This course is a seminar with emphasis both on a careful reading of the assigned works of Alexis de Tocqueville and the historical, political and intellectual worlds relevant to his life and thought. We will examine the origins of American democratic thought and practice as understood by Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* and George Wilson Pierson’s superb review of Tocqueville’s brief visit to America. These will be supplemented with occasional secondary readings which suggest the relevance of his analysis both for the history of political thought and for contemporary American democratic thought and action. In the second half of the course we will turn to Tocqueville’s assessment of France through his account of the events leading to the French Revolution in *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*.

A recurrent theme in Tocqueville’s work [and a primary focus of this course] is that of revolution. Tocqueville worried about the disastrous effects of revolution in France, brought about, he argued, by the excessive zeal of French intellectuals both in 1789 and in 1848 – but also the result of France’s particular social, cultural and historical circumstances. France was a highly centralized political regime. As such, it prohibited the sort of democratic “practice” that he came to understand as necessary to the initiation of democratic politics. In America Tocqueville found a very different sort of history, culture and society. Not only was it decentralized, thus affording the opportunity for ordinary people, more easily, to affect the course of their own lives, but it had a history that afforded it the luxury of experimenting with local government for over 100 years before the American democratic revolution. The comparison between the two revolutions and the two countries in the late 18th and early 19th centuries thus offers us an important perspective on the preconditions necessary, as Tocqueville understood them, for successful democratic revolution, while simultaneously affording us an opportunity to reexamine democratic theory and practice in contemporary America as well as in the many emerging democracies throughout the world at the end of the 20th century.

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance in seminar discussions, written responses to weekly review questions and a term project. Attendance in seminars is, therefore crucial. Students who miss more than two seminars without formal, written excuses, will put their grades in serious jeopardy. Students will be expected to write a seminar paper [12-15 pages] preceded by a summary statement, an outline, and a first draft. Final paper topics will be discussed as the semester progresses. Topics may include (1) an analysis of Tocqueville’s thought on particular issues [e.g. civil society, liberty, equality, authority, religion, revolution, American and/or French social and political institutions or (2) a comparison of Tocqueville’s thought with that of another European or American political thinker [e.g. Rousseau, Montesquieu, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson], or (3) an examination of democratic or revolutionary politics in another setting with particular attention to the Tocquevillian questions about the relationship between revolution and democracy raised in course readings and discussion.
LEARNING GOALS:
1. Expose students to the philosophical and practical problems of political organization, action, and governance.
2. Spur critical thinking about the nature of citizenship, rights, and duties.
3. A solid foundational understanding of the critical theoretical issues underlying political life: the individual and community; political obligation and civil disobedience; stability, revolution, and change; legitimacy and justice; and freedom and power.

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30am – 12 pm and by appointment Monday, Tuesday and Thursday in Hickman 506.
Phone: 932-9595
Email: bathory@rci.rutgers.edu

Assigned Readings: Available at the Rutgers Bookstore:

.............................................., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* ISBN: 0-385-09260-1
Selected Essays, on sakai

Introductions: Tocqueville and the Problem of Liberalism

January 21st

Introduction:
Assignment: xeroxed essay (“Liberalism Defined”)
Suggested supplemental reading:

Roger Boesche, *The Strange Liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville*
Tocqueville’s Itinerary: http://www.tocqueville.org/chap4b.htm

Part I: Tocqueville in America

January 28- Feb 4th: The Founding Spirit and America’s “Habits of the Heart”

Assignments: January 28th:
“’The Art and Science of Politics” (sakai)
*Democracy in America*, author’s intro, pp. 1-60
James Madison, *The Federalist*, Letter #10
George Wilson Pierson, *Tocqueville in America* pp. 3-84
Review Questions #1: #s 1-3 (General Disc + 1-6 (Democ in Amer for Jan 28th) Sakai Drop Box!)
Feb. 4th:
Democracy in America, pp. 61 – 98
Pierson, pp. 85 – 132
James Madison, Federalist #10 (sakai)

Review Questions #1 (cont’d) Democracy in Amer 7-12 (Drop Box)
Madison Review Questions as per sakai, due Feb 6th (Sakai Drop Box)

February 11th: The Arts of Association: Limiting the Excesses of American Democracy
Assignments:

Democracy in America, pp. 189-195, 231-315
Pierson, pp. 132-166
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/home.html

Review Questions #2 (Sakai Drop Box)

February 18th: The Three Races in America
Assignments: Democracy in America, pp. 316-413
Pierson, pp. 229-313; 511-524; 593-601
Alvin Tillery, “Tocqueville as Critical Race Theorist” (sakai_
Paul Krugman, For Richer (sakai)

Review Questions #3 Sakai Drop Box

February 25th: From Religious Belief to “Self-interest rightly understood”
Assignments:

Democracy in America, pp. 287 – 301; 431-454; 503-530; 542-550
Pierson, pp. 417-488
Strout and Bathory, Tocqueville on Religion (sakai)

Review Questions #4 (Sakai Drop Box)

March 4th – March 11th: Democratic Despotism and the Future of Democracy
Assignments: March 6th:
Democracy in America, pp 616-645
Pierson, pp. 543-569; 656-662; 671-678; 718-777

March 13th: Democracy in America, pp. 667-705

McWilliams, “Democracy and the Citizen.” (sakai)
Edward Rhodes: “Onward Liberal Soldiers” (sakai)

Review Questions #5 (sakai Drop Box)

March 25th: Research Paper Topic and Outline Due!

March 25th: I: Democracy in America: The Message and the Method
II: Tocqueville in Transition: America and France
Assignments: Pierson, 656-662, 671-678, 718-777
Michael Sandel, “America’s Search for a New Public Philosophy” (sakai)
Part II: Tocqueville and France

April 1st
The Old Regime Intro: “Democratic Revolution and the 21st Century”
Assignments: Tocqueville: The Old Regime Forward + pp. 1-60
Kaplan: “Was Democracy Only a Moment?” (sakai)
Review Questions #1 Old Regime (Sakai Drop Box)

April 8th
Assignments: Tocqueville: The Old Regime, pp. 60 - 137

April 15th: Politics, Economics and the Old Regime
Assignments: George Soros essays (sakai)
Assignment: The Old Regime and the French Revolution, Forward and pp. 138-211
Pierson, pp. 681-699
Review Questions #2 Old Regime (Sakai Drop Box)

April 22nd: First Draft of Research Paper Due!

April 22nd – May 1st: Paper Presentations in class

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Students are expected to follow University Academic Integrity Regulations. Regulations may be found at the following website: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/