

American Political Thought II
Spring 2021
Boston College

Political Science 234

Professor Ken I. Kersch
Email: kersch@bc.edu

This course surveys American Political Thought from the end of the Civil War to the election of Ronald Reagan, with a few added readings that bring matters to the present day (a separate course – APT I -- takes up the pre-Civil War period). It is sometimes said that the United States, being new and not European, lacks any serious philosophical tradition, with *The Federalist Papers* (before the period we treat) the only serious contribution to political thought the nation has produced. Others take the U.S. as the exemplar or apotheosis of a single political theory: Lockean liberalism. At the same time, however, American political history, with its providentialist religiosity, robust democracy, de-centered (and often besieged) localism, vibrant (and sometimes fierce) capitalism, struggles unto war over principles of civic and social equality, and (yes) liberal commitment to individual freedom, is among the most interesting and important in the world. As this list suggests, it is also full of tensions, contradictions, arguments, struggles, and battles. Is American political thought unique or “exceptional”? Is it deep or shallow? Is it a coherent whole, or a cacophonous miscellany? Does it develop over time, or remain rooted in timeless principles? Is it a tradition we should be proud of or ashamed? Is it of value, to our politics today, and beyond our shores, or merely of antiquarian interest? We will look at some of the most prominent American thinkers from the late nineteenth century to today in an attempt to answer these questions, and to avail ourselves of the insights, limits, and legacy of this thought in assessing our individual and collective pasts and futures.

The class will be part lecture and part discussion. Students are expected to attend all classes, to do all assigned readings prior to class, and to be ready to discuss the readings and the questions they raise during our class meetings. I reserve the right to call on any student in class at any time.

Required Texts:

Isaac Kramnick and Theodore J. Lowi, *American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology* (W.W. Norton, 2019)(Second Edition) [“KL”]

Ken I. Kersch, *American Political Thought: An Invitation* (Polity, 2021)[“Kersch-APT”]

Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems* (City Lights Pocket Poets, 2001 [1956]).

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (Vintage, 1992 [Dial Press, 1963]).

Additional Required Materials posted on course Canvas Site [CV].

There are required assigned songs that you should listen to. You can access these on whatever streaming music service you want (Spotify, Apple Music, etc.). I provide YouTube links for the songs in cases where the YouTube video version of the song might be worth watching for its visuals (such as for watching the artist perform it live, a nice montage, etc.).

Course Requirements: Two (2) Papers (50%); Two Quizzes (30%); Class Attendance/Participation/Ungraded Exercises (20%).

Covid-19 Logistics:

Class Meetings/Attendance: This class will be taught via Zoom, live and synchronous, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Noon-1:15 PM, EST. Except in cases of illness or other important life issue, students are expected to regularly attend class on Zoom at the usual time.

I expect your live, real-time face to be visible live on Zoom (rather than a screen saver or logo). It is important for the dynamics of the class that I and the other students in the class be able to see you, just as we would in a live, in-person class. Exemptions will be granted for legitimate reasons on a case-by-case basis.

Notification re Recordings: This class will be recorded. The purpose of this is to provide access to material for students enrolled in this class who miss the session for an excused absence (such as illness or technical difficulty). While all of the recordings will be stored within the Canvas site, they ***will only be available for viewing by individual permission to course students with excused absences.***

Canvas: We will make use of the course Canvas page. Most of the readings in this course are in the required Kramnick-Lowi text. Any reading not in that text is posted in the Modules section of the course Canvas page. We may also use the Announcements and Discussion boards. I will be posting some of the outlines, terms, and lists that I would normally write on the classroom blackboard on Canvas. We may use that page in other ways as well, as needed.

Office Hours: I will not be in my office in McGuinn this semester. I will, however, hold virtual office hours by appointment. I should be quite available and accessible for these, other than during the day on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when I am either teaching or preparing to teach both of my classes. You should email me -- best -- or otherwise speak to me to set up a time to talk.

