AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT
AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT
READINGS AND MATERIALS

Keith E. Whittington
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK OXFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
BRIEF CONTENTS

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF VOLUME xvii
TABLES, FIGURES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS xxiii
PREFACE xxv

CHAPTER 1  Introduction to American Political Thought  1

CHAPTER 2  The Colonial Era, Before 1776  13

CHAPTER 3  The Founding Era, 1776–1791  81

CHAPTER 4  The Early National Era, 1791–1828  159

CHAPTER 5  The Jacksonian Era, 1829–1860  231

CHAPTER 6  Secession, Civil War, and Reconstruction, 1861–1876  309

CHAPTER 7  The Gilded Age, 1877–1900  363

CHAPTER 8  The Progressive Era, 1901–1932  425

CHAPTER 9  The New Deal Era, 1933–1950  499
CHAPTER 10 Civil Rights and the Great Society, 1951–1980 563

CHAPTER 11 Recent Politics, 1981–Present 635

Sources 00
Index 00
 CONTENTS

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF VOLUME xvii
TABLES, FIGURES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS xxiii
PREFACE xxv

CHAPTER 1 Introduction to American Political Thought 1

CHAPTER 2 The Colonial Era, Before 1776 13

I. Introduction 13
II. Democracy and Liberty 19
   Roger Williams, The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution (1644) 21
   John Cotton, An Exposition upon the 13th Chapter of the Revelations (1645) 24
   John Winthrop, Little Speech on Liberty (1645) 26
   John Wise, A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches (1717) 28
   Thomas Paine, Common Sense (1776) 33
III. Citizenship and Community 39
    Mayflower Compact (1620) 40
    Jonathan Mayhew, A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers (1750) 41
    William Livingston, Of Party Divisions (1753) 47
IV. Equality and Status 49
    William Henry Drayton, Letters of Freeman (1769) 50
    Slaves’ Petition to the Massachusetts Governor (1774) 52
# Table of Contents

## V. Political Economy  57
- John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity* (1630)  58
- Cotton Mather, *A Christian at his Calling* (1701)  62
- Benjamin Franklin, *The Way to Wealth* (1758)  64

## VI. America and the World  66
- Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars* (1824)  68
- John Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1768)  70
- Daniel Leonard, *Massachusettensis* (1775)  74
- Thomas Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence* (1776)  77

## CHAPTER 3 The Founding Era, 1776–1791  81

### I. Introduction  81

### II. Democracy and Liberty  85
- John Adams, *Thoughts on Government* (1776)  87
- Carter Braxton, *An Address to the Convention of the Colony* (1776)  90
- James Madison, *Federalist Papers* (1787)  100
- *Brutus Essays* (1787)  111
- *Letter from the Federal Farmer* (1787)  119
- Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, *Correspondence on a Bill of Rights* (1787–1789)  123

### III. Citizenship and Community  126
- J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782)  127
- John Jay, *Federalist Papers* (1787)  129

### IV. Equality and Status  131
- Abigail Adams and John Adams, *Correspondence on Women’s Rights* (1776)  132
- Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787)  134
- Benjamin Banneker and Thomas Jefferson, *Correspondence on Slavery* (1791)  138

### V. Political Economy  141
- James Madison, *Vices of the Political System of the United States* (1787)  142
- Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787)  146
VI. America and the World 148
   Corn Tassel (Onitositah), Reply to the American Commissioners (1777) 149
   Alexander Hamilton, Letter to James Duane (1780) 151
   George Washington, Circular Letter to the State Governors (1783) 154

CHAPTER 4 The Early National Era, 1791–1828 159
I. Introduction 159
II. Democracy and Liberty 163
   Thomas Jefferson, Kentucky Resolutions (1798) 165
   Fisher Ames, The Mire of Democracy (1805) 168
   Thomas Jefferson, Letter to a Committee of the Danbury Baptists (1802) 170
   John Marshall, Marbury v. Madison (1803) 171
   Lyman Beecher, Practicality of Suppressing Vice (1803) 174
   Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Samuel Kercheval (1816) 176
   James Kent and David Buel, Jr., Debate at New York Constitutional Convention (1821) 178

III. Citizenship and Community 182
   George Washington, Farewell Address (1796) 183
   Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address (1801) 186
   Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Adams (1813) 188
   John Marshall, McCulloch v. Maryland (1819) 191

IV. Equality and Status 197
   Judith Sargent Murray, The Necessity of Subordination (1798) 199
   Memorial of the Free People of Color to the Citizens of Baltimore (1826) 201

V. Political Economy 204
   Alexander Hamilton, First Report on Public Credit (1790) 206
   Alexander Hamilton, Report on Manufactures (1791) 210
   John Taylor, Tyranny Unmasked (1822) 217

