

Georgetown University
Masters and Doctoral Liberal Studies Program

SYLLABUS (@10/07/14)

The Federalist Papers: Creating A New Nation

LSHV- 353 - 01

Weds. Jan 14 to Apr 15, 6:30-8:45 PM

Class room TBD

Spring 2015

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Course Description:

Thomas Jefferson said, “A morsel of genuine history is a thing so rare as to be always valuable.” (September 8, 1817 to John Adams). This seminar focuses such morsels of genuine history, namely, on the drafting of the Constitution, the Ratification Debate of 1787 to 1788, and on *The Federalist Papers*. The personalities and actions of Washington, Madison, Hamilton, Jay, and Franklin are central to the narrative story, but the course gives special prominence to the Anti-Federalist opposition to the Constitution (such as Patrick Henry) and to the adoption of the Bill of Rights. In the end, we confront the question: how well has the institutional framework and political philosophy argued for by *The Federalist* survived in an age of terrorism, economic meltdown, and increasingly strident partisanship?

The course approaches these subjects principally as history. We try to stay true to the moment, attend to what people said then, and avoid *presentism*. Current affairs invariably intrude, however, and offer useful foils that illuminate the past as well. For instance, Texas and South Carolina have launched movements to secede from the Union, and twenty-one state legislatures have voted to nullify the federal health care law. The elections from 2008 to 2014 show that the very interest groups or factions *The Federalist* spoke about are today challenging the foundations of our government: small or large government, uses of executive power, states rights vs. federal authority, regulations vs. big

money, etc. It is a premise of the course that today's political and philosophical issues relate back directly to the constitutional debates of 1787-88.

The surprise protagonists of the course are the Anti-Federalists, who opposed the new constitution and bear a resemblance to today's Tea Partiers, states-righters, and other forms of current populism. Indeed, rather than a celebration of Constitution and the winning Federalist arguments, the course asks students to focus their required research paper on some aspect of Anti-Federalism. And the course asks the basic question of who won the debate?

Thomas Jefferson called *The Federalist* "The best commentary on the principles of government, which was ever written." Others have said the collected essays are "by far the greatest book on politics ever written in America." Now, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, even the U.S. Supreme Court increasingly cites *The Federalist* as a resource for the meaning of the Constitution. Yet some critics claim that it is only sophisticated propaganda. So it is that scholars and politicians continue to argue about whether *The Federalist* offers an accurate analysis of the framers' intentions. The course will explore that debate and whether the arguments of 226 years ago still have meaning.

Students will each be assigned at the beginning of the course responsibility for "representing" one of the original thirteen states to better understand the context of 1787-88. This will entail some individualized research, intellectual gymnastics and imaginative advocacy. Everyone will be asked to play with the challenges of learning about some particularities of the past, suspending what we know about what happened, but still enjoying the stimulation of issues that are alive and around us today.

Learning Goals and Objectives. The course has five main goals:

(1) To acquaint and engage students with the context and narrative history of the formation, debate, and ratification of the Constitution;

(2) To complete a careful reading of all *The Federalist* Papers and selected Anti-Federalist writings;

(3) To consider how the ratification debate may offer lessons on rhetorical style, civil debate, coping with problems, and who we are as Americans;

(4) To gain practice and experience in oral and written communication skills, blogging, classroom discussion, and in the devising of a topic, researching, and preparing a graduate-level research paper; and

(5) To put to the test Thomas Jefferson's opinion that "*a morsel of genuine history is a thing so rare as to be always valuable.*"

Note: This course is independent of and supplemental to The Founding Era course [LSHV 704-01].

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Books:

1. Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist: A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States*. Ed. Robert Scigliano (New York: Modern Library Paperback Edition, 2001). ISBN 0-375-75786-4; \$10.84 [Note: there are many editions of *The Federalist*. Any will suffice, but live discussions to page references make it helpful in class to use the same edition.]

2. *The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates*. Ed. Ralph Ketchum (New York, Signet Classic paperback, 2001). ISBN0-451-52884-0; \$7.95

3. Maier, Pauline. *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution 1787-1788* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010) ISBN 978-0-684-86858-4 (pbk) \$12.91

4. Stewart, David O. *The Summer of 1787* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2007) ISBN13: 978-0743286930 [Used copies may be obtained through the bookstore or on-line.]