I am available, moreover, to meet with students in person, by appointment, one-on-one. These meetings can be either with regard to the class itself, or just for us to meet and get to know each other. We talk about anything you would like to talk about, or that comes up. Any such in person meeting, however, will need to be outdoors, masked, and at an appropriate social distance. Obviously, given the cold, this is less likely to be an option at the beginning of the semester, and more likely as the weather gets warmer over time.

I live near campus, so it is not especially burdensome for me to meet you in person outdoors. These meetings would likely take place on a campus lawn (such as on the lawn, or in the new

park, near the gym, on the Brighton campus near the Art Museum), near the Reservoir, or the yard of my apartment. Please email or speak to me if you would like to meet in person.

Teaching Assistant: X will be the Teaching Assistant for the course. He will be grading all the assignments in this course. He will also hold office hours, in the format he will determine is best, in light of the ongoing pandemic.

Preparation for Class: The class will be part lecture and part discussion. Students are expected to attend all classes, to do all assigned readings prior to class, and to be ready to discuss the readings and the questions they raise during our class meetings. I reserve the right to call on any student in class at any time.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is violated by any dishonest act committed in an academic context, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism (attempting to pass the work of others off as your own, in any way in any part of an assignment), and submitting for credit in this class work done for another class.

The University's policy on Academic Integrity may be found at www.bc.edu/integrity. Ask me if you have any questions about academic integrity; the Political Science Department also offers a quiz and discussion at <http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/quiz.html>.

All suspected violations will be reported to the Dean in accordance with University policy. A final grade of "F" for the course will be given in the event of a violation of academic integrity."

Disability Accommodations:

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact X at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD. For other students with medical, physical, psychological, and temporary disabilities should register with the Disability Services Office. Go to the following link for more details to register: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-affairs/sites/student-outreach-and-support-services/disability-services.html>

WEEK ONE

Introduction

Liberalism; Republicanism; Providentialism – and more....

Kersch, APT, Ch. 1 -- "Themes and Frameworks of American Political Thought"

Song:

Bob Dylan, "Highway 61 Revisited" (1965)

WEEK TWO

Capitalism and the New State

Kersch, APT, Ch. 5 -- “Industrial Capitalism, Reformism, and the New American State”; “Restraining Government: The Philosophy of Laissez Faire”

William Graham Sumner, “What the Social Classes Owe to Each Other” (1884); “The Challenge of Facts” (1895): KL 613.

Andrew Carnegie, “The Gospel of Wealth” (1889): KL 632.

Lester Ward, *Sociocracy* (1893); “Plutocracy and Paternalism” (1895): KL 672.

Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1889): KL 646.

WEEK THREE

Kersch, APT, “Ideas in Action”

Populism

Ignatius Donnelly, *Cesar’s Column* (1891): KL 684.

James Baird Weaver, *A Call to Action* (1892): KL 690.

National People’s Party Platform (1892): KL 700.

William Jennings Bryan, “Cross of Gold” Speech (1896): KL 708.

WEEK FOUR

Kersch, APT, “Reformist and Revolutionary Critics of Industrial Capitalism: Ideas”

Labor and Voices of Dissent

Emma Goldman, “Anarchism: What it Really Stands For” (1907): KL 724.

Eugene V. Debs, “Unionism and Socialism” (1904) [CV]; “Speech to the Jury” (1918): KL 735.

Samuel Gompers, “The American Labor Movement” (1914): KL 743.

WEEK FIVE

Kersch, APT, “A New Birth of Freedom? Equality and Union After Slavery”; “Sex and Gender”

First Wave Feminism

Victoria Woodhull, “On Constitutional Equality” (1871); “The Principles of Social Freedom” (1871): KL 755.

Susan B. Anthony, “Speech About Her Indictment” (1873): KL 764.
 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Women and Economics” (1898): KL 766.
 Jane Addams, “If Men Were Seeking the Franchise” (1913): KL 772.

