

**POLS 650: Tocqueville**  
**Northern Illinois University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**Fall 2017**

**Professor Radasanu**

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**Course Description:**

This semester we will read Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville is the preeminent French liberal of the nineteenth century. He helps us to reflect on the American regime, but also on modernity and its various forces including commerce and democracy in relation to what came before in the form of the *ancien régime*.

**Required Texts:**

Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*; translated, edited, and with an introduction by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2000.

**Recommended Secondary Readings**

Aron, Raymond. *Main currents in sociological thought*, translated by Richard Howard & Helen Weaver. New York: Basic Books, 1965-1967.

Banfield, Edward C. "The illiberal Tocqueville." *Here the people rule: selected essays* / Edward C. Banfield. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1991.

Boesche, Roger. *The strange liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Craiutu, Aurelian, "Tocqueville's Paradoxical Moderation," *Review of Politics*, Vol. 67, No. 4, 2005.

Jardin, André. *Tocqueville: a biography*; translated from the French by Lydia Davis with Robert Hemenway. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1988.

Kessler, Sanford. *Tocqueville's civil religion: American Christianity and the prospects for freedom*. Albany : State University of New York Press, 1994.

Kitch, Sarah Beth. "The Immovable Foundations of the Infinite and Immortal: Tocqueville's Philosophical Anthropology." *AJPS* (July 2016).

Koritansky, John C. *Alexis de Tocqueville and the new science of politics: an interpretation of Democracy in America*. Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 1986.

Kraynak, Robert P. *Christian faith and modern democracy: God and politics in the fallen world*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001.

- Lawler, Peter Augustine. *The restless mind: Alexis de Tocqueville on the origin and perpetuation of human liberty*. Savage, Md: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993.
- Lawler, Peter Augustine, ed. *Tocqueville's political science: classic essays*. New York: Garland Pub., 1992.
- Lawler, Peter Augustine and Joseph Alulis, ed. *Tocqueville's defense of human liberty: current essays*. New York: Garland Pub., 1993.
- Manent, Pierre. *Tocqueville and the nature of democracy*; translated by John Waggoner; foreword by Harvey C. Mansfield. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996.
- Manent, Pierre. *An intellectual history of liberalism*; translated by Rebecca Balinski ; with a foreword by Jerrold Seigel. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Masugi, Ken, ed. *Interpreting Tocqueville's Democracy in America*. Savage, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1991
- Mitchell, Joshua. *The fragility of freedom: Tocqueville on religion, democracy, and the American future*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Pierson, George Wilson. *Tocqueville and Beaumont in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.
- Stauffer, Dana Jalbert (2014). Tocqueville on the Modern Moral Situation: Democracy and the Decline of Devotion. *APSR* 108 (4), 772-782.
- Tocqueville. *Journey to America*, translated by George Lawrence; edited by J.P. Mayer. London: Faber and Faber, 1959 E 165 T5433
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Selected letters on politics and society*, edited by Roger Boesche; translated by James Toupin and Roger Boesche. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1985.
- Winthrop, Delba. "Tocqueville's American women and 'the true conception of democratic progress.'" *Political Theory* 14.2 (1986)
- Wolin, Sheldon S. *Tocqueville between two worlds : the making of a political and theoretical life*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Zetterbaum, Marvin. *Tocqueville and the problem of democracy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967.

This list is anything but exhaustive.

### **Formal Requirements and Basis of Grading:**

For those taking course for credit:

- One-page papers (20%): Complete six one-page responses to questions posed by

professor. The professor will post one or more questions for the following week's readings on Blackboard. You are advised to consult these questions each week, but you will be expected to hand in short (but polished) responses at the beginning of the following class six times. If you want to improve your grade, you can always do more and have your six best count. These are due at the beginning of class, and are considered late if they are not handed in at that time or before.

- Lead two discussions (20%): Each student will be scheduled to lead two discussions. Students are expected to make preliminary remarks, and lead about half an hour of discussion.
- Take-home Exam (20%): circa 2500 words; available on November 14th, due November 18th, (via email; 5pm). Penalties for lateness will be outlined on the exam sheet and are summarized below under lateness policy.
- Term Paper (30%): December 12<sup>th</sup>, 5pm. Circa 4000 words. Students will also be expected to present a rough draft of their work for class on November 28<sup>th</sup>, which will be dedicated to workshopping term papers. Should students not have a preliminary draft ready for this purpose, then they will be penalized 20% of their paper grade.
- Participation (10%): Please see expectations below.

Auditors:

- Expected to attend and participate actively
- Complete two one-page response papers (see above) and lead one class discussion.

For all of the assignments listed above, you will receive additional information on the specific requirements in a timely fashion.

### **Expectations of Students:**

#### CLASS PARTICIPATION

Attendance and participation are crucial components of this class. You are expected to attend and participate every class, or offer a very good excuse for not doing so. This means that you must read the text to be covered that day, and be prepared to discuss the text thoughtfully. Ask and answer questions, offer comments, and argue with the professor's interpretation of the text. Without doing most of these things on a regular basis, it will not be possible to earn an A for the attendance and participation portion of your grade (10%).

#### GRADING

To earn an A in the course, both active and thoughtful participation and excellent written work will be required. For written work, A's are earned when compelling interpretations are provided (and expressed clearly) in response to the assigned topics or topics of your own devising.

#### LATENESS POLICY

Extensions on the final papers are granted only if the student has a very good reason. Everyone should be working on the term paper throughout, so that a last-minute glitch doesn't affect your ability to hand in your paper in a timely fashion.

No extensions will be granted on one-page papers.

The take-home exam will be due at a specific time on a specific day, via email. The time stamp of the email will determine whether the student has completed the assignment on time. Exams that are within one day late (this means within 24 hours of the due date and time – and not a minute later), will incur a 10% late penalty. Exams that are not handed in within 24 hours of the due date and time will not be accepted. This strict policy is meant to uphold the integrity of this assignment as an exam.

Rescheduling presentations once they have been agreed upon should be avoided. Only in very few circumstances will this be permitted (e.g., severe illness).

## INCOMPLETES

Incompletes are given only for unforeseeable events that make it impossible to complete course work by the end of the semester. Students are responsible for informing the professor of such events, and for securing her consent for an incomplete, as promptly as possible.

## **Class Schedule:**

We will meet on the appointed day and at appointed time throughout the semester. In each class (with the exception for the class we designate for paper workshop –November 28th), we will deal with about 50 pages of the primary text. We will fine tune the amount based on the week and the material ahead.

We begin in the thick of it with the first class on Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>. Read Tocqueville's Introduction, and chapters 1 and 2 of volume 1, part 1.

If you must miss a class, it is imperative that you find out where we broke off, and what reading is required for the following class.

Assignment dates are firm (unless changed by unanimous consent of students and professor).