



**Lakehead University**  
**POLI 3519: American Presidency**  
**Winter 2023 Jan 9 - Apr 11**

Instructor: TBD

Email: TBA

**Introduction:**

While the United States is not the most uniformly popular regime in the world today, it is hard to deny that it has been a successful experiment. From its violent beginnings, it has emerged a stable, productive, and remarkably flexible democracy. Even its detractors are often a testament to the strength and wisdom of the principles underlying the longest-lasting modern democracy. No place are these principles better explained and defended than in the words and deeds of the "Founding Fathers" and other leaders who have helped navigate the regime through often troubled waters. Our task as students of American political thought is to examine the ideas underlying the American experiment in democracy and, using wise observers to assist us, to assess its ultimate example in the world. We shall also consider to what extent it has in the past met, and may now again be facing, challenges posed by its most serious critics and most powerful foes.

**Method of delivery:**

Each Friday, a new lecture will become available to you on Course Link under "Content". In each PPT (or other format) you will be offered links to readings and instruction about things to look for in them that week; this will include questions for further analysis and discussion. In addition, each lecture will direct you to additional websites (links made available in lectures in most cases) and/or video. You will also be introduced to questions for class discussion that will require your contributions by the next Friday (see requirements below regarding "class discussions").

**Schedule, Topics, and Readings (further readings or viewing will be linked in lectures):**

- 1. Week 1:** Introduction to course and some broad theses.

**READ:** see lecture for more information

- 2. Week 2:** Declaration of Independence; rule of the people.

**READ:** <https://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/>

**Federalist, #1-8:** [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/fed.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp)

- 3. Week 3:** Majority faction and representation; federalism.

**READ:** *Federalist* #9-15; 23: [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/fed.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp)

Constitution of the U.S.: <https://constitutionus.com/>

**Lincoln's Lyceum Speech:**

<http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.htm>
- 4. Week 4:** Extent of national government; separation of powers; legislative branch.

**READ:** *Federalist* #37-39; 51: [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/fed.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp)

**The Federalist vs. Anti-Federalists debate:** <https://fliphtml5.com/pbww/pgmg/basic>
- 5. Week 5:** Executive branch; nature and extent of executive power.

**READ:** *Federalist* #70-77: [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/fed.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp)
- 6. Week 6:** Judiciary and judicial review.

**READ:** *Federalist* #78-85: [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/fed.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp)

*Anti-Fed: Brutus XV:* <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/brutus-xv/>
- 7. Week 7:** Introduction to Tocqueville; tyranny of the majority; maintenance of democracy.

**READ:** Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (Introduction to Vol. 1 and Pt. 2, Chs 7-9)

[file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/Tocqueville\\_Democracy%20in%20America.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/Tocqueville_Democracy%20in%20America.pdf)
- 8. Week 8:** Influence of democracy on religion, ideas, and sentiments.

**READ:** *Democracy in America*, Vol. 2, Part Three, Chs. 8, 9, 10 and 12 (see link above)
- 9. Week 9:** Influence of democracy on customs, family, ambition, and war.

**READ:** To be supplied.

**10. Week 10:** Democracy and despotism; perpetuation of institutions.

**READ:** <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.htm>

*Democracy in America*: Vol. 2, Part Four, Chs. 6, 7, 8 (see link above)

**11. Week 11:** Lincoln and the challenge of slavery; its legacy today.

**READ: Lincoln** (selections): To be supplied.

**12. Week 12:** Is America still a stable democracy? Review; exam preparation

**READ:** Reading and viewing to be supplied.

### **Requirements:**

**1. Class discussions (30%):** each week, you will be asked to make an entry to a forum discussion of questions raised in lectures or readings. You will be required to make your own contribution to the discussion and to comment upon others' contributions. Specific reference to course readings will be required. Of course, you must maintain an adequate level of politeness and civility in order that we can work together in friendship toward the best answers to the questions posed.

**2. Term paper (35%):** an approximately 2000 word essay (6-7 pages) in which you show significant familiarity with the text/topic you choose to focus on and intelligently investigate a particular issue or problem raised in it. I will offer further specifics regarding the format, expectations, and topic choices by the third week of the term. **Due date:** TBA.

**3. Final Exam (35%):** this will be assigned during the university exam period. You will be given at least three days to complete your responses to significant questions raised in the course.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is expected of all Lakehead University students. Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are expected to make themselves fully familiar with Lakehead's policy in this area. Although all these policies will be enforced in full, it is worth emphasizing the following:



***\*\*\*Plagiarism involves presenting another's work, ideas, theories, or interpretation as one's own\*\*\****

To avoid plagiarism, writers should always:

1. Put quotation marks around any passages/sentences from sources
2. Paraphrase material completely; simply changing (with the help of a thesaurus) or rearranging a few words or the tense of a verb is not paraphrasing.
3. Give accurate and complete citations for all material ***including paraphrased material.***
4. Avoid borrowing entire arguments or approaches to a subject from another writer. Make it 'original' while staying faithful to the assignment parameters.