

Political Studies Program, Summer 2013
THE FEDERALIST
Instructor: Ralph Lerner
Washington, D.C.

The series of newspaper essays collectively known as *The Federalist* are rightly regarded as classics of American political thought. Standing alone, however, they are only one half of a notable conversation. We will try to uncover the differing presuppositions, hopes, and fears of those who debated whether to replace the existing Articles of Confederation with the proposed Constitution of the United States.

Tuesday, July 9, 2013, 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

A New Kind of Republic

Readings:

- *Federalist*, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 9, 14, 37
- Herbert Storing, *The Anti-Federalist Papers*, Introduction
- *Anti-Federalist*, Federal Farmer 1 (2.8.1–13), 5 (2.8.59–66), 6 (2.8.71–73)
- *Anti-Federalist*, Agrippa 4 (4.6.16–17)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the competing visions of public happiness that are implicit in these debates over America's political organization?
2. How might one account for there still being disagreement, even after securing independence from Britain, whether the thirteen colonies—now states—ought to be a single nation?

Wednesday, July 10, 2013, 9:00 am to Noon

Federal vs. Consolidated Government

Readings:

- *Federalist*, Nos. 15, 23, 39
- *Anti-Federalist*, Federal Farmer 16 (2.8.196–198), 17 (2.8.204–213)
- *Anti-Federalist*, Brutus 1 (2.9.10–21)
- *Anti-Federalist*, Pennsylvania Minority (3.11.16–30)

Discussion Questions:

1. Are the anxieties voiced by those who criticized the proposed constitution better understood as expressions of parochialism, pessimism about human nature, realism, or something else?
2. Are the supporters of the proposed constitution excessive in trusting that the structures built into its framework will suffice to prevent tyrannical rule, be it of the government or of the governed?

Thursday, July 11, 2013, 9:00 am to Noon

Representation

Readings:

- *Federalist*, Nos. 10, 35, 56
- *Anti-Federalist*, Federal Farmer 7 (2.8.93–100)
- *Anti-Federalist*, Brutus 3 (2.9.41–44), 4 (2.9.45–49)
- *Anti-Federalist*, Melancton Smith (6.12.8–25)

Discussion Questions:

1. Can a system of representation ever be and remain representative? And what exactly ought to *be* represented?
2. Are there better and worse ways of enlisting the talents of an elite in political life? Consider some alternatives.

Friday, July 12, 2013, 9:00 am to Noon

Ambition and Its Discontents

Readings:

- *Federalist*, Nos. 49, 51, 62, 70, 72
- *Anti-Federalist*, Impartial Examiner 1 (5.14.13–16)

Discussion Questions:

1. How might one channel ambition without driving it out of politics altogether?
2. Does the debate over the proposed constitution presume too much about the character of the American public both at the time and in the future?