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Professor Fears is the author of more than seventy articles and reviews on ancient history, the history of liberty, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome, The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology, The Theology of Victory at Rome, and The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology. He has published a three-volume edition of Selected Writings of Lord Acton, the great British historian of liberty. In addition, Professor Fears’s comments on the lessons of history have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals in the United States and abroad.

On fifteen occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, he was chosen as the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year.
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A History of Freedom

Scope:

Our course explores the history of freedom, from the birth of the idea of liberty in classical Greece to our own day. Our course rests upon the premise that ideas change history. No idea in the history of the world has been more influential than freedom. Indeed, it can be argued that freedom is the definitive idea of our civilization, and the march towards freedom the central theme of our history. Our course deals with the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of freedom. We also deal with the moral dimension of freedom, and we ask a question as old as classical Greece and as current as today’s newscasts: can we separate liberty, religion and morality, and is there a dichotomy between public and private morality in a free society?

Our course recognizes the many definitions that have been given to the words freedom and liberty. However, our course proceeds with a two-fold working definition. Liberty is freedom under the law: the freedom of a People to govern itself under laws it gives to itself. Complementing this political freedom is the freedom of the individual: the liberty of the individual to live as he or she chooses as long as that individual does not infringe upon the rights of another individual. Finally, our working definition of freedom maintains that responsibility is the other side of liberty and that for every right there is a corresponding duty.

Our course also rests on the premise that history is made by great individuals and great events, not by anonymous social and economic forces. Accordingly, we center our course around six seminal epochs in the history of liberty and the great individuals and events that shaped them: Greece, Rome, Christianity, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, World War II, and the last decades of the twentieth century.

Lectures One--Six focus on the birth of freedom in Greece and the history of the world’s first democracy, Athens. Our first lecture sets the stage by defining the Greek idea of liberty within the framework of the struggle against the absolutism of the Persian king and his vast empire. Lectures Two--Four describe the institutions and values of the Athenian democracy and the intellectual revolution brought about by this first government “of the People, by the People, and for the People.” Lecture Five examines the trial and execution of Socrates as a test case in the values of the Athenian democracy. Lecture Six concludes our section on Greece with a discussion of the new political and intellectual world brought about by the achievements of Alexander the Great.

Lectures Seven--Eleven trace the history of freedom at Rome. For the Founders of America, the history of Rome was filled with lessons for the citizens of our new Republic. Lecture Seven describes the balanced constitution of the Roman republic, which served the Founders as a model for our own Constitution. Lecture Eight asks why the Romans, at the height of military power and material affluence, lost their republican liberty and accepted the military dictatorship of the Caesars. Lectures Nine and Ten evaluate the contribution made to the history of freedom by the Roman Empire of the Caesars. Lecture Eleven discusses the reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the new forms of liberty that arose out of its ruins.

Lectures Twelve--Seventeen are devoted to the role of Christianity in the history of freedom. Lecture Twelve, on Jesus, places his life and mission within the framework of the political and religious currents of the Roman Empire. Lecture Thirteen compares Jesus and Socrates and asks why the two greatest teachers in history were tried and put to death on trumped-up charges. Lecture Fourteen on Paul explores liberation as a central theme in the message of early Christianity. Lecture Fifteen analyzes the contribution of the institutional church to ideas and institutions of freedom. Martin Luther and the new forces of freedom unleashed by the Protestant Reformation are the subject of Lecture Sixteen. Our section on freedom and Christianity concludes with the intellectual and political opposition offered to freedom by the ideas of Machiavelli and that of the divine right of kings.

Herman Melville wrote, “we Americans are a chosen people, who bear the ark of the liberties of the world.” Our course believes that the United States, its foundation and history, is the most important single event in the history of freedom. Accordingly, we devote eleven lectures to this theme. Lectures Eighteen--Twenty discuss the ideas and events that led up to the American Revolution. Lectures Twenty-One and Twenty-Two analyze the Declaration of Independence, its sources, and its meaning. The United States Constitution is the subject of Lectures Twenty-Three—Twenty-Five. Lecture Twenty-Three describes the ideas, personalities, and events that shaped the
Constitutional Convention of 1787. Lectures Twenty-Four and Twenty-Five analyze the ideas and institutions of liberty embodied in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Founders and their Constitution did not resolve two great questions: slavery, and whether a citizen’s ultimate loyalty lay with his state or with the United States. Lectures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven discuss the American Civil War as the great struggle that resolved these issues. The focus is on Robert E. Lee and Abraham Lincoln as paradigms of the conflicting ideas of liberty over which the Civil War was fought. Lecture Twenty-Eight presents Franklin Roosevelt—as his social, economic, and political program—as the fulfillment of Abraham Lincoln’s ideal of government “of the People, by the People, and for the People.”