Research Paper: There will be one research paper (minimum 20 pages) and occasional pop-quizzes. Students will develop their own research topic with the instructor's approval but it must relate to some aspect of the Anti-Federalist side of the debate on the Constitution. Students are free to approach the paper in an interdisciplinary fashion; that is, the topic and its exposition or argument may emanate from diverse perspectives such as art, economics, biography, geography, history, law, political science, philosophy, religion, etc. There is also flexibility in your choice of medium for your research product (e.g., say, a play, digital story, or any creative format), as long as there is an accompanying scholarly bibliographic essay.

A three (3) page abstract and a brief oral presentation on the paper to the class is a course requirement.

Class Participation, Blogs, and Discussion Board: Class Participation includes in-class discussions and out-of-class or *virtual* time through the course Blackboard site. This virtual time reduces in-class time and is supervised, evaluated, and material to the course and a student's performance. It consists of both blog and Discussion Board posting and comments. *It is estimated that this substantive out of class time will take a minimum of eight cumulative hours.*

The Blog: The Class Blog, entitled "The *Federalist* Lives," is an informal forum for class members-only. Students are expected to write a post or make a comment in the blog at least once a week. Its purpose is to provide a current, real-time opportunity to explore The *Federalist's* relevance in today's world. Usually, we can count on current events and commentary in the media to more than fill our needs!

Discussion Board: Each week, several different students will be assigned to post questions in the course's Blackboard Discussion Board, and all students will post an answer to one or more of the questions before class. These and the instructor's questions will be the core of the discussion. Student questions should be posted by Monday evening, and answers submitted by 3:00 PM before each Wednesday class.

Grades: Timely attendance of each class is required. Class participation, which includes the virtual work, counts 40% of the course grade, and the research paper will represent the other 60% and includes a brief class presentation and short paper describing the essence of your research topic.

Schedule:

January 14

Introduction and Big Picture

Review of syllabus, objectives, state assignments, virtual work

Read: Maier, *Ratification*, Introduction and Prologue [34 pages]

January 21

The Federal Convention

David O. Stewart: *The Summer of 1787* [47-243 pages]

January 28

The Anti-Federalists Attack

Centinel I, Ketcham, *Anti-Federalist Papers*, 227-237.
Federal Farmer I & II, Ketcham, 256-269.
Brutus I, Ketcham, 269-280.
John DeWitt I & II, Ketcham, 189-198.
Cato V, Ketcham, 317-321.

- February 4 **The Writing of *The Federalist***
 Federalist 1-5 and other readings
- February 11 **Utility of the Union: Call for Change**
 Federalist Nos. 6 – 14
- February 18 **Insufficiency of the Articles of Confederation**
 The *Federalist* Nos. 15 – 22 and
 Brutus V
- February 25 **Defense of the Constitution: A New Nationalism**
 The *Federalist* Nos. 23 – 36
James Madison to Edmund Randolph January 10, 1788
http://www.constitution.org/jm/17880110_randolph.htm

George Washington to Madison, January 10, 1788
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=343>
- March 4 **Difficulty of Republicanism and Federalism**
 The *Federalist* Nos. 37 – 51
- March 11 **Spring Break [..? TBD] (No Class)**
- March 18 **Designing a Legislature**
House: The *Federalist* Nos. 52 to 61
Senate: The *Federalist* Nos. 62 to 66
- March 25 **Creating the Executive Branch**
 The *Federalist* Nos. 67-77
- April 1 **Creating The Role of the Judiciary**
 The *Federalist* Nos. 78 to 85
Bailyn’s Essay on “A Note on *The Federalist* and the Supreme
Court” pp. 126-130 [See External Links]
The Virginia and New York Ratification Conventions.

April 8

The Aftermath and the Bill of Rights

Maier, *Ratification*: Epilogue: “Playing the After Game”

Labunski, Richard. *James Madison and the Struggle for the Bill of Rights* (2006), Chapters 8 and 9 (pages 178-243, accessed through Georgetown Library electronically at

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/georgetown/docDetail.action?docID=10160533>.

April 15

Conclusion

Bernard Bailyn Essay: “*The Federalist Papers*” in *To Begin The World Anew*. [In External Links.]

Student Presentations

April 29

Research Papers Due at 5:00 PM

At Dean’s Office or postmarked that day.

Attendance Policy: Based on the policy of the DLS/MALS Program, punctual attendance is required; attendance of the first class is mandatory; absences are not expected, and more than one excused absence may result in the withdrawal of the student from the course since sufficient contact hours would not be met to warrant the award of credit or grade.

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

Honor Code:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Disabilities Statement:

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.