VI. America and the World 220
   George Washington, Farewell Address (1796) 221
   Thomas Jefferson, Letter to William Henry Harrison (1803) 223
   John Quincy Adams, Speech on Independence Day (1821) 225
   James Monroe, Seventh Annual Message (1823) 227
# Chapter 5  
## The Jacksonian Era, 1829-1860  
### I. Introduction  
### II. Democracy and Liberty  
- George Bancroft, *The Office of the People in Art, Government, and Religion* (1835)  
- Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience* (1849)  
- John C. Calhoun, *A Disquisition on Government* (1850)  
### III. Citizenship and Community  
- Samuel F. B. Morse, *Imminent Dangers to the Free Institutions of the United States* (1835)  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Politics* (1844)  
- George H. Colton, *Responsibility of the Ballot Box* (1846)  
### IV. Equality and Status  
- William Lloyd Garrison, *Declaration of Principles for The Liberator* (1831)  
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments* (1848)  
- Sojourner Truth, *Ain’t I a Woman* (1851)  
- Frederick Douglass, *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?* (1852)  
- George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!, or, Slaves Without Masters* (1857)  
- James Hammond, *Speech to the Senate on Slavery* (1858)  
- Abraham Lincoln, *Speech at New Haven* (1860)  
### V. Political Economy  
- Andrew Jackson, *Veto of the Bank Bill* (1832)  
- Henry Clay, *Speech on the American System* (1832)  
- William Leggett, *True Functions of Government* (1834)  
- Orestes Brownson, *The Laboring Classes* (1840)  
### VI. America and the World  
- Andrew Jackson, *Speech on Indian Removal* (1830)  
- O'Reilly, *Manifest Destiny* (1839)  

---

# Chapter 6  
## Secession, Civil War, and Reconstruction, 1861–1876  
### I. Introduction  
### II. Democracy and Liberty  
- Abraham Lincoln, *First Inaugural Address* (1861)  
- Thaddeus Stevens, *Speech on the Reconstruction Acts* (1867)
III. Citizenship and Community 321
   Jefferson Davis, *Farewell to the Senate* (1860) 322
   Abraham Lincoln, *Second Inaugural Address* (1865) 325
   Lysander Spooner, *No Treason* (1867) 327

IV. Equality and Status 330
   Charles Sumner, *The Barbarism of Slavery* (1860) 331
   Alexander H. Stephens, *Cornerstone Address* (1861) 334
   Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address* (1863) 337
   *Reconstruction Amendments to the U.S. Constitution* 338
   Frederick Douglass, *Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln* (1876) 340
   Susan B. Anthony, *Is It a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?* (1873) 343

V. Political Economy 347
   Abraham Lincoln, *First Annual Message* (1861) 348
   Russell H. Conwell, *Acres of Diamonds* (1870) 350

VI. America and the World 352
   Abraham Lincoln, *Fourth of July Message to Congress* (1861) 353
   Chief Spotted Tail, *Speech to the Sioux Commissioners* (1876) 359

CHAPTER 7  The Gilded Age, 1877–1900 363

I. Introduction 363

II. Democracy and Liberty 366
   Francis Parkman, *The Failure of Universal Suffrage* (1878) 368
   Stephen J. Field, *The Centenary of the Supreme Court of the United States* (1890) 370
   James B. Weaver, *A Call to Action* (1892) 372

III. Citizenship and Community 374
   Henry W. Grady, *The New South* (1886) 375
   Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893) 379
   Henry Cabot Lodge, *Speech to the Senate on Literacy Tests* (1896) 382
   Grover Cleveland, *Literacy Test Veto* (1897) 384

IV. Equality and Status 386
   Thomas E. Watson, *The Negro Question in the South* (1892) 387
   Booker T. Washington, *Atlanta Exposition Address* (1895) 390
   Helen Kendrick Johnson, *Woman and the Republic* (1897) 393
   Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics* (1898) 395
### V. Political Economy 398
- William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883) 399
- Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth* (1889) 405
- Henry D. Lloyd, *Wealth against Commonwealth* (1894) 408
- Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) 411

### VI. America and the World 413
- Josiah Strong, *Our Country* (1885) 414
- William Graham Sumner, *The Conquest of the United States by Spain* (1899) 417
- Elihu Root, *Speech at Canton, Ohio* (1900) 420

### Chapter 8: The Progressive Era, 1901–1932 425

#### I. Introduction 425

#### II. Democracy and Liberty 429
- Theodore Roosevelt, *The New Nationalism* (1910) 432
- Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom* (1913) 436