WEEK SIX

Kersch, APT, “The New Pluralism: Ethnicity, Nationality, and Race”

Empire

Josiah Strong, *Our Country* (1885): KL 789.
 Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West* (1889-1896): KL 795.
 Henry Cabot Lodge, “Speech on a Literacy Test for Immigrants” (1896): KL 798.
 Albert J. Beveridge, “The March of the Flag” (1898): KL 803.

William Graham Sumner, “The Conquest of the United States by Spain” (1899): KL 809.
Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League (1899): KL 807.

WEEK SEVEN

Racial Equality

Booker T. Washington, “Atlanta Exposition Address” (1895): KL 852.
 W.E.B. DuBois, “The Souls of Black Folk” (1903); “The Talented Tenth” (1903): KL 856;
 “[Niagara Movement] Declaration of Principles” (1905) [CV].

Marcus Garvey, “The True Solution of the Negro Problem” (1922): KL: 875.

Song:

Billie Holiday (1915-1959), “Strange Fruit” (1937)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnlTHvJBp0>

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” (1900)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyS3HPInHtI>

WEEK EIGHT

Kersch, APT, “From Pragmatism to Progressivism”; “Pragmatism in Politics and Government”

The Social Gospel and Progressivism

Lincoln Steffens, “The Shame of the Cities” (1904): KL 890.

Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1909): KL 909.

John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (1910); *The Public and Its Problems* (1927): KL 925.

Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (1922) [CV].

Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909): KL 949.

Theodore Roosevelt, *New Nationalism* (1910): KL 971.

Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom* (1913): KL 984.

WEEK NINE

Kersch, APT, Ch. 6 -- “The New Deal Liberal Order: Collapse, Culmination, or ‘Great Exception’?”; “The New Deal”

New Deal Thought (and Resistance)

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “Speech at Oglethorpe University” (1932); “Commonwealth Club Speech” (1932); “First Inaugural Address” (1933) [CV]; “The Four Freedoms” (1941); “A Second Bill of Rights” (1944): KL 1040.

Herbert Hoover, “Rugged Individualism” (1928); “The Fifth Freedom” (1941): KL 1015.

Songs:

Al Jolson, “Brother Can You Spare a Dime?” (1931)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F4yT0KAMyo>

Woody Guthrie, “I Ain’t Got No Home in This World Anymore” (*Dust Bowl Ballads*, 1940)

Woody Guthrie, “Do Re Mi” (*Dust Bowl Ballads*, 1940)

Woody Guthrie, “Pretty Boy Floyd” (*Dust Bowl Ballads*, 1940)

Woody Guthrie, “Jesus Christ” (1940)

Woody Guthrie, “Grand Coolee Dam” (*Columbia River Ballads*, 1941 – Commissioned by the Bonneville Power Association)

Bukka White, “Parchman Farm Blues” (1940)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFO4jmQB6zs>

WEEK TEN

Rebellious Undercurrents: The Fifties

Kersch, APT, “The Fate of the Individual in a Mass Polity”; “Who Governs? The Liberal Consensus”; “Outliers in Franklin Roosevelt’s America: The ‘Radical Right,’ Marxian Left, and Marginalized African-Americans”

The Liberal Center

Louis Hartz, *The Concept of a Liberal Society* (1955): KL 1092.

Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* [CV]

Robert Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (1961): [CV].

Conservatism/Anti-Communism

Kersch, APT, “Postwar Conservatism’s Political Rise”; “Conservative Political Thought”: 270; 273.

William F. Buckley, Jr., *God and Man at Yale* (1951): KL 1080.

Whittaker Chambers, *Witness* (1952): KL 1083.

Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative* (1960): KL 1101.

Song:

The Louvin Brothers, “Great Atomic Power” (from *Weapon of Prayer*, 1962)

Kersch, APT, “Rumbling Undercurrents”; “Radical Stirrings, Civil Rights, the Contentious 1960s and the Rise of Modern Conservatism”; “Mass Conformity: The Diagnosis and the Rebels”

WEEK ELEVEN

Radical Stirrings

C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (1956) [CV].