The twentieth century witnessed unprecedented challenges to freedom. Lectures Twenty-Nine—Thirty-Three focus on World War II as a decisive moment in the history of freedom, a struggle between good and evil as embodied in Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler and the traditions each represented. The section begins with the French Revolution and its ambiguous legacy to the history of freedom. Lectures Thirty and Thirty-One are devoted the liberal tradition and Winston Churchill. Lectures Thirty-Two and Thirty-Three explore the illiberal tradition and Adolf Hitler.

Our final three lectures look at the Cold War and the extraordinary march towards freedom witnessed by the last decade of the twentieth century. America as the bastion of liberty is the central figure in these concluding lectures. It was American Presidents from Truman to Reagan who understood and fought Communism and the Soviet system as archetypal enemies of true liberty. Lecture Thirty-Five examines the relationship between liberty and civil disobedience in the ideals and actions of Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our last lecture summarizes our course and looks into the future. Americans entered the twenty-first century convinced that we are the only superpower and that the innovations of science, technology, and industry have opened a new era of individual liberty, prosperity, and peace. It should be remembered that Europeans entered the twentieth century under similar delusions. This course of lectures ends on a cautionary note, one that was already voiced in the Athenian democracy of the fifth century BC. Excessive individualism is not liberty but rather license. There can ultimately be no separation between public and private morality. A democratic society can survive only if its citizens have a shared set of moral and political values. Excessive prosperity can lead to that public apathy about politics which is the death knell of liberty. In the end, the true test of a free society is its ability to produce leaders of ability, vision, and moral character.
Lecture One

The Birth of Freedom

Scope: The course of lectures opens by placing the viewer/listener on the field of Marathon, September 21, 490 B.C. The Battle of Marathon was the seminal event in the history of freedom. 9,000 citizen-soldiers of Athens defeated the far larger, far better equipped army of the Persian king Darius and thwarted his attempt to subjugate Greece. The battle highlights dramatically the contrast between the political liberty of the Greek city-states and the absolutism of the monarchies of the ancient Near East. The Egyptian language did not have a word for “liberty.” In Mesopotamia and Persia, “freedom” existed only in the sense of liberties granted by an absolute ruler to his subjects. It was the Greeks who discovered the concept of political and personal liberty, and no civilization untouched by the Greeks has ever developed such freedom. The lecture concludes with definitions of liberty and with a survey of the central themes of our course.

Outline

I. The Battle of Marathon: September 21, 490 B.C.
   A. Background.
      1. The Persian king Darius intended to subjugate the Greek mainland as part of his consolidation and expansion of the Persian Empire.
      2. In 498, the Athenians had sent a small force to aid the Greek cities of Asia Minor in their revolt against King Darius.
      3. The attack on Athens eight years later was to punish Athens and to terrorize the remaining cities of the Greek mainland into subjugation.
   B. Armies.
      1. The Persian army numbered 26,000 veteran troops. It had dominance of the sea. It had strong cavalry forces, including heavily armored horses and riders, and excellent archers. It was experienced and highly successful in defeating Greek armies comparable to that of Athens. The Persians were commanded by two of the king’s best generals, Datis and Artaphernes.
      2. Nine thousand Athenian citizen-soldiers were aided by one thousand citizen-soldiers from the nearby city-state of Plataea. The Greek force consisted entirely of heavily armed infantrymen (hoplites) under the command of the Athenian general Miltiades.
   C. By superior tactics and personal courage, the Athenians routed the Persian army and foiled its subsequent attempt at a surprise capture of Athens.
   D. Pheidippides ran twenty-six miles back to Athens from Marathon with news of the victory.

