

PSC-275A, Spring 2012
TuTh 10:00-11:15, Johns 212
Office hours: TuTh 11:15-12:15, and by appointment
Email: benjamin.storey@furman.edu

Issues in Political Thought
Benjamin Storey
Office: Johns 111JA
Phone: 294-3574

The Tocqueville Program Spring 2012: Liberal Education and Liberal Democracy

“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and will never be.”—Thomas Jefferson

Course Description

From the beginning of the American Republic, our best statesmen and thinkers have seen an essential connection between liberal democracy and liberal education. According to Thomas Jefferson, the extensive educational plan he proposed for his native Virginia was a means for “rendering the people the safe, as they are the ultimate, guardians of their own liberty.”

Higher education in the America of 2012 is, in some ways, flourishing to a degree that matches the highest hopes Jefferson could have entertained for it. A higher proportion of Americans attend our colleges and universities than ever before, and these institutions are well-funded and highly respected. But all is not well. In recent years, study after study has rolled off the presses describing a “crisis on campus,” a crisis that touches every aspect of the university: its curriculum, its cost, and its student culture.

In this course, we will investigate the state and the aspirations of higher education, and its relation to political life in a liberal democracy. The questions that guide will be: what is liberal education? How does liberal education relate to citizenship, particularly in a regime such as our own? What is the connection between liberal education and Christianity—the religion that invented the university? What is the state of liberal education in our institutions of higher learning at present? What, finally, should you, as students, expect to gain from the liberal education you are pursuing, and what is required of you to partake of what the university, at its best, has to offer?

Daily Schedule

Part I: The College Experience

Tuesday, January 10: Introduction; Wolfe, *I am Charlotte Simmons*, p. 1-113.

Thursday, January 12: Wolfe, *I am Charlotte Simmons*, p. 114-207.

Tuesday, January 17: Wolfe, *I am Charlotte Simmons*, p. 208-388.

Thursday, January 19: Wolfe, *I am Charlotte Simmons*, p. 388-488.

Tuesday, January 24: Wolfe, *I am Charlotte Simmons*, p. 489-630.

Thursday, January 26: Wolfe, *I am Charlotte Simmons*, p. 630-752.

Friday, January 27: Paper 1 (2 pages, maximum) due by 12:00 noon to Johns 111JA.

Part II: The Classical Foundations of Liberal Education

Tuesday, January 31: Plato, *Apology of Socrates*

Thursday, February 2: Plato, *Republic*, Book VII (Moodle)

Tuesday, February 7: Plato, *Laws*, Book I

Thursday, February 9: Plato, *Laws*, Book II

Friday, February 10: Paper 2 (2 pages, maximum) due by 12:00 noon to Johns 111JA.

Part III: Modern Liberal Democracy and Liberal Education

Tuesday, February 14: Benjamin Constant, “The Liberty of the Ancients and the Moderns Compared” (Moodle)

Thursday, February 16: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington on Education and Citizenship (Moodle)

Tuesday, February 21: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume II, Part I, chapters 1-3, 9-11, 15 (Moodle)

Wednesday, February 22: Tocqueville Lecture by John Agresto, “Do American Colleges and Universities Today Serve Any Public Function?” 4:30 pm, Watkins Room, University Center (Attendance Required)

Thursday, February: John Agresto Class Visit; Agresto, “The Higher Education Bubble” (Moodle)

Tuesday, February 28: Agresto, “Lincoln and the Humanities” (Moodle)

Wednesday, February 29: Paper 3 (2 pages, maximum) due by 12:00 noon to Johns 111JA

Wednesday, February 29: Cicero Society/Tocqueville Program Lecture by Catherine Zuckert, “Why Study Plato?” 4:30, Watkins Room, University Center (Attendance Required)

Part IV: Science and Liberal Education

Thursday, March 1: Francis Bacon, *The Great Instauration*, p. 1-33

March 3-11: Spring Break

Tuesday, March 13: Mansfield, *Manliness*, ix-xiii; 1-32.

Wednesday, March 14: Tocqueville lecture by Harvey Mansfield, “Science and Liberal Education,” 4:30 pm, Watkins Room, University Center (Attendance Required)

Thursday, March 15: Mansfield class visit; Bacon, *The New Organanon*, Preface and Selected Aphorisms (Moodle); Peter Thiel, “The End of the Future” (Moodle)

Tuesday, March 20: Mansfield, *Manliness*, 32-49, 229-244; “A New Feminism” (Moodle).

Thursday, March 22: To be announced

Friday, March 23: Paper 4 (2 pages, maximum) due by 12:00 noon to Johns 111JA

Part V: Christianity, Philosophy, and the University

Tuesday, March 27: Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (selection); Ernest Fortin, “Why Christians Invented the University” (moodle)

Thursday, March 29: No Class (Furman Engaged)

Tuesday, April 3: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Question 1; Fortin, “Thomas Aquinas and the Reform of Christian Education” (moodle)

Thursday, April 5: Josef Pieper, “The Philosophical Act,” p. 63-97 (moodle)

Tuesday, April 10: Pieper, “The Philosophical Act,” p. 98-134 (moodle)

Wednesday, April 11: Paper 5 (2 pages, maximum) due by 12:00 noon to Johns 111JA

Part VI: Liberal Education and Political Liberalism

Thursday, April 12: Richard Rorty, “Education as Socialization and as Individualization;” Kronman, *Education’s End*, 1-8 (Introduction).