#### III. Citizenship and Community 446
- Louis D. Brandeis, *True Americanism* (1915) 448

#### IV. Equality and Status 453
- Edgar Gardner Murphy, *The White Man and the Negro at the South* (1900) 454
- Jane Addams, *If Men Were Seeking the Franchise* (1913) 462

#### V. Political Economy 465
- Eugene V. Debs, *Unionism and Socialism* (1904) 466
- Emma Goldman, *Anarchism* (1907) 470
- Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909) 474
- Herbert Hoover, *American Individualism* (1922) 481

#### VI. America and the World 484
- Theodore Roosevelt, *Social Values and National Existence* (1915) 485
- Woodrow Wilson, *Address to the Senate on the Terms of Peace* (1917) 487
- Randolph S. Bourne, *The State* (1918) 491
- William E. Borah, *On the Need for Naval Disarmament* (1919) 494
CHAPTER 9

The New Deal Era, 1933–1950 499

I. Introduction 499

II. Democracy and Liberty 502
   Herbert Hoover, Rugged Individualism Speech (1928) 505
   Franklin D. Roosevelt, Commonwealth Club Address (1932) 508
   Albert Jay Nock, Life, Liberty, and . . . (1935) 513
   Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fireside Chat on the Reorganization of the Federal Judiciary (1937) 515

III. Citizenship and Community 519
   John Dewey, Liberalism and Social Action (1935) 520
   Thurman Arnold, The Symbols of Government (1935) 523

IV. Equality and Status 526
   James Weldon Johnson, Negro Americans, What Now? (1934) 528
   Ralph J. Bunche, A Critical Analysis of the Tactics and Programs of Minority Groups (1935) 531
   A. Philip Randolph, March on Washington Keynote Address (1942) 533

V. Political Economy 535
   Rexford G. Tugwell, The Principle of Planning and the Institution of Laissez Faire (1932) 536
   Adolf A. Berle, Jr., A High Road for Business (1933) 539
   Huey P. Long, Every Man a King (1934) 541
   Earl Browder, What is Communism? (1936) 544

VI. America and the World 546
   George F. Kennan, The Sources of Soviet Conduct (1947) 547
   Harry S. Truman, Address before a Joint Session of Congress (1947) 551
   Reinhold Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness (1949) 554
   Robert A. Taft, A Foreign Policy for Americans (1951) 558

CHAPTER 10

Civil Rights and the Great Society, 1951–1980 563

I. Introduction 563

II. Democracy and Liberty 567
   Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom (1962) 569
   Barry Goldwater, Acceptance Speech for the Republican Nomination for President (1964) 571
   Herbert Marcuse, An Essay on Liberation (1969) 575
   John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (1971) 579

III. Citizenship and Community 583
   Young Americans for Freedom, The Sharon Statement (1960) 584
Students for a Democratic Society, The Port Huron Statement (1962) 585
Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks at the University of Michigan (1964) 590
Ralph Nader, We Need a New Kind of Patriotism (1971) 593

**IV. Equality and Status** 595
Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham City Jail (1963) 597
Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have a Dream Speech (1963) 602
Malcolm X, The Ballot or the Bullet (1964) 605
Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (1963) 610
Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (1969) 613

**V. Political Economy** 616
John Kenneth Galbraith, American Capitalism (1952) 618

**VI. America and the World** 622
Hans J. Morgenthau, In Defense of the National Interest (1952) 624
James Burnham, Containment or Liberation? (1953) 627

**Chapter 11 Recent Politics, 1981–Present** 635

**I. Introduction** 635

**II. Democracy and Liberty** 638
Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural Address (1981) 640
Richard Rorty, The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy (1990) 643
David Graeber, Direct Action, Anarchism, Direct Democracy (2009) 648

**III. Citizenship and Community** 651
Richard John Neuhaus, What the Fundamentalists Want (1985) 653
Michael Walzer, What Does It Mean to be an 'American'? (1990) 656
Wendell Berry, Citizenship Papers (2003) 662

**IV. Equality and Status** 665
Thurgood Marshall, Bicentennial Speech (1987) 668
Cornel West, Race Matters (1994) 671
Barack Obama, Eulogy at the Funeral Service in Honor of Reverend Clementa Pinckney (2015) 673
V. Political Economy 677
Bill Clinton, *Remarks to the International Business Community* (1994) 682
Michael Albert, *Beyond Class Rule is Parecon* (2012) 684

