Men’s Lyceum* (Learn@UW)
                  *Address to the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society* (Learn@UW)

R Oct. 24         Lincoln, *Cooper Institute Address* (Learn@UW)
                  *House Divided Speech* (Learn@UW)

T Oct. 29         Lincoln, *First Inaugural Address* (Learn@UW)
                  *Gettysburg Address* (Learn@UW)
                  *Second Inaugural Address* (Learn@UW)

R Oct. 31         Concluding Discussion of Lincoln
                  Lincoln Essay Due

T Nov. 5          *American Progressivism*, Part I

R Nov. 7          *American Progressivism*, Part III

T Nov. 12         *American Progressivism*, Part IV

R Nov. 14         *American Progressivism*, Part VI
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading/Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>T Nov. 19</td>
<td>Selections from FDR and LBJ (Learn@UW)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Nov. 21</td>
<td>Hayek, <em>The Road to Serfdom</em>, Introduction and Chapters 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>T Nov. 26</td>
<td>Hayek, <em>The Road to Serfdom</em>, Chapters 5-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Nov. 28</td>
<td><strong>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>T Dec. 3</td>
<td>Hayek, <em>The Road to Serfdom</em>, Chapters 9-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Dec. 5</td>
<td>Hayek, <em>The Road to Serfdom</em>, Chapters 13-16 and Conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>T Dec. 10</td>
<td>Kirk, <em>The American Cause</em>, start</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Dec. 12</td>
<td>Kirk, <em>The American Cause</em>, finish</td>
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**Final Essay/Project Due Date TBA**