Tuesday, April 17: Kronman class visit; Kronman, *Education’s End*, 37-90 (Chapter 2).

Tuesday, April 17: Tocqueville Lecture by Anthony Kronman, “Liberal Education and Political Liberalism,” 4:30 pm, Watkins Room, University Center (Attendance Required)

Thursday, April 19: Kronman, *Education’s End*, 91-139 (Chapter 3; Chapter 4, beginning).

Friday, April 20: Paper 6 (2 pages, maximum) due by 12:00 noon to Johns 111JA

Tuesday, April 24: Summation

Monday, April 30, 12:00 Noon: Take Home Exam Due

Course Requirements and Grading

Requirements

- 1. Five short papers:** During the term, six short papers will be assigned; you must write five of them. Papers must be no longer than 2 pages, in 12-point font, with 1-inch margins (line spacing is up to you). These papers should be organized, compressed, and polished.
- 2. Take Home Exam:** Later on in the term, a question or questions for a take-home, open book exam will be announced. The question or questions will be broad, and you will be expected to formulate an essay or essays in response to them that draws broadly from the semester's readings. Your ten-page (maximum) response will be due on Monday, April 30, at 12:00 noon.
- 3. Class Participation:** Perfect attendance in class and at guest lectures with no active participation earns a C for class participation. The addition of regular participation earns a B; frequent, helpful, intelligent participation earns an A. After 2 unexcused absences, every further absence results in the loss of one partial letter grade (B becomes B-, B- becomes C+, and so on).

Grade Composition

Short Papers:	5 papers, 10% each	50%
Final Exam:		40%
Class Participation:		10%
Total:		100%

Grade Scale:

<u>Grade Values</u>		<u>Grade Ranges</u>	
A	4.0	A	3.83-4.00
A-	3.7	A-	3.50-3.83
B+	3.3	B+	3.17-3.50
B	3.0	B	2.83-3.17
B-	2.7	B-	2.50-2.83
C+	2.3	C+	2.17-2.50
C	2.0	C	1.83-2.17
C-	1.7	C-	1.50-1.83
D+	1.3	D+	1.17-1.50
D	1.0	D	0.83-1.17
D-	0.7	D-	0.50-0.83
F	0.0	F	0.00-0.50

Class Texts:

Tom Wolfe, *I am Charlotte Simmons*. New York: Picador, 2004.

Plato, *Four Texts on Socrates*. Trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Plato, *The Laws of Plato*. Trans. Thomas L. Pangle. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis and The Great Instauration*. Ed. Jerry Weinberger. Wheeling, IL: Crofts Classics, 1980.

Harvey C. Mansfield, *Manliness*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Anthony Kronman, *Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life*. Yale University Press, 2007.

I. Writing and Grading guidelines for Short Papers

Short papers will show that the student (1) understands the text to be interpreted and appreciates its significance; (2) has reflected substantially on the assigned theme; (3) has organized his or her answer with a thesis, a conclusion, and a logical sequence of paragraphs that advance an argument from the thesis to the conclusion; (4) has marshaled specific evidence from the text to support his or her thesis in a manner that demonstrates independent engagement with the text; (5) has carefully edited and proofread his or her writing to produce a compact and compelling style.

Specific Grades:

A: An outstanding essay, marked by unusual clarity of description, force of argument, richness and precision of language, inventiveness, or wit. Shows substantial reflection on the theme and makes a compelling argument for a definite thesis. Carefully organized and well-written. Makes detailed reference to the text in question. Usually the result of mastering particular points, and then stepping back and composing an interesting and compelling essay.

B: A good essay that consistently argues for a thesis on the assigned theme. Competent, but undistinguished; may tend to be more informational than thoughtful. Evidence of substantial specific knowledge of the text.

C: A lackluster essay that either fails to make an argument about the theme or makes it in an unconvincing way. Usually, seriously deficient in understanding, textual specificity, or quality of writing.

D: Fails to make an argument or makes it in a completely unconvincing way. May contain some relevant points, but they are hard to recognize. Typically lacks understanding, textual specificity, and polish.

F: No evidence of serious work.

Please underline the thesis of your paper (in your first paragraph), and *italicize* the thesis of every subsequent paragraph.

Make ample use of the Oxford English Dictionary Online (oed.com), and the Chicago Manual of Style Online (chicagomanualofstyle.org) while writing. You will need to access both through the library's webpage (library.furman.edu); the class moodle site has links.

You must provide citations for *any* source from which you draw, directly or indirectly, in writing your papers, including electronic resources. Failure to use quotation marks to identify words you have borrowed or to provide citations for sources consulted is an academic integrity violation, and will be treated accordingly.