VI. America and the World 686
Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, *Dictatorships and Double Standards* (1979) 687

sources 00
index 00
TOPICAL OUTLINE OF VOLUME

1. Democracy and Liberty
   Roger Williams, *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution* (1644)
   John Cotton, *An Exposition upon the 13th Chapter of the Revelations* (1645)
   John Winthrop, *Little Speech on Liberty* (1645)
   Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776)
   John Adams, “Thoughts on Government” (1776)
   Carter Braxton, *An Address to the Convention of the Colony* (1776)
   Alexander Hamilton, *Federalist Papers* (1787)
   James Madison, *Federalist Papers* (1787)
   Brutus Essays (1787)
   *Letter from the Federal Farmer* (1787)
   Correspondence of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison (1787)
   Thomas Jefferson, *Kentucky Resolutions* (1798)
   Fisher Ames, “The Mire of Democracy” (1805)
   Thomas Jefferson, Letter to a Committee of the Danbury Baptists (1802)
   Lyman Beecher, *Practicality of Suppressing Vice* (1803)
   Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Samuel Kercheval (1816)
   James Kent and David Buel, Jr., Debate at New York Constitutional Convention (1821)
   George Bancroft, “Office of the People in Art, Government, and Religion” (1835)
   Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience” (1849)
   John C. Calhoun, *A Disquisition on Government* (1850)
   Theodore Parker, “Law of God and the Statutes of Men” (1854)
Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address (1861)
Thaddeus Stevens, Speech on the Reconstruction Acts (1867)
Francis Parkman, “The Failure of Universal Suffrage” (1878)
Stephen J. Field, “The Centenary of the Supreme Court of the United States” (1890)
James B. Weaver, A Call to Action (1892)
Theodore Roosevelt, The New Nationalism (1910)
Woodrow Wilson, The New Freedom (1913)
Herbert Hoover, “Rugged Individualism” Speech (1928)
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Commonwealth Club Address (1932)
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fireside Chat on the Reorganization of the Federal Judiciary (1937)
Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom (1962)
Barry Goldwater, Acceptance Speech for the Republican Nomination for President (1964)
John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (1971)
Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural Address (1981)

2. Citizenship and Community
Mayflower Compact (1620)
Jonathan Mayhew, A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers (1750)
William Livingston, “Of Party Divisions” (1753)
Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, “Letters from an American Farmer” (1782)
John Jay, Federalist Papers (1787)
George Washington, “Farewell Address” (1796)
Thomas Jefferson, “First Inaugural Address” (1801)
Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Adams (1813)
John Marshall, McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
Samuel F. B. Morse, Imminent Dangers to the Free Institutions of the United States (1835)
Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Politics” (1844)
George Colton, “Responsibility of the Ballot Box” (1846)
Jefferson Davis, Farewell to the Senate (1860)
Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address (1865)
Lysander Spooner, No Treason (1867)
Henry W. Grady, “The New South” (1886)
Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893)
Henry Cabot Lodge, Speech to the Senate on Literacy Tests (1896)
Grover Cleveland, Literacy Test Veto (1897)
Louis D. Brandeis, “True Americanism” (1915)
Randolph S. Bourne, “Trans-National America” (1916)
John Dewey, Liberalism and Social Action (1935)
Thurman Arnold, The Symbols of Government (1935)
Young Americans for Freedom, The Sharon Statement (1960)
Students for a Democratic Society, The Port Huron Statement (1962)
Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks at the University of Michigan (1964)
Ralph Nader, “We Need a New Kind of Patriotism” (1971)
Michael Walzer, “What Does It Mean to be an ‘American’?” (1990)
Wendell Berry, Citizenship Papers (2003)

3. Equality and Status
William Henry Drayton, Letters of Freeman (1769)
Slaves’ Petition to the Massachusetts Governor (1774)
Jonathan Boucher, On Civil Liberty, Passive Obedience, and Non-Resistance (1775)
Correspondence of Abigail Adams and John Adams (1776)
Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (1787)
Correspondence of Benjamin Banneker and Thomas Jefferson (1791)
Judith Sargent Murray, “The Necessity of Subordination” (1798)
Memorial of the Free People of Color to the Citizens of Baltimore (1826)
William Lloyd Garrison, Declaration of Principles for the Liberator (1831)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” (1848)
Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman” (1851)
Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852)
George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All!, or, Slaves Without Masters (1857)
James Hammond, Speech to the Senate on Slavery (1858)
Abraham Lincoln, Speech at New Haven (1860)
Charles Sumner, The Barbarism of Slavery (1860)
Alexander H. Stephens, Cornerstone Address (1861)
Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (1863)
Reconstruction Amendments to the U.S. Constitution
Frederick Douglass, “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln” (1876)
Susan B. Anthony, “Is It a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?” (1873)
Thomas E. Watson, “The Negro Question in the South” (1892)
Booker T. Washington, Atlanta Exposition Address (1895)
Helen Kendrick Johnson, Woman and the Republic (1897)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Women and Economics (1898)
Edgar Gardner Murphy, The White Man and the Negro at the South (1900)
Jane Addams, "If Men Were Seeking the Franchise" (1913)
James Weldon Johnson, *Negro Americans, What Now?* (1934)
Ralph J. Bunche, “A Critical Analysis of the Tactics and Programs of Minority Groups” (1935)
A. Philip Randolph, March on Washington Keynote Address (1942)
Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham City Jail (1963)
Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have a Dream Speech (1963)
Malcolm X, The Ballot or the Bullet (1964)
Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)
Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (1969)
Barack Obama, Eulogy at the Funeral Service in Honor of Reverend Clementa Pinckney (2015)