II. The Persian Wars.
   A. Marathon did not mark the end of Persian attempts to conquer Greece. In 480, Darius’s son, King Xerxes, personally led a vastly larger expedition to conquer Greece.
   B. The Persian empire of Darius and Xerxes.
      1. Its geographical extent was roughly equal to the continental United States.
      2. It was well organized and administered by a sophisticated bureaucracy and excellent communications infrastructure.
      3. It had enormous financial resources.
      4. The Persian empire was a highly successful political structure. It was multicultural, diverse, and tolerant. It was the first government in history that ruled successfully over a large number of distinct ethnic groups and religions and assured to all the rights and privileges, as well as the responsibilities, of membership in a great imperial nation.
      5. The Persian king was absolute master, supreme general, judge, and administrator. He was the source of law. All members of the empire, from the lowliest peasant to the king’s second-in-command or grand vizier, regarded themselves as “the slaves of the king.”
   C. Greece.
1. The geographical extent of classical Greece was roughly equal to that of New York State.
2. It was divided into hundreds of fiercely independent city-states. A city-state (polis) consisted of a city (generally walled) and surrounding territory. The state of Rhode Island is larger in area than almost any classical Greek city-state.
3. Only twenty-nine Greek city-states joined with Athens and Sparta to resist the attempted conquest by King Xerxes in 480 B.C.
4. Despite the disunity of the Greeks and the overwhelming military and financial superiority of Xerxes, the Greek alliance defeated the Persian king in the great naval and land battles of Salamis (480 B.C.), Plataea (479 B.C.), and Mycale (479 B.C.).

III. The significance of the Persian Wars for the history of freedom.
A. The defeat marked the end of Persian attempts to conquer Greece and the beginning of that empire’s decline.
B. Victory meant that the Greeks were free to develop those political and cultural achievements that for later generations would characterize Western civilization: political liberty and freedom of thought, speech, and action. In these terms, the nineteenth-century British political thinker James Mill would declare that the Battle of Marathon was more important to English history than the Battle of Hastings.
C. The Greeks attributed their victory over the Persians to two factors.
   1. The Greeks were free men fighting the slaves of a despot.
   2. The Persians committed the sin of hybris.
D. Hybris is the correct transliteration, not hubris.
   1. Hybris is best defined as outrageous arrogance. Hybris is the abuse of power, especially the abuse of power over the weak and innocent. It is moral, as well as physical, outrage.
   2. In Athenian law, hybris was the term for rape. Hybris can be committed toward the gods, as well as toward men.
E. Aeschylus, the great playwright of the Athenian democracy, was an important figure in coalescing the ideas behind this interpretation of the Greek victory over Persia.
   1. Aeschylus fought at Marathon.
   2. In 472, he produced his tragedy the Persians.
F. According to Aeschylus, the Greeks won because they were free and because Xerxes committed hybris. In the Persians, Aeschylus also warned the Athenians to avoid the crime of hybris, which had destroyed Xerxes.
G. Herodotus.
   1. The Persian Wars were the subject of the first great work of historical writing, the Histories of Herodotus.
   2. Herodotus was a citizen of the Greek city of Halicarnassus in Asia Minor, under Persian rule.
   3. Herodotus came to Athens and, in 445/444 B.C., recited his history to an Athenian audience. So delighted were the Athenians that they rewarded Herodotus with an enormous monetary grant of ten talents. One talent was a sum large enough to build a warship.
   4. Herodotus portrayed the Persian Wars as the victory of freedom over tyranny and the divine punishment of hybris.

IV. Definitions of freedom and liberty.
A. The English language reflects the history of England; it is a mixed language, derived both from Germanic and French (Latin) roots. As it does with many other concepts, English uses a Latin-derived word, liberty (libertas), and a Germanic-derived word, freedom (Freiheit), to express our concept.
B. It is possible to distinguish in meaning between liberty and freedom.
   1. Freedom may have more a connotation of individual freedom and of emancipation.
   2. Liberty has more the sense of political liberty. Such distinctions are largely artificial in contemporary English, and our lectures will use the two words synonymously.
C. Lord Acton, the nineteenth-century British historian of liberty, said that more definitions had been attached to freedom and liberty than Arabic had words for camel. From St. Paul to George Orwell, liberty has been
defined as slavery. Our course will use a two-fold definition of freedom, one that was already accepted in the Athenian democracy of the fifth century B.C. and in Aristotle’s *Politics*.

D. Liberty is political liberty, the national independence and autonomy of a people to govern itself under laws it gives to itself.

E. Liberty is individual liberty, the freedom of the individual to live as he or she chooses as long as he or she does not infringe on the freedom of another individual.

F. The Greeks distinguished such ordered liberty, liberty under law, from the dissolute, unchecked license that “barbarians” like the Scythians called freedom.

G. Liberty is the discovery of the Greeks.

1. Freedom as we understand it did not exist in the great civilizations of Egypt and the Near East that preceded the Greeks.

2. The ancient Egyptian language did not have a word for liberty.

3. In Mesopotamia, the word for freedom (Sumerian *ama-gi*) means “liberties” granted by an all-powerful king to his subjects; that is, liberties that are arbitrarily granted and can be arbitrarily taken away.

