**Overview:** This course explores the elements of American thought that have shaped our national political culture. Political thought we define as *any speech, writing, discourse, or debate that relate to the governance of a society.* Political culture consists of those attitudes and beliefs that orient people to politics and government. It is the thesis of this course that *ideas matter,* i.e., what men and women think about the nature, organization, and operation of politics and government has important and enduring consequences in the life of a nation. We test this thesis by studying the values, beliefs, and arguments that define the American experience and produce its unique political culture. Special emphasis is placed on the roots of the American political order, religion in American life, and the political thought that cultivates the habits, morals, and civic virtues essential for stable republican self-government. We fill focus on American *exceptionalism* as an artifact of American political thought and its profound impact on contemporary American politics and government. This course carries a heavy reading load and is an Arts and Sciences writing emphasis course, students are advised to take this into account when enrolling and planning their semester workload. Students must check this page between class sessions for announcements, new material, and on-line quizzes.

**Policy:** Attendance is required and will be taken. It is expected that students will attend class every day, prepared and ready to participate in class discussions. Excessive absences inevitably will affect your grade. Final grades are based on student performance on a two-part midterm examination (100-points), a cumulative two-part final examination (200-points), quizzes (not to exceed a total of 75-points), and extra credit exercises (which will range in total from 20 to 50-points). Quizzes are unannounced and designed to reward students for close attention to lectures and reading assignments. No makeup quizzes are given. At the close of the term the total points for all students are summed and letter grades are assigned based on a class curve. To obtain extra credit students must complete take-home exercises based on reading beyond required material. Makeup examinations may be arranged, but only when the instructor has extended permission before the scheduled test date. The makeup examination for the midterm is scheduled for Wednesday, March 14. The make-up final examination is scheduled for Friday, May 6. We reserve the right to make appropriate and necessary adjustments to point totals and the course schedule with advance notice. All university rules regarding academic honesty are enforced. Students are required to check the course webpage between class meetings. We reserve the right to adjust point totals, assignments, and dates with notice.

**Required Books:**


**Important Dates** (subject to change with notice):

- **Monday, March 14:** Midterm Examination
- **Wednesday, March 16:** Midterm Makeup 1:30 to 3:25 pm – McClung Tower 1009
- **Wednesday, May 4:** Final Examination @ 8:00 to 10:00 am – HSS 112
- **Friday, May 6:** Make-up Final Examination @ 12:30 to 2:30 pm – McClung Tower 1009