C. Wright Mills, *Letter to the New Left* (1960): KL 1115.

Teen Rebellion/Beat/Rock and Roll

Allen Ginsberg, *Howl* (1955).

Movies Trailers:

The Wild One (1953) [directed by Stanley Kramer; starring Marlon Brando]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIKWlx-Yxkg>

Rebel Without a Cause (trailer) [starring James Dean](1955)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAlzg0S51GY>

Songs:

Big Joe Turner, “Shake, Rattle, and Roll”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhELpSeeipg>

Bill Haley and the Comets, “Shake, Rattle, and Roll” (1954)

Little Richard, “Good Golly Miss Molly” (1958)

Muddy Waters, “I Just Want to Make Love to You” (1954) (written by Willie Dixon)

The Shangri-Las, “Leader of the Pack” (1965)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SM_99DtI0tE

The Shirelles, “Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow” (1964) (written by Carole King)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3irmBv8h4Tw&list=RD3irmBv8h4Tw>

Elvis Presley, “Jailhouse Rock”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfrC8PAQtIg>

WEEK TWELVE

The Sixties

Kersch, APT, “Civil Rights Resistance,” “Black Nationalism”

Civil Rights and Black Power

Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Power of Nonviolence” (1957); “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (1963): KL 1133.

Songs:

Sam Cooke, “A Change is Gonna Come” (1963)

Nina Simone, “Mississippi Goddam” (1964)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJ25-U3jNWM>

The Impressions, “People Get Ready” (1965)

The Staple Singers, “Why? (Am I Treated So Bad)” (1967)

Bob Dylan (joined by Joan Baez), “When the Ship Comes In” (live, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, 1963)[Start at 4:05]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IgSj-2gQ54>

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (1963)

Song:

The Carter Family, “Rock of Ages” (1930)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmXgREeRf5c>

Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (1964): KL 1147.

Stokely Carmichael, “Toward Black Liberation” (1966): KL 1153.

Songs:

Gil Scott Heron, “Whitey on the Moon” (1970)

Gil Scott Heron, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” (1970)

The Last Poets, “Black Is,” “White Man’s Got a God Complex,” “Black People What Y’All Gon Do,” “Black Wish” (1971)

Amiri Baraka, “It’s Nation Time/Pull the Covers Off” (1972)

Bayard Rustin, “From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement” (1965) [CV].

WEEK THIRTEEN

The New Left

Kersch, APT, “The New Left”

Students for a Democratic Society, *The Port Huron Statement* (1962): KL 1121.

Mario Savio, “An End to History,” (1964) [CV]

Yippies/Hippies/Counterculture

Kersch, APT, “The Full Flowering: The Late 1960s Counterculture”

William F. Buckley, Jr. TV interview of Allen Ginsberg on *Firing Line*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKBAJYceQ54>

Abbie Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It* (1968) [CV]

Jerry Rubin, “Yippie Manifesto” (1969): KL 1168

Songs:

Bob Dylan, “Song to Woody” (1962)

Bob Dylan, “Like a Rolling Stone” (1965)

The Jefferson Airplane, “D.C.B.A.-25” (1967)(from *Surrealistic Pillow*)

Psych Out (Film, Opening Sequence: Music: The Strawberry Alarm Clock)
(1968)(featuring “Pretty Song from Psyche Out”)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoNvDYe9QHQ>

Easy Rider (Film, Opening Credits; d. Dennis Hopper)(1969)(featuring
Steppenwolf, “Born to be Wild”)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-OWEDge0BM>

Canned Heat, “Goin Up the Country” (1969)(live at Woodstock):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hf0Dm-OaTNk>

Susan Sontag, “What’s Happening in America” (1966) [CV]

Joan Didion, “Slouching Toward Bethlehem” (1967) [CV]

Joan Didion, “The White Album” (1968-1978) [CV]

Songs:

