In this course, we will study the American Revolution by examining the political theory which sparked the revolution itself and which lay behind the writing of the Constitution. We will begin by looking at the important predecessors to the revolution, particularly the works of John Locke, the Baron de Montesquieu, and David Hume. We will then consider important works from the period surrounding the revolution, including works by Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson. Finally, we will look at the debates surrounding the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, including the Federalist Papers and important anti-Federalist works.

The eighteenth century was a time of remarkable intellectual activity in the West, and the Americans played a central role in it, both reflecting the thought in Europe and influencing the course of thoughts and events there. Although it was over 200 years ago, the eighteenth century was a modern period: their concerns are largely our concerns. But since they come from a different background, they approach these concerns in a different and (I hope) illuminating way. So we want to examine these ideas in their context, but we also want to see what these thinkers can tell us about the role and nature of government and of society.

**Texts**

David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary* (Liberty Classics)
Thomas Jefferson, *Political Writings* (Cambridge)
John Locke, *Letter concerning Toleration* (Hackett)
John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (Hackett)
Montesquieu, *Selected Political Writings* (Hackett)
Thomas Paine, *Political Writings* (Cambridge)
David Wooton, ed. *The Essential Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers* (Hackett)

**Recommended:**

I have ordered Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography* (Yale). It’s a good yarn, but we do not, alas, have time for it. I do, however, recommend it as a way of thinking about the ethos of Colonial America. I also recommend that you read a short general history of the revolutionary period as a background for our discussion of the Revolution and the debates about the Constitution. My suggestions are Gordon Wood’s *The American Revolution* (Modern Library, 2003), Edmund Morgan’s *The Birth of the Republic, 1763-89* (Chicago) and Harry Ward, *The American Revolution: Nationhood Achieved, 1763-88.*
Course requirements

The following is a list of the assignments required to complete the course and their approximate due dates. The course grade is divided into 16 parts, apportioned as shown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Parts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First tutorial</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second tutorial</td>
<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final assignment</td>
<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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Class participation, you will note, is a significant part of your grade. This is a senior seminar, and so participation is expected. Everyone should come to class prepared to discuss the readings—or at least, to ask questions about it. In addition, every week of class, I expect you to send me a one-page e-mail of about some aspect of that week’s readings, due Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m.

The major assignments in this course will be done using a tutorial system. I will give you a series of questions about particular texts, and I will ask you to respond to them in a paper of 6-8 pages. You and another student will meet with me in my office during the week set aside for that purpose. Together, the three of us will discuss each of your papers. While attending a tutorial is required, you will graded only on what is in your paper. I will explain the tutorial method in more detail later.

For your final assignment, you will have a choice: you may either write a third tutorial of 8-10 pages on a topic I will give you, or you may write an 8-10 page paper on a topic of your own choosing. This latter option will give you the opportunity to explore an issue of particular interest to you at greater length. Note that the paper must be a philosophy paper: it should explain and evaluate a line of argument that is important to the political philosophy in this period. It can not be a research paper on the people or the period, or even on the controversies of the day. I will be happy, however, to help you develop your topic. In any case, if you choose to write a paper, you must consult me.

Schedule of Readings

The schedule is (of course) tentative. References to The Essential Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers are abbreviated EFA.

I. Theoretical background to revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Texts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 5-7</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>John Locke, <em>Letter concerning Toleration</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 12-14</td>
<td>Locke, <em>Second Treatise on Government</em>, chs. I-V (5-30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 19-21</td>
<td>Locke, <em>Second Treatise</em>, chs. VI-XIX (30-124)</td>
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         “Of the First Principles of Government,” 32-36
         “Of the Origin of Government,” 37-41
         “Of the Independence of Parliament,” 42-46
         “Of Parties in General,” 54-63
         “Of the Parties in Great Britain,” 64-72
         “Of the Rice and Progress of the Arts and Sciences,” 111-37
         “Of the Original Contract,” 465-87
         “Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth,” 512-29

II. The Revolution
Oct 10-12  • First tutorial (no class, Oct 10)
         Thomas Paine, Common Sense, in Political Writings, 1-38

Oct 17-19  The Declaration of Independence, in Jefferson, Political Writings pp. 96-102
         Notes on the State of Virginia, 1785, Queries XIV, XVII-XVIII (474-80, 392-96, 480-82)

Oct 24  Letter to Maria Cosway, 1786, "Dialogue between My Heart and My Head," (10-21)
         Letter to James Madison, 1787 (107-09)
         Letter to William Stephens Smith, 1787 (109-11)
         Letter to Peter Carr, 1787 (252-56)
         Address to the Danbury Baptist Association, 1802 (396-97)
         Letter to Benjamin Rush, 1803 (266-70)

III. The Constitution
Oct 26  Articles of Confederation (EFA 317-24)
         The Virginia Plan (EFA 324-26)
         United States Constitution (EFA 326-37)

Nov 2  No class, Oct 31
         George Mason, Objections to the Constitution (EFA 1-3)
         Address of the Pennsylvania Minority (EFA 3-24)
         Jefferson, Letter to James Madison, in Political Writings, 360-63

Nov 7-9  Speech of Patrick Henry (EFA 25-41)
         Speeches of Melancton Smith (EFA 42-58)
         “Cato,” nos. 4-5 (EFA 58-65)
         “Centinel,” no. 1 (EFA 65-74)
         “Brutus,” nos. 6, 11, 12, 15 (EFA 74-96)

Nov 14-16  • Second tutorial (No class, Nov 14)
         Federalist Papers 1-2, 6-10 (EFA 140-74)
Nov 21  
_No class, Nov 23 (Thanksgiving break)_

Nov 28-30  
*Federalist Papers* 39, 47-52, 55, 57, 62-63, 70, 78, 83-85 (EFA 219-316)

Dec 5-7  
“Debate on First Amendment Language” (handout 348-49)  
Bill of Rights (EFA 337-38)

Dec 12  

Conclusion

• Third assignment due, Dec 15, 4:00 p.m.