

Draft Syllabus

A final version of this syllabus will be available on the first day of class.

THE FEDERALIST PAPERS

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“The independence of America considered merely as a separation from England would have been a matter but of little importance, had it not been accompanied by a revolution in the principles and practice of governments.”

Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*

This course is devoted almost exclusively to reading *The Federalist Papers*. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote these papers in order to persuade the people of New York to ratify the Federal Constitution that had been adopted at the “federal” convention held during the steamy summer of 1787 in Philadelphia. Their significance for us lies in the effort to articulate the theoretical foundations underlying the proposed new regime. The challenge the authors of the Constitution faced was how to establish a popular government, based on the consent of the people institutionalizing the principles of freedom that had emerged during the period of the European Enlightenment, and yet create a government that was strong (“energetic”) enough to rule but would not oppress. *The Federalist Papers* explore how the particular provisions of the proposed constitution try to meet those often competing ends. We are not reading *The Federalist Papers* to discover the much talked about “original intent,” but rather to understand the theoretical grounding of a particular political regime that happened to be instituted in 18th century America.

We will also read some of the works written by the *Anti-Federalists*. Though they began with similar principles of popular sovereignty and republican freedom, they warned the American people that by ratifying the proposed Constitution they would, in the words of one Anti-Federalist, “fix an elective despotism upon themselves and their posterity.”

Note on this as a Washington, DC, course:

One class session will be devoted to attending a play at the Ford Theater entitled “Jefferson’s Garden.”

We are exploring the possibility of an optional Saturday trip to Philadelphia to visit Independence Hall where the Constitution was written. Other possible trips would be to Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason, one of the two participants in the Federal Convention who refused to sign the Constitution, the Newseum, and the National Archives depending on class interest and schedules.

Required Books:

Hamilton, Jay, Madison, *The Federalist Papers*, edited by George W. Carey and James McClellan. Published by Liberty Fund.

The Anti-Federalists, edited by Herbert Storing, selected by Murray Dry from *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, University of Chicago Press.

Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, *The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1794*, edited by Morton Frisch. Published by the Liberty Fund

Cell phones must be turned off and put away. I prefer that you do not use computers.

Readings and Discussion Schedule: Adjustments in the readings will probably occur depending on how quickly or slowly we make our way through the material and in response to particular issues that may emerge from our discussions and/or events in DC.

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2:

Selections from John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*:

Chap. VIII. ¶95-99; Chap XI, ¶134-136; Chap. XIX. ¶211, ¶221- 226

Declaration of Independence (Appendix 1 in *Federalist Papers*)

Federalist No. 1

Centinel, #1 (Storing, pp. 13-20)

Patrick Henry (Storing, pp. 295-97)

Week 3

Federalist Nos. 2-8

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter 15

Week 4

Federalist Nos. 9-10

Brutus 2.9.11-21 (Storing, pp. 113-117)

Agrippa 4. 6.16-17(Storing, p. 234-36)

Week 5

Federalist Nos. 11-14

Federal Farmer I-II (Storing pp. 32-43), XVII.2.8.204-205 (Storing, PP. 87-9)

Week 6

Federalist Nos. 15-18, 21-22

Articles of Confederation (Appendix 2 in *Federalist Papers*)

Week 7

Federalist Nos. 23, 25-26, 28-29

Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapter 17

Federal Farmer XVII (Storing 87-95)

Brutus VII-- X (Storing 145-62)

Impartial Examiner 5.14.8 (Storing 284-85)

Week 8

Federalist Nos. 30-31, 33-36

Impartial Examiner 5.14.6-8 (Storing 282-84)

Week 9

Federalist Nos. 37-40

Brutus V 2.9.55-58 (Storing 133-34)

Federal Farmer V (Storing 60-65)

Week 10

Federalist Nos. 41-44

Re-read Article 1, section 8 of the *Articles of Confederation*

Impartial Examiner, 5.14.13-5.14.16 (Storing, 289-91)

Week 11

Federalist Nos. 45-49

Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* Book 11, Chapter 6

Re-read Centinal # 1 (Storing, 13-20).

Federal Farmer III (Storing 43-54)

Week 12

Federalist Nos. 50-58

Week 13

Federalist Nos. 62-64, 67-68, 70-71

Week 14

Federalist Nos. 78, 84-85

Impartial Examiner, 5.14.5 (Storing, 282).

Centinel Letter # 2, available at

<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1939>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Grading, will be based on three papers and class participation.

Three Papers (80%): Below are the instructions for each paper. Cite the *Federalist* by number and the page in the Carey edition we are using for class, the Anti-Federalists by author, letter number and page in the Storing edition.

Paper # 1 (20%): (Due Week of February 20)

Write a paper of **4-5 pages** on the following topic:

“Bigger is better” is a consistent theme of the early *Federalist Papers*. Assess how successful these arguments are in response to the writings of the Anti-Federalists.

Paper # 2 (25%): (Due Week of March 20)

Write a paper of **5-6 pages** on the following topic:

Read Chapter II of John Stuart Mill’s *Considerations on Representative Government* (copies will be provided). Discuss how JS Mill’s conception of the role of representation in the “Ideally Best Form of Government” differs from or complements that offered by the *Federalists* and/or the Anti-Federalists.

Paper # 3 (30%): (Due Week after classes end)

Write a paper of **6-7 pages**

Read the *Pacificus-Helvidius Debates* (ordered text) which sets Hamilton against Madison on the question of presidential power. Discuss whose argument appears to be more consistent with what appears in the jointly authored *Federalist Papers* and why.

Participation (20%): Students will be expected to have read and reflected on the materials before class so that they can participate effectively in class discussions.