The Rolling Stones, “I Just Want to Make Love to You” (1964) [redux of Muddy
Waters version above, live on *The Hollywood Palace*, hosted by Dean Martin]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1m2-nbMFwHY>

Barry McGuire, “Eve of Destruction” (Live, Hullabaloo, 1965)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwYNWYaS3bI>

Jimi Hendrix, “Star Spangled Banner” (1969)(Live at Woodstock)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKAwPA14Ni4>

The Velvet Underground and Nico, “I’m Waiting for My Man” (1967)

WEEK FOURTEEN

Kersch, APT, Ch. 8 --“The Identity and Post-Materialist Left, The New Right, and Third-Way Liberalism,” “Sex and Gender,” “The Intervention of Feminist Women of Color,” “Gay Liberation and the Politics of LGBTQ+ Identity,” “Racial and Ethnic Identity and Pride: The Chicano and American Indian Movements, and Beyond”

The New Movements of the Late Sixties and the Seventies

Second Wave Feminism

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963): KL 1158.

N.O.W. “Bill of Rights” (1967): KL 1164.

Redstockings Manifesto (1969): KL 1165.

Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (1970) [CV].

Phyllis Schlafly, “The Power of the Positive Woman” (1977) [CV].

Songs:

The Crystals, “He Hit Me (It Felt Like a Kiss)” (1963)

Jack Jones, “Wives and Lovers” (1965) (Burt Bacharach and Hal David)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urVEehofQJ4>

Loretta Lynn, “One’s on the Way” (1971)

Loretta Lynn, “The Pill” (1975)

Helen Reddy, “I am Woman” (1975)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dq1BvVAkzyY>

The Mary Tyler Moore Show [Theme Song/Opening Credit Sequence] (1970-1977)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1GC6yXZ4e4>

Identity/Power/Culture

Harry Hay, “What Gay Consciousness Brings, and Has Brought, to the Hetero Left” (1991): KL 1318

Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, “I am Joaquin” (1969) [CV]

AIM “Twenty Points” (1972) [CV]

Judith Butler, “Gender Trouble” (1990): KL 1287

WEEK FIFTEEN

Conservatism

Kersch, APT, “The New Right”

Young Americans for Freedom, “The Sharon Statement” (1960): KL 1120

Milton Friedman, *Free to Choose* (1980) KL: 1219

Norman Podhoretz, “The Adversary Culture and the New Class” [CV]

Songs:

The Louvin Brothers, “There’s a Star-Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere”
(from *Weapon of Prayer* (1962))

Roy Acuff, “Stuck Up Blues” (1941)

Staff Sgt. Barry Sadler, “The Ballad of the Green Berets” (1966)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5WJJVSE_BE

Merle Haggard (and The Strangers), “The Fightin’ Side of Me” (1968)

Merle Haggard (and The Strangers), “Okie from Muskogee” (1968)

Covered by: The Beach Boys and the Grateful Dead, “Okie from Muskogee” (Live, Fillmore East, 1971)(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDBKIHSp4ss>)

Merle Haggard, “Working Man Blues” (1969)

Merle Haggard (and The Strangers), “Hungry Eyes” (1969)

C. Everett Koop and Francis Schaeffer, *What Ever Happened to the Human Race?* [CV]

Ronald Reagan, “First Inaugural Address”: KL: 1258

Trumpism

Publius Decius Mus, “The Flight 93 Election” (2016): KL 1485

Donald J. Trump, “Inaugural Address” (2017): KL 1514.

Songs:

Hank Williams, Jr., “A Country Boy Can Survive”

Hank Williams, Jr., “If Heaven Ain’t a Lot Like Dixie”

Hank Williams, Jr., “If the South Woulda Won”

The Movement for Black Lives Platform (2016): KL: 1507

Conclusion/Future

Kersch, APT, “Third Way (Neo)Liberalism”; Ch. 9 -- “Conclusion,”

Songs:

Merle Haggard, “Are the Good Times Really Over? (I Wish a Buck Was Still Silver)” (1982)

Nina Simone, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free” (1967)