

Georgetown University
Masters and Doctoral Liberal Studies Program

The Federalist Papers: Creating a New Nation

LSHV-353-01

Wednesdays, 6:15-8:30 PM

Fall, 2009

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Course Description & Objectives: This seminar course is a focus on the entire text of *The Federalist Papers* and the Anti-Federalist opposition in the historical context of the Ratification Process, 1787-1788. It uses the Federal Convention and the adoption of the Bill of Rights to round out the edges of a concentration on the Papers themselves.

Thomas Jefferson called the *The Federalist* “The best commentary on the principles of government, which was ever written.” Others have said the collected essays are “by far the greatest book on politics ever written in America.” Scholars and politicians often argue they offer the most accurate analysis of the intentions of those who designed the Constitution, and the Supreme Court increasingly accepts the *Federalist* as a uniquely reliable source for the meaning of the Constitution. Now, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the ideas and problems explored by Madison, Hamilton, and Jay continue to illuminate questions faced by developing democracies (old and new) such as: what is the nature of national security, the balance to be achieved between unity/stability and diversity/change; the possibility of creating divided but effective governing powers; the means of preventing tyranny; adequate representation of the will of the people. What, if any, restraints may be placed upon the popular will and is this consonant with democracy? How is human nature both appropriate for and destructive of democratic government?

This seminar's topics are from *The Federalist* (Call for Change; the Need for Financial Stability; the Genius and Legality of the Constitutional Convention; Republicanism and Federalism; Designing a Legislature; Creating an Executive Branch; The Role of the Judiciary). Madison, Hamilton and Jay's papers will provide the opportunity for full class discussion of the "new" American government proposed in 1787-88.

Our analysis will include historical, philosophical, and political issues of late 18th century America; the continuing and current debate about the nature of goals of democratic government. We will have an especially close look at the relevance then and now of the arguments posed by the Anti-federalists. The research paper will be uniquely focused on the Anti-Federalists. How is it that the forces of anti-government persist so intensely today alongside greater and greater powers to a central government? The course will raise the question: how well has the institutional framework and political philosophy argued for by *The Federalist* survived in an age of terrorism and economic meltdown?

Note: This course is independent of and supplemental to The Founding Era course [LSHV 704-01]. *The Federalist Papers* is a micro-focus on the essays themselves, the Anti-Federalists, the Ratification Process, and the adoption of the Bill of Rights.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Books:

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist: A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States*. Ed. Robert Scigliano (New York: Modern Library Paperback Edition, 2001).

The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates. Ed. Ralph Ketchum (New York, Signet Classic paperback, 2001).

Labunski, Richard. *James Madison and The Struggle for the Bill of Rights* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006).

Stewart, David O. *The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2007)

Research Paper: There will be one research paper (minimum 20 pages). The subject will relate to the Anti-Federalists and will be assigned during the class. A three (3) page abstract and a presentation on the paper is course requirement.

Class Participation: The course involves reading in its entirety one of the basic texts in American history and government. All students are expected to have completed the readings for the day and will bring to each class three of their own questions based on those readings. These and the professor's questions will be the core of the discussion, plus some lecture on the history of the period. Student questions should be submitted by email to the professor before each class.

Grades: Class participation will be 40% of the grade. The research paper will represent 60% and will include the class presentation and short paper.

Schedule:

September 9, Wed. 6:15 - 8:30 PM Introduction to the Moment
Read: *The Summer of 1787* (Read in entirety for the first class)

September 16, Wed. 6:15 – 8:30 PM Call for Change

Read: Nos. 1,6,7,8,9,15,16,21,22,23 [Hamilton]

Nos. 2,3,4,5 [Jay]

Nos. 18,19,20 [Madison]

September 23, Wed. 6:15 – 8:30 PM The Need for Financial Stability

Read: Nos. 11 to 13 and 30 to 36 [Hamilton]

September 30, Wed. 6:15 – 8:30 PM Genius and Legality of the Constitutional Convention: A New Nationalism

Read: Nos. 37, 38, 40, 43 [Madison]

Nos. 17, 24 to 29 [Hamilton]

October 7, Wed. 6:15 - 8:30 PM Republicanism and Federalism

Read: Nos. 10, 14, 39, 41, 42 to 51 [Madison]

October 14, Wed. 6:15 – 8:30 PM Designing a Legislature

Read: House: Nos. 52 to 61 [Madison and Hamilton]

Senate: Nos. 62 to 66 [Madison, Jay, Hamilton]

October 21, Wed. 6:15 - 8:30 PM Creating the Executive Branch

Read: Nos. 67-77 [Hamilton]

October 28, Wed. 6:15 - 8:30 PM The Role of the Judiciary

Read: Nos. 78 to 83 [Hamilton]

November 4, Wed. 6:15 – 8:30 PM The Anti-Federalist Arguments

Selected Readings of the Anti-Federalist Papers

Student Presentations: The Anti-Federalist Arguments and State Ratification Conventions

November 11, Wed. 6:15 – 8:30 PM

Read: Nos. 84-85 [Hamilton]

Student Presentations: The Anti-Federalist Arguments and State Ratification Conventions

November 18, Wed. 6:15 – 8:30 PM

Read: Richard Lubunski: *James Madison and The Struggle for the Bill of Rights*

November 25, Wed. [No class: Thanksgiving]

December 2, Wed. 6:15 – 8:30 PM

Read: Bernard Bailyn: “The Federalist Papers” & Conclusion