4. **Political Economy**
   John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity* (1630)
   Cotton Mather, *A Christian at his Calling* (1701)
   Benjamin Franklin, “The Way to Wealth” (1758)
   James Madison, “Vices of the Political System of the United States” (1787)
   Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787)
   Alexander Hamilton, First Report on Public Credit (1790)
   Alexander Hamilton, Report on Manufactures (1791)
   John Taylor, *Tyranny Unmasked* (1821)
   Andrew Jackson, Veto of the Bank Bill (1832)
   Henry Clay, Speech on the American System (1832)
   William Leggett, “True Functions of Government” (1834)
   Orestes Brownson, “The Laboring Classes” (1840)
   Abraham Lincoln, First Annual Message (1861)
   Russell H. Conwell, “Acres of Diamonds” (1870)
   William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883)
   Andrew Carnegie, “The Gospel of Wealth” (1889)
   Henry D. Lloyd, *Wealth against Commonwealth* (1894)
   Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899)
   Eugene V. Debs, “Unionism and Socialism” (1904)
   Emma Goldman, *Anarchism* (1907)
   Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909)
   Herbert Hoover, *American Individualism* (1922)
Rexford G. Tugwell, “The Principle of Planning and the Institution of Laissez Faire” (1932)
Adolf A. Berle, Jr., “A High Road for Business” (1933)
Huey P. Long, “Every Man a King” (1934)
Earl Browder, What is Communism? (1936)
John Kenneth Galbraith, American Capitalism (1952)
Bill Clinton, Remarks to the International Business Community (1994)
Michael Albert, “Beyond Class Rule is Parecon” (2012)

5. America and the World
Joseph Doddridge, Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars (1824)
John Dickinson, Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania (1768)
Daniel Leonard, Massachusettensis (1775)
Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence (1776)
Corn Tassel, Reply to the American Commissioners (1777)
Alexander Hamilton, Letter to James Duane (1780)
George Washington, Circular Letter to the State Governors (1783)
George Washington, “Farewell Address” (1796)
Thomas Jefferson, Letter to William Henry Harrison (1803)
John Quincy Adams, Speech on Independence Day (1821)
James Monroe, Seventh Annual Message (1823)
Andrew Jackson, Speech on Indian Removal (1830)
Memorial of the Cherokee Nation (1836)
John L. O’Sullivan, “Manifest Destiny” (1839)
Abraham Lincoln, Fourth of July Message to Congress (1861)
Abraham Lincoln, Letter to James C. Conkling (1863)
Chief Spotted Tail, Speech to the Sioux Commissioners (1876)
Josiah Strong, “Our Country” (1885)
William Graham Sumner, “The Conquest of the United States by Spain” (1899)
Elihu Root, Speech at Canton, Ohio (1900)
Theodore Roosevelt, “Social Values and National Existence” (1915)
Woodrow Wilson, Address to the Senate on the Terms of Peace (1917)
Randolph S. Bourne, The State (1918)
William E. Borah, On the Need for Naval Disarmament (1919)
George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” (1947)
Harry S. Truman, Address before a Joint Session of Congress (1947)
Reinhold Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness (1949)
Robert A. Taft, A Foreign Policy for Americans (1951)
Hans J. Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest* (1952)
James Burnham, *Containment or Liberation?* (1953)
Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards" (1979)
TABLES, FIGURES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 2-1 Timeline of the Colonial Era
Figure 3-1 Timeline of the Founding Era
Box 3-1 The Two James Madisons
Figure 4-1 Timeline of the Early National Era
Figure 4-2 Percentage of States with Property Qualifications on Voting
Figure 5-1 Timeline of the Jacksonian Era
Figure 6-1 Timeline of Secession, Civil War, and Reconstruction
Figure 7-1 Timeline of the Gilded Age
Figure 7-2 Percentage of Population in Urban Areas
Figure 8-1 Timeline of the Progressive Era
Figure 8-2 Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections
Figure 8-3 Foreign Born as Percentage of Population
Figure 8-4 Percent of States by Region Allowing Women to Vote at Time of Nineteenth Amendment
Figure 9-1 Timeline of the New Deal Era
Figure 9-2 Federal Revenue and Expenditures as Percentage of GDP
Figure 10-1 Timeline of Civil Rights and the Great Society
Figure 10-2 Military Personnel as Percentage of Population and Military Expenditures as Percentage of GDP
Figure 11-1 Timeline of Recent Politics
Figure 11-2 Trust in Government Index, 1964–2008
Figure 11-3 Share of Total Income and Total Wealth by Top 1% of Wealth Holders, 1913–2012
This textbook takes a new approach to the study of American political thought. The target audience consists of professors, students, and readers interested in researching, teaching, and learning about the intellectual history and the history of political thought in the United States. The work focuses on those questions of politics and society of concern to all Americans and provides readers with the materials necessary for thinking intelligently about these issues. The book provides an introduction to the ideas that have affected, shaped, and transformed American politics and an appreciation of the controversies and disputes that have mobilized Americans since the first European settlements in North America.