V. Our course: *A History of Freedom*.

A. The focus of our course is on the ideas and institutions of freedom.

B. Our course rests on the conviction that history is made by great individuals, great ideas, and great events—not by anonymous social and economic forces.

C. Hence, we focus on seminal individuals, ideas, and epochs in the history of freedom:

1. Athenian democracy
2. Alexander the Great
3. Rome
4. Christianity
5. Renaissance and Reformation
6. The Anglo-American tradition of liberty
7. The founding of the United States and the history of liberty in America
8. The challenge to liberty in the twentieth century: the liberal tradition of freedom represented by Lincoln and Churchill versus the illiberal tradition of despotism embodied in Hitler and Stalin.

D. The course concludes with a consideration of the progress and challenges to liberty in our own day.

Essential Reading:

Aeschylus, *Persians*.

Herodotus, Books VI–IX.

Supplementary Reading:

Green, *Greco-Persian Wars*.


Questions to Consider

1. How would you define freedom?

2. Why did the Greeks develop the idea of freedom?
Lecture Two
Athenian Democracy

Scope: The wars against Persia (490, 480/79 B.C.) propelled Athens to a position of leadership in the Greek world and led the Athenians to develop history’s first true democracy. Under the leadership of the aristocratic statesman Pericles (461-429 B.C.), the Athenians became the first government to be based upon the ideal of the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens. The Assembly of all citizens was absolute sovereign; and the goal of the Athenian democracy was the complete equality of all citizens and the involvement of all citizens in all aspects of government. Trial by jury, a citizen army, freedom of speech, and other individual rights and responsibilities were fundamental to Athenian democracy and its legacy to the history of freedom. Pericles ranks with Lincoln and Churchill as one of the three greatest democratic statesmen in history. As did Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address, Pericles in his Funeral Oration defined the ideals and values of his countrymen and their democracy:

Outline

I. Why the Greeks discovered liberty.
   A. The idea of freedom did not arise in Greece because of geographical conditions (mountainous terrain creates small, independent city-states) or social conditions (slavery).
      1. It arose because of the great challenge posed by the threat of Persian conquest.
      2. Especially at Athens, the struggle against Persia coalesced inchoate ideas about freedom into a clear conception, first of political, then of individual, liberty under democracy.
   B. We insist that ideas are not necessarily the product of social and economic forces. Ideas themselves can shape history.
   C. We also insist on the uniqueness of historical experiences: the Hebrews and monotheism; the Athenians and democratic liberty.

II. The consequences of the Persian Wars for the Athenian democracy.
   A. Athens and Sparta led the Greek alliance to victory over Xerxes.
   B. After the defeat of Persia, Sparta sank back into isolationism.
   C. By 462, the Athenians had achieved this goal and transformed this confederation into an Athenian empire, dominated by Athens and paying large sums of tribute to the Athenians.

III. The Athenian empire consisted of 245 Greek city-states on the coast of Asia Minor, the coast of the Black Sea, the northeastern area of Greece, and the islands of the Aegean Sea.
   A. The empire was ruled by the Athenians for the benefit of the Athenians. The subject cities or “allies” regarded the empire as a tyranny, and the Athenians agreed with this assessment.
   B. The empire itself was unprecedented; it was a thalassocracy, a sea-borne empire, made possible by technological innovations in ship craft. The *trireme*, or warship, with three banks of oars was the trident missile of classical Greece, the supreme offensive weapon of its day.
   C. Dominance of the sea made the Athenian empire possible.
   D. The most intimate nexus existed between the democracy and imperialism at Athens. Pericles, the champion of radical democracy, was the foremost imperialist at Athens.
   E. Victory over Persia and the creation of an Athenian empire instilled enormous self-confidence in the ordinary Athenian citizen.
   F. Tribute from the empire enabled the Athenians to provide pay for those holding public office, thereby enabling ordinary citizens to participate in the government in unprecedented numbers.

IV. Pericles and the Athenian democracy.
   A. The Athenian democracy that won the Persian Wars was a balanced democracy.
1. The sovereign will of the people was checked by a supreme court (Areopagus) composed of ex-magistrates and, thus, indirectly elected by the people.

2. The Areopagus could veto or declare unconstitutional a law passed by the Assembly of all Athenian citizens.

B. In 462–461 B.C., a series of political reforms abolished the power of the Areopagus.

C. The leader of this reform was Pericles, who would guide the Athenian democracy from 461 until his death in 429 B.C.

D. Pericles.

1. He was from a wealthy, aristocratic family.
2. His fellow citizens admired him for his honesty and complete devotion to public service.
3. He was an intellectual and a lover of art and deeply engaged in the most innovative intellectual currents of his day.
4. He led a free people by his moral authority, rather than by the power inherent in any political office he held.

