

WELCOME TO
Moral Reasoning 74

The Theory and Practice
of Republican Government

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President Obama – Inaugural Address

“Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet, every so often, the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because **we, the people**, have remained **faithful to the ideals of our forebears** and true to **our founding documents**.”

President Obama – Inaugural Address

“Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man -- a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience sake.”

The Ubiquity of “Democracy”

President Bush, 2007 State of the Union:
“Democracy” 2005: 8 times.

2005 inaugural: “The concerted effort of free nations to promote democracy is a prelude to our enemies’ defeat.”

2001 inaugural: “The most important tasks of a democracy are done by everyone.”

The Ubiquity of “Democracy”

President Bush, 2003:

“The roots of our democracy can be traced to England, and to its Parliament.”

“The establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be a watershed event in the global democratic revolution.”

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html>

The Ubiquity of “Democracy”

Kerry, 9/24/2004:

“We will promote the development of free and democratic societies throughout the Arab and Muslim world.... We must reach out to them and yes we must always promote democracy.”

http://www.johnkerry.com/pressroom/speeches/spc_2004_0924.html

Question

1. How many times does the word “democracy” appear in the U.S. Constitution?
2. How many times did Bush use the word “republic” in his inaugural? How many times did Kerry use the word “republic” in his acceptance speech?

What the Constitution Does Say

Article IV, Section 4: “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against invasion....”

Hamilton, *Federalist* #1

I propose, in a series of papers, to discuss the following particulars: -- The utility of the UNION to your political prosperity -- the insufficiency of the present confederation to preserve that Union -- the necessity of a government at least as energetic with the one proposed, to the attainment of this object -- The conformity of the proposed Constitution to the true principles of **republican government** -- Its analogy to your own State constitution -- and lastly, The additional security which its adoption will afford to the preservation of that species of government, to liberty, and to property.

So, What is a Republic? Hamilton, *Federalist #9*

The science of politics, however, like most other sciences, has received great improvement. The efficacy of various principles is now well understood, which were either not known at all, or imperfectly known to the ancients. The regular distribution of power into distinct departments; the introduction of legislative balances and checks; the institution of courts composed of judges holding their offices during good behavior; the representation of the people in the legislature by deputies of their own election: these are wholly new discoveries, or have made their principal progress towards perfection in modern times. They are means, and powerful means, by which the excellences of republican government may be retained and its imperfections lessened or avoided."

Democracy v. Republic Madison, *Federalist #10*

Madison contrasts two forms of government, democracy and republic.

"a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person"

Madison: pure democracy "can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert results from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or **an obnoxious individual.**"



Note to all lawyers: This is, quite obviously, not an advertisement for Trump University. Web material is being used for educational purposes, for the definition of an “obnoxious individual.”

So What's Wrong with Democracy? Madison, *Federalist* #10

“Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.”

“Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would at the same time be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.”

What is a Republic? Madison, *Federalist #10*

“The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens and greater sphere of country over which the latter may be extended.”

“The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations.” [Rossiter ed, p. 82]

THEMES

- I. Introduction and Animating Questions
- II. The Roman Republic and the Machiavellian Model
- III. The “English Republic” and Montesquieu’s Lessons
- IV. The Creation of the American Republic
- V. The Promise and Perils of Republican Government in Contemporary America: slavery, finance, & challenges from libertarianism, social democracy and direct democracy.

READINGS All at Coop

Hamilton, Jay, Madison. *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter.

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans Harvey Mansfield, Nathan Tarcov.

Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed*.

Morgan, *Inventing the People*.

READINGS

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*

Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*

Hamilton, *Writings*

Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*

Robert E. Wright, *One Nation Under Debt: Hamilton, Jefferson and the History of What We Owe*

Also, Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*.

CLASS FORMAT

1. 2 lectures, 1 discussion section per week

2. Your requirements

- attendance at lectures and sections
- 3 discussion papers (4-6 pp.)
- final examination (finals week)

3. Things your TFs might add

Course Home Page

<http://people.hmdc.harvard.edu/~dcarpent/repgovt.htm>

Contains:

- Syllabus [in HTML and .PDF (Adobe) format]
- Contact Information (for me, for TFs [to come])
- All Course Announcements and Assignments, plus Policies and Guidelines for the Class
- Lecture Notes [also in HTML & .PDF]
- My Philosophy for the Course and Other Brain Candy

Writing Demands I

1. Clear Argumentation

- Argument on paper's first page.
- Argument should be summarized (or able to be summarized) in one sentence.

2. Clear organization: ("Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em, tell 'em, then tell 'em what you told 'em.")

- Papers should have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Paragraph is the basic building-block of the paper.

Writing Demands II

3. Proper Grammar and Spelling

- Use spell-check
- Grammar: Strunk & White: *Elements of Style*.
- Use grammar-check
- Have a friend (even someone else in class) read your paper.

4. Counterarguments

- Essential to good argumentation
- Actively consider (and briefly refute) arguments against your position

Announcements

- (1) CAPS Undergraduate Senior Thesis Grants. Applications now available.
- (2) Project on anti-slavery petitioning, incl. paid work in D.C. this summer [part-time or full-time] in the National Archives.