American political thought sits at the intersection of political theory and American politics. With that in mind, this text highlights four important features of this material:

- The full range of American political thought
- The interaction of American political thought and politics
- The struggle over American values
- The central role of history and historical development

The teaching of American political thought has traditionally served a variety of purposes. It provides an entry point for studying American political history broadly. The debates that make up the central sources of American political thought trace the history of American politics and policymaking. Key political and policy innovations and significant challenges to American success have been accompanied by new thinking about what values are most central to American politics and how they should be applied, extended, or modified to help chart the path ahead.

American political thought provides an angle for better understanding American society and politics. The history of American political thought is the record of the struggle to define the fundamental principles that should guide political decision making. Contemporary politics rests on an inheritance of political traditions and values that have been built up (and sometimes torn down) across generations. American political thought
exposes the choices that have been made over time and the rationales that underwrite political action.

The study of American political thought is the study of a particular kind of intellectual history. American political thought focuses on the ideas associated with different stages of society and politics, the contesting ideologies that motivate, legitimate, and guide political action. Unlike some other primary documents associated with historical study, the materials of American political thought do not simply show what happened and how people lived. They show how people have thought about the world in which they lived and how they sought to explain it, rationalize it, or change it.

An appreciation for American political thought complements the study of political theory as such. American political thought is concerned with ideas in action. It engages with the fundamental questions of political life, but it does so within immediate contexts and with foreseeable consequences. Participants in the American political tradition have sought to extrapolate basic commitments and lessons from the American political experience but have then made use of those lessons to advocate concrete action within the political realm. The study of American political thought serves as a bridge between the discussion of abstract principles and value systems and the examination of how politics works in practice.

FULL RANGE OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

This text covers the full range of American political thought. Many texts artificially truncate the subject, either by restricting the range of voices that have contributed to public debates in American history or by narrowing the scope of the subject matter to a few particular themes. This text takes an expansive approach to the subject matter, exposing readers to the full spectrum of political debate and challenging them to think about all the key issues that have informed and been informed by enduring American political values.

The text takes a comprehensive approach to understanding American political thought. The thinkers, writers, and speakers represented in these pages include scholars, intellectuals, politicians, judges, journalists, ministers, and political activists of all stripes. The debate over political values has not taken place in the seminar room, but neither has it been restricted to the loftiest seats of political power. The key consideration for inclusion is whether the speaker or writer was insightful, reflected significant political sentiments and concerns, and was influential in public debates. In those debates, presidents and senators rub elbows with labor organizers and escaped slaves. This text seeks to capture American political thought in all its richness, giving due consideration to those who spoke from the pulpit or the lectern, for the marginalized and for the privileged, on behalf of an America that had been inherited and of an America that was being imagined.

As part of the effort to broaden the scope of what is traditionally considered within the rubric of American political thought, the text also expands the field of issues under consideration. Each chapter is divided into five parts: democracy and liberty, citizenship and community, equality and status, political economy, and America and the world. These are overlapping categories, and even within a single speech or pamphlet a thinker may range
over and connect several of these issues. Nonetheless, these divisions usefully capture some recurring debates within American political thought. Debates over democracy and liberty have revolved around such questions as how political authority is grounded, what popular government implies, how liberty can best be preserved, and what rights should be recognized. Debates over citizenship and community ask what it means to be an American, why and how the American political community is tied together, what are the bonds that hold the community together, and what are the privileges and duties of a citizen. Debates over equality and status consider what one of the axiomatic principles of the United States—that all men are created equal—might mean, what are the tensions between equality and liberty, how status and privilege can be reconciled with republican community, and on what terms different races, ethnicities, classes, and sexes work together in a common political and social space. Debates over political economy investigate the relationship between the material world and the political, between public policy and the public welfare, between labor and capital and the basic ordering of the social and economic world. Debates over America and the world try to identify how the United States can and should position itself on the international stage and what American foreign policy says about the values and identity of the United States, and how American values should shape American behavior abroad.