V. The institutions of the Athenian democracy.

A. From the reforms of Pericles until its effective end in 322 B.C., the Athenian democracy was a radical democracy: the Assembly of all Athenian citizens was absolute sovereign with no check on its will.

B. The Athenian democracy was, in its most complete sense, “government of the People, by the People, and for the People.”

C. Contrasts between Athenian and American democracy.

1. The Athenian democracy was not a representative government. All major decisions were made by the Assembly (Ekklesia), consisting of all adult male Athenian citizens.
2. The Athenian democracy rested in the belief that any citizen was capable of handling any governmental tasks.
3. Unlike our democracy, the Athenian government was not government by elected professional politicians or bureaucratic experts. Most governmental offices were filled by random allotment. The citizen stuck his hand in a jar of beans and if he pulled out the right color bean, the job was his for a year.
4. In contrast to our political apathy, the goal of the Athenian democracy was to engage as many citizens as possible in the process of government. Thus, most governmental tasks were handled by committees, generally of ten.
5. Pay for office enabled as many citizens as possible to serve.
6. There were strict term limits of one year for public office.
7. Pay, allotment, term limits, and committees were the foundation of the Athenian democracy.

D. Rights and duties of Athenian citizens.

1. The individual Athenian citizen possessed guaranteed rights: freedom of speech, freedom of expression, the right to trial by jury, and the right to bear arms.
2. Freedom of religion was not a right enjoyed by Athenians. To be an Athenian citizen was to worship the gods that protected Athens.
3. Service on juries was a basic duty of Athenian citizens. To engage as many citizens as possible, juries generally had 501 members, and several juries would be in session on one day.
4. The Athenian army was a citizen army. Military service was essential to citizenship. That is the basic reason that women were not allowed to vote or to enjoy other specific rights of citizenship at Athens.

VI. Freedom and the Athenian democracy: types of liberty.

A. National liberty: the freedom of the Athenian people from foreign domination.
B. Political liberty: the freedom of the Athenians to govern themselves under laws they give to themselves.
C. Equal liberty: freedom defined as the equality of all citizens.
D. Individual liberty: the right of the Athenian to live as he chooses.
E. Economic freedom: equality of opportunity based on a free market economy.
VII. Pericles ranks with Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill as one of the three democratic statesmen in history.

A. We must distinguish a statesman from a politician.

B. Unlike a politician, a statesman must possess four essential characteristics:
   1. A bedrock of principles
   2. A moral compass
   3. A vision
   4. The ability to build a consensus to achieve that vision.

VIII. The Funeral Oration of Pericles is his great statement of his own principles and the values of the Athenian democracy.

A. It was delivered in the winter of 431/30 to commemorate the Athenians who died in the first year of the great war with Sparta (Peloponnesian War). The Funeral Oration was recorded by the historian Thucydides.

B. The purpose of the Funeral Oration was to build a consensus to achieve Pericles’s vision of making Athens the only superpower in the Greek world. The Funeral Oration of Pericles has been compared with Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address as a preeminent statement of the values of democratic government.

IX. The values of the Athenian democracy.

A. The Athenian democracy embodied government of the People, by the People, and for the People, including:
   1. A unique form of government
   2. A model for the world
   3. Liberty under the law
   4. Equality before the law
   5. Respect for laws, written and unwritten.

B. The Athenian democracy was tolerant.
   1. In Athens, you are free to live as you choose.
   2. If we do not like your lifestyle, we do not discriminate against you; we do not even give you sour looks.

C. The democracy offered economic opportunity, including:
   1. Free market economy
   2. Prosperity
   3. The right to enjoy the good life
   4. The idea that poverty is no disgrace; the only disgrace is in not trying to get rich.

D. Political involvement.
   1. We believe it is our duty to be involved in politics. We do not say that the politically apathetic person is minding his own business. We say that he has no business at all being in Athens.
   2. We are patriotic for the best of reasons; our country is worthy of our love.
   3. Our policies are based on reason.
   4. We are as brave and militarily proficient as the Spartans without the unrelieved military training and brainwashing that marks the lives of the Spartans.

E. Foreign policy.
   1. We use our power for the benefits of other nations, weaker and less fortunate than us.
   2. We do not look for war, but we do not run and hide from aggressors.

F. We are the model for Greece. The individual Athenian is absolute master of himself and achieves this mastery with exceptional versatility and grace.

