Eastern Illinois University  
New Course Proposal  
PLS 4943, American Political Thought

1. CATALOG DESCRIPTION  
A. Political Science 4943  
B. American Political Thought  
C. (3-0-3)  
D. Fall-Odd numbered years  
E. AMER POL THT  
F. Course Description: This course investigates the evolution of American political thought and examines the social and political ideologies that have shaped the American political system, including Puritanism, Populism, Progressivism, and Reform Liberalism. This course also studies the role of American political thought in the development of American politics and policy.  
G. Prerequisites: PLS 1153G or permission of the instructor.  
H. Fall 2007

2. STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND EVALUATION  
A. Students enrolled in this course will: 
   • Develop an understanding of the evolution of American Political Ideas  
   • Analyze American Political Thought  
   • Develop critical thinking and writing skills  
   • Demonstrate knowledge of how American Political Ideas translate into political strategies and public policy

B. Evaluation of Undergraduate Student performance in the course will be based on:  
   • Midterm Exam 30%  
   • Final Exam 30%  
   • Short Papers 40% One paper will be assigned for each section of the course (for a total of three). The student will choose a topic within that section and address a critical question in American Political Thought.

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<th>Midterm Exam</th>
<th>Final Exam</th>
<th>Short Papers</th>
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<td>Develop an understanding of the evolution of American Political Ideas</td>
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<td>Develop critical thinking and writing skills.</td>
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<td>Analyze and Critique American Political Ideas</td>
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<td>Demonstrate knowledge of And assess how American political ideas Translate into public policy</td>
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C. This course will not be a Technology Delivered course.

D. Graduate students enrolling in this course will have a more detailed and research oriented reading list and in lieu of the two exams, the students will write two research papers on a particular Ideological tradition in American Politics.

E. This course will be Writing Intensive; Exams will include essay questions and each student will be required to write three analytical papers on critical topics in American Political Thought.

3. Outline of the Course:
A. This course will meet 45 times during the semester (3 times a week). The outline of course topics is as follows:

**Reading Assignments**

**Week 1: Introduction**

*Political Ideas and a New Nation*

**Week 2: Religion and Politics**

*Religion, Freedom, and the New Nation*

**Weeks 3 & 4: New Visions of America: Revolution**

*The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution, and Defining a Nation*

**PAPER 1 Due**

**Weeks 5 & 6: America Evolving: Slavery and Modernization**

*Slavery, the Civil War, and the Revolution of Reconstruction*

**EXAM 1**

**Weeks 7 & 8: American Political Economy Considered**

*Capitalism, Populism, Progressivism*

**Weeks 9 & 10: American Political Economy Reconsidered**

*Socialism, Reform Liberalism, and Political Dissent*

**PAPER 2 Due**
Weeks 11 & 12: American Liberalism in the Twentieth Century

*Pre World War II Liberal Thought, Post War Redefinitions of Liberalism and Conservatism*

Weeks 13 & 14: Expanding the Scope of Liberalism

*Dissenting Voices and Expanding Political Participation*

Week 15: Modern Problems in American Politics and Course Review

**PAPER 3 Due**

**FINAL EXAM**

B. This course will not be a technology delivered course.

4. **RATIONALE**
   
   **A.** This course will expand the department’s offerings in Political Theory by offering students the opportunity to explore the political and philosophical foundations of American Government. This course can also supplement courses in American political behavior and political institutions by exploring the links between political ideas and public policy across a broad spectrum of American life.

   **B.** The new course would be appropriate for junior and senior majors and non-majors along with graduate students. Prerequisites: PLS 1153G or permission of the instructor. This course requires a foundation in American Government and knowledge of the Institutions, Practices, and Policies of American Politics, and thus PLS 1153G will be helpful to the potential student. This course will be listed as a 4000 level course because it will utilize critical analysis of original source material to explore the evolving role of political ideology in American Politics and American Public Policy; therefore upper class standing will be essential for comprehending the subject matter.

   **C.** This course will explore and analyze the legal, political, and social ideas that help frame American politics. This course analyzes these ideas from a political science perspective and although other university departments offer courses that cover some aspects of American political philosophy, Political Science 4943 is not similar to any existing course.

   **D.** This course allows Political Science majors to complete their requirements in the Political Theory area and serves as an upper level elective for both the political science major and minor. Graduate students may count this course as an elective to supplement their concentration and minor requirements.

5. **IMPLEMENTATION**
   
   **A.** Initially the course will be assigned to Dr. Kevin Anderson. Other qualified faculty may be assigned to teach the course in the future.

   **B.** No additional cost will be incurred by the students.
C. The class will use textbooks by Kenneth Dolbeare and Michael Cummings


6. COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER

A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course but may be accepted as a substitute; however, upper-division credit will not be awarded.

7. DATE APPROVED BY DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL October 19, 2005

8. DATE APPROVED BY COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE November 11, 2005

9. DATE APPROVED BY CAA January 12, 2006  CGS  January 17, 2006