Such themes are broad, but they are regularly played out in particular contexts, motivated by specific public problems and concerned with distinct policies. These readings are chosen because the writer is able to rise above the details of a particular policy debate and illuminate broader concerns. These particular debates are an occasion for thinking about enduring features of American politics and recurrent aspirations, ideals, and concerns. They are of interest not because we seek to replay the legislative debates surrounding the construction of the Maysville Road or the occupation and governance of the Philippines, but because those debates open for inspection conflicting ideas about basic American commitments.

INTERACTION OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT AND POLITICS

A central theme of the study of American political thought is that political action and political ideas are intertwined. American Political Thought presents readers with materials for evaluating the extent to which politics influences ideas and vice versa. Every historical chapter begins with an introduction that outlines the political, social, and intellectual circumstances of the period. These introductions provide an understanding of the most important political coalitions of that period, their platforms, major political personalities, the most important policy disputes, the social conditions and cleavages, and predominant social and political ideas. This information enables students to determine for themselves whether American political values are timeless or time-bound, whether the expression of political ideas operates on a separate track from the pursuit of political interests, or whether ideas and interests work in concert.

American political thought can be viewed primarily from the perspective of political philosophy, with American theorists contributing to timeless and universal debates over
the deep foundations and eternal questions of political life. This book provides the resources for approaching American political thought in this way. The readings include substantial excerpts from the most profound political thinkers in American history—the *Federalist Papers* on constitutionalism, Thoreau on political resistance, Calhoun on majoritarianism, Lincoln on nationalism and equality, Dewey on democracy—and background discussion of the international philosophical debates within which they participated. The excerpts included in this volume address timeless themes and eternal questions of political life, and these thinkers can readily be put in dialogue with each other and with debates and concerns of today.

But the American contribution to the long tradition of Western political philosophy is limited. American political writers have been more practical and concrete in their concerns than theoretical and abstract. Over time, the United States has produced more statesmen and lawyers than political philosophers. Understanding what motivated these writers, how they intervened in political events, and what they sought to accomplish requires some appreciation for their surroundings, the problems they faced, the intellectual and political resources they possessed, and the conversations in which they were involved. These materials reveal the political in American political thought and the connections between public policy, political action, and political thought. They reveal the political ideals that inspired and puzzled political entrepreneurs.

**STRUGGLE OVER AMERICAN VALUES**

American political history is replete with disagreements over American political identity and ideals. *American Political Thought* details the struggle over American values and national ideals. The materials in the book demonstrate the range of arguments, actors, and political movements that have roiled the American political landscape. The book canvases a diverse set of writers and political actors who have contributed to the American political conversation. The book illuminates the extent to which disputes within American political thought have been resolved, while also indicating the extent to which debates over ideas and practice have evolved across time and reemerged over time.

These materials help illuminate a specifically American political tradition. They illustrate the values and concerns that have moved generations of Americans in politics. They show how Americans have struggled with the fundamental questions of governance and political life. The answers they have offered have not always been persuasive, but they have influenced how American political institutions and political culture have developed and provide insights into the kinds of problems they have tried to solve.

This volume can also help dispel easy assumptions that Americans have always agreed about the political fundamentals and have primarily fought over resources rather than ideas. Although there has been substantial agreement over many basic issues—the divine right of kings has gained little traction in the United States—these areas of agreement can obscure substantial areas of disagreement. While Americans have almost universally endorsed popular government, for example, there have been heated disagreements over what popular government requires. Participants in those debates have approached these questions from a
wide range of perspectives—religious and secular, liberal and conservative, egalitarian and inequalitarian. This volume gives space to those disparate voices, avoiding the crackpot and outlandish but including the diverse array of figures who have wielded some influence over public opinion and political movements over the course of American history.

HISTORY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Contemporary American political thought is the product of numerous arguments and decisions made by historical actors working within the political, legal, and intellectual constraints of their political eras. *American Political Thought* is organized historically so as to better reveal the nature of those constraints and how they have evolved over time. The historical organization highlights the connections between different types of disputes and arguments, as well as the terms of debate between opposing parties. The thematic organization within chapters helps tie together arguments across time and shows how conversations evolve over time and build on what has come before.