G. Later ages will stand in awe of the achievements of the Athenians.

H. This was the nation for which these men died. Let us prove ourselves worthy of carrying on the task they have thus far so nobly advanced.

I. Attitude toward female Athenians. As for the women, try not to be inferior to what your nature makes you and remember that a woman’s greatest virtue is not to be talked about, whether for good or ill.
X. Judging the Athenian democracy.

A. Some of the finest minds of antiquity—Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero—judged the Athenian democracy to have been a failed form of government.
   1. It was government by the mob, in which the poor exploited the rich, a government without respect for individual rights or property. Such Founders of the United States as John Adams also held this view.
   2. Historians of our own day condemn the Athenian democracy for the denial of rights to women and for slavery.

B. Democracy at Athens was compatible with slavery and the denial of rights to women. To the Athenian, an essential component of liberty was the freedom to dominate others—foreigners, slaves, and women.

C. The Athenian democracy was exclusive. Only those whose grandparents had been born Athenian citizens could be citizens.

D. In judging the Athenian democracy, we should remember that when our own country was formed, slavery was protected by our Constitution, and women did not have the right to vote.
   1. Slavery ended in the United States only in 1865. Women did not receive the right to vote at the national level until 1920.
   2. Democracy in our country has been compatible with immigration quotas and with the brutal domination of Native Americans.

Essential Reading:
Aristotle, Athenian Constitution.
Plutarch, Life of Pericles.
Thucydides, Funeral Oration, Book II, Chapters 34–46, but the whole of Thucydides’s The Peloponnesian War can be read with much profit.

Supplementary Reading:
Zimmern, Greek Commonwealth.
Roberts, Athens on Trial.
Ober and Hedrick, Demokratia.

Questions to Consider:
1. Would you want an Athenian-style democracy in the United States today?
2. Compare the values of the Athenian democracy with the values of the American democracy.
Lecture Three
Athens: Freedom and Cultural Creativity

Scope: The freedom of the Athenian democracy brought about an intellectual revolution that rivaled the scientific and technological revolution of our own day. The political and economic freedom of Athens attracted to it the finest minds of the Greek world. The goal of the Athenian citizens was to educate themselves for the awesome responsibilities of self-government. Out of that desire arose the concept of the liberal arts as an education suited to a free citizen. The Athenian democracy developed the study of history, the scientific study of medicine, philosophy, drama, and rhetoric and fostered canons of art and architecture that would forever define the ideal of “classical.”

Outline

I. Freedom and democracy in fifth-century Athens unleashed an intellectual ferment comparable to the scientific and technological revolution of our own day.

A. The finest minds of the age were attracted to Athens by freedom of thought and speech in the Athenian democracy and by the prosperity and equality of opportunity created by its free market economy.

B. These intellectual figures or experts were called Sophists (wise men). They were the fifth-century equivalents of today’s professors. They earned salaries for teaching, particularly to the young men of Athens. A year of study under the more famous Sophists was roughly as expensive as a year’s tuition today at Harvard University.

C. Famous Sophists included Protagoras, Hippias, and Gorgias.

D. Such instruction was deemed to be eminently practical. Like today’s college degree, study with a Sophist was thought to be the key to success in life.

E. The most highly prized skill taught by the Sophist was rhetoric, the art of speaking well. Rhetoric, the science of persuasion, was the means to achieve political leadership.

F. Great oratory, the Greeks and Romans believed, flourishes only in a truly free society. As in the Athenian democracy, free men must be persuaded by articulately presented, cogent arguments. By contrast, the slogans of advertising are the hallmarks of despotism.

G. In the tolerant atmosphere of the Athenian democracy, the Sophists challenged all accepted political and moral values.

H. The focus of the Sophist’s intellectual curiosity was human, not divine. Protagoras said, “man is the measure of all things. As to the gods, I do not know whether they exist.”

I. Pericles was a close friend of one of the most famous Sophists, Anaxagoras, who taught that human reason was the most powerful force in the world.

J. The arguments served at the popular level to create a dichotomy between public and private morality. The idea took root among the Athenian citizens that “might makes right,” and this idea was put into practice by the policies of the Athenian democracy. The idea is conveyed forcefully by the historian Thucydides, himself a Sophist, in his Melian Dialogue.

II. This intellectual revolution was consciously fostered and paid for by the Athenian citizens. The Athenians understood the awesome responsibilities of self-government. They sought to educate themselves for freedom. In the process, the liberal arts were born in Athens of the fifth century B.C.

A. Aristotle defines the liberal arts as an education suited to free citizens. These are the humanities, for they focus on what is human:
   1. Rhetoric: the speeches of Pericles, as recorded by Thucydides, are the greatest example of oratory used to educate the citizens
   2. History: the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides
   3. Philosophy: Socrates
   4. Drama: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.
B. The intellectual ferment created by freedom at Athens also played a critical role in the development of medicine as the scientific study of the human body. This movement is associated with the name of Hippocrates. The Athenian democracy developed the idea that every citizen had the right to the best possible medical care.

III. Art and architecture were shaped by the intellectual revolution and by the demand of the Athenian citizens to be educated for freedom.
   A. The fifth century saw great works of art and architecture throughout the Greek world, but Athens was the center.
   B. The art and architecture of classical Greece expressed the ideal of man as the measure of all things.
      1. Spear Bearer (Doryphorus) of Polyclitus: canon of human bodily proportions.
      2. The temple of the Virgin Goddess Athena (Parthenon): human reason as the measure of all things. The Greeks took the monumental structures of Egypt and reduced them to a comprehensible size.
      3. The great buildings in the sacred area of Athens (Acropolis) were the conscious expression of the pride of the Athenians in their democracy and their empire.
   C. The Acropolis also expressed the belief of the Athenians that no society can long endure without a common set of shared moral and political values. To inculcate these values was the purpose of dramatic performances at Athens.

Essential Reading:
Thucydides, Book V, chapters 84–106.
Plato, Gorgias.

Questions to Consider:
1. Is democracy responsible for the technological and scientific revolution of our own day?
2. One of the key issues debated by the Sophists was whether absolute moral standards exist. Is morality dictated by circumstances, or are some things always right or wrong? Where do you stand on this question?
Lecture Four
Athenian Tragedy: Education for Freedom

Scope: Tragedy was the characteristic cultural statement of the Athenian democracy, and the great tragedians – Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides – are coterminous with the great age of the Athenian democracy in the fifth century B.C. It was part of an Athenian citizen’s civic duty to attend these dramatic performances. Although set in the distant past, the tragedies served as a common forum for the discussion and debate of the most profound political and moral issues of the day. Sophocles’s Antigone, Oedipus the King, and Oedipus at Colonus are fundamental documents in the history of freedom, exploring such enduring questions as personal versus public morality, natural law, and the freedom of conscience.

Outline

I. Dramatic performances of tragedy and comedy were central features of the Athenian democracy.
   A. These performances were religious festivals, dedicated to the gods, especially Dionysus.
   B. Attendance at these performances was part of the duties of a citizen.
   C. The performances were conscious attempts by the Athenian citizens to provide a common forum for consideration of critical issues of the day.

II. The dramatic performances called tragedies are the characteristic cultural statement of the Athenian democracy.
   A. The great age of tragedy and its greatest playwrights are exactly coterminous with the great day of the Athenian democracy: from the Persians of Aeschylus (472 B.C.) to the Bacchae of Euripides (405 B.C.) and the Oedipus at Colonus of Sophocles (401 B.C.).
   B. Aristotle’s definition of tragedy is in his work on Poetics.
      1. Tragedy is the imitation of an action, great in magnitude, noble, and complete.
      2. Tragedies were performed, not narrated.
      3. They were performed in noble language and music.
      4. They aroused in the audience feelings of fear and pity, thereby achieving a purging (catharsis) of those emotions.
      5. Except for the Persians, tragedies concerned mythological, not historical, events.
   C. For Aristotle and the Athenian audience, a tragedy is a dramatic performance that portrays the utter downfall of a great and noble figure, such as Oedipus of Thebes.
      1. The tragic hero’s ruin is brought by an action he or she takes. The action may be well intended, but it misses the mark (in Aristotle’s term, harmatia).
      2. The consequences not only destroy the hero but, frequently, innocent victims as well.

III. For Aristotle, Oedipus the King by Sophocles was the perfect tragedy.
   A. Sophocles produced three tragedies centering on the story of Oedipus: Antigone (442 B.C.), Oedipus the King (429 B.C.) and Oedipus at Colonus (401 B.C.).
   B. In Oedipus the King, the protagonist learns that he has killed his father and slept with his mother. The play asks whether there are certain things that man is not meant to know in the first place.
   C. Antigone is not only a great play in its own right but also a fundamental document in the history of freedom. It poses questions that continue to concern every thoughtful citizen of a democracy:
      1. Does a dichotomy exist between public and private morality? Antigone says no.
      2. Does an absolute morality exist; are some things always right in all times, in all places, in all circumstances? Antigone says yes.
      3. What would be examples of such absolute rights or wrongs? For Antigone, one example is piety, defined here as the obligation to honor her brother with the proper funeral rights required by the gods.
      5. What is conscience? For Antigone, it is the inner voice that is god speaking to the individual.
6. When is the individual justified in following his or her own conscience in defiance of the will of the majority or the laws of the state? When the individual believes that the laws of man contravene the laws of god.