The historical institutionalist turn within the study of American political thought, and American politics more broadly, has focused our attention on the ways in which ideas and actions are connected and the extent to which American politics is characterized by critical junctures and path dependencies that help structure political thinking at any given moment. This book is sensitive to these historical intersections, revealing the distinctive quality of contemporary political ideas and developing an appreciation for alternative conceptions of the political future.

The volume divides the history of American political thought into several distinct chapters organized by time period. The chapters encompass the colonial period (before 1776), the founding (1776–1791), the early republic (1792–1828), the Jacksonian Era (1829–1860), the Civil War and Reconstruction period (1861–1876), the Gilded Age (1877–1900), the Progressive Era (1901–1932), the New Deal (1933–1950), the civil rights era (1951–1980), and recent politics (1981–present). The separation of these periods is certainly not hard and fast, but they serve to break American history into more digestible portions and highlight the intertwined debates that are distinctive to different historical eras. The historical approach highlights the fact that Elizabeth Cady Stanton was in dialogue with Frederick Douglass and Horace Greeley rather than Gloria Steinem, and Herbert Croly was in conversation with William Graham Sumner and Theodore Roosevelt rather than Milton Friedman. Later writers have had much to learn from earlier ones, but they also worked within their own intellectual and cultural milieu and responded to their own distinctive political problems and constraints.

PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Most readers in American political thought have been not much more than anthologies, providing little of the additional content that is now common for texts designed for classroom use and offering minimal guidance for a student being tossed into an unknown sea. While emphasizing the excerpted text from the primary sources, this book tries to offer
some additional context. The text presents a consistent pedagogical framework across the chapters:

- An opening chapter introduces the study of American political thought and highlights some general themes and vocabulary that make a frequent appearance in the literature.
- Each substantive chapter is divided into a consistent set of topical sections.
- Each chapter begins with a brief introduction to the political, social, and intellectual context of the period. Sections within each chapter summarize major themes, with a bulleted list of major developments for ease of reference.
- All readings are prefaced with explanatory headnotes, which contextualize the reading, indicate its importance, and provide questions for consideration as the student reads the material.
- Period illustrations help provide further context for the materials.
- Timelines throughout the volume summarize major events in the period and place source materials relative to those events.
- All chapters end with guidance for primary readings for further study and suggested readings in the secondary literature.

For ease of use, the readings in the text are modernized (except where the writer was intentionally archaic in his or her language). Footnotes appearing in the excerpts are from the original source, unless otherwise indicated. The sources from which the readings are drawn are consolidated in a section at the end of the book.

SUPPLEMENTS

We live in a time in which a wider range of once-difficult-to-find source materials in American political thought are now more readily available to students and researchers. Nonetheless, even amidst this plenty, some important works are hard to find. More fundamentally, confronted with such a vast sea of information, even experts can easily become lost. The value of a text of this sort is that it can bring together the familiar and the less familiar, separate the wheat from the chaff, reduce long texts to their core components, and provide necessary contextualization to help readers make sense of what is before them.

I have made every effort to produce a one-volume text that is flexible enough to support a range of teaching approaches and emphases while compact enough to be easily useable. Nonetheless, these pages only sample the richness of the many contributions to American political thought—a sample that I hope will be illuminating, thought-provoking, and captivating. I have made many more readings, similarly edited and introduced, available on a supplemental website. For those who want to read more deeply or to find a particular item that could not be included in the text, I hope that those materials will open the door to the wide range of contributions to American political thought. The website also includes useful tools for both instructors and students, including sample syllabi and self-study quizzes.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would not have embarked on this project without the inspiration provided by many valued teachers and students, some perhaps more distant than others. My eyes were first opened to American political thought by a second-hand copy of Alpheus Mason’s pioneering Free Government in the Making, and I hope this volume does justice to the tradition that he did so much to initiate. Happily, I found further encouragement in the field as an undergraduate studying with J. Budziszewski at the University of Texas and managed to wander into a graduate program at Yale that was filled with lively discussions at the intersections of political theory and American political history and a supportive community for American political thought. Perhaps less obviously, I am grateful to Howard Gillman and Mark Graber, who have not only been invaluable in their writing and conversations on American constitutional history but who also suffered with me through the process of learning how to produce a book of this sort. Without the experience with American Constitutionalism, I am not sure that I would have attempted this book. My editor at Oxford University Press, Jennifer Carpenter, with the able assistance of Matt Rohal, was suitably encouraging in starting this project and appropriately stern in bringing it to more-or-less timely completion.

I also thank the many reviewers who provided invaluable feedback on the several stages of this project: **

As always, I appreciate the patience and love of Tracey and Taylor, who were willing to forgive me for starting another project amidst other obligations.