7. How can the individual know that he or she is right in taking such actions? He cannot. He can only act and take responsibility for his actions.

D. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus has assumed responsibility for his actions. In the end, he finds salvation through wisdom.

**Essential Reading:**
Sophocles, *The Theban Plays* (*Oedipus the King, Antigone, Oedipus at Colonus*).
Aristotle, *Poetics*.

**Supplementary Reading:**
Meier, *Greek Tragedy*.

**Questions to Consider:**
1. Who is the tragic hero (heroine) of *Antigone*, Creon or Antigone?
2. If tragedy is the characteristic cultural statement of the Athenian democracy, would you say that situation comedies like “Seinfeld” are the characteristic cultural statements of the American democracy?
Lecture Five
Socrates on Trial

Scope: Posterity has condemned the Athenian democracy for its conduct and defeat in the Peloponnesian War. Even more influential in that condemnation has been the trial and execution of Socrates (399 B.C.). Socrates was one of the greatest teachers in history. His students, such as Plato, regarded him as the wisest, the best, and the most just man of his day. Yet a jury of his fellow citizens tried, convicted, and executed him for his religious beliefs. The trial remains a test case for the values of all democratic societies, and the Apology of Socrates an enduring testament to individual freedom, the right to conscience, and the power of ideas.

Outline

I. The circumstances of Socrates’s trial.
   A. In 404 B.C., Athens had surrendered unconditionally to Sparta. In the aftermath, the democracy was overthrown and a tyrannical oligarchy had ruled with terror.
   B. By 399, the democracy had been restored. But the Athenian people were deeply bitter toward Socrates.
      1. Two of his most famous pupils, Alcibiades and Critias, were viewed as traitors who had played a major role in the defeat of Athens and the subversion of its democracy.
      2. Alcibiades and Critias were believed to have been corrupted by Socrates.

II. Socrates the teacher.
   A. Early on a morning of 399 B.C., a man waits for the law courts in Athens to open. He is seventy years old.
   B. He considers himself the most patriotic of Athenians.
   C. His friends and students consider him the best, wisest, and most just man of his day. The god Apollo considers him the wisest of men.
   D. He is Socrates, and he is about to go on trial for his life.

III. The ordinary Athenian’s perception of Socrates was presented in Aristophanes’s comedy Clouds, produced in 427 B.C.:
   A. Socrates is a Sophist; he corrupts young people by teaching them the lying art of rhetoric and to swindle the people by making good arguments seem bad and bad arguments seem good.
   B. He does not believe in the gods of Athens but in new gods—the clouds.

IV. What Socrates taught.
   A. Socrates did not consider himself a Sophist or a teacher. He knew that he was not wise, and this knowledge separated him from so many who thought they were wise. He believed himself called by god to search for wisdom.
   B. Socrates was, in fact, one of the two greatest teachers in history. Both he and Jesus never wrote a book. Neither would receive tenure in an American university.
   C. If we judge a teacher by the greatness of his pupils, then none was greater than Socrates. His pupil was Plato, who was the fountainhead of our philosophical tradition.
   D. Plato paid Socrates the greatest tribute. He places all his ideas in the mouth of his teacher.
   E. The teachings of Socrates:
      1. Socrates did not lecture. He did not teach a specific doctrine.
      2. He questioned and examined all he met in an effort to gain wisdom (Socratic method).
      3. He was a philosopher, a lover of wisdom. For him, philosophy was not an arid academic discipline. It was a life spent in the search for wisdom.
      4. He went around Athens questioning famous men, such as Pericles and Sophocles, who were reputed to be wise. His questioning exposed their hypocrisy and lack of true wisdom.
5. Socrates refused to participate in the political life of Athens. He said, “no honest man can survive in your democracy.”
6. He practiced traditional piety, but he also insisted on following his inner voice, his conscience, which he believed to be the voice of god.

V. The trial of Socrates.
A. Formal charges: Socrates corrupts the young and does not believe in the gods of Athens but in new, different divinities.
B. The apology of Socrates.
   1. Socrates’s response is not a defense, not an “apology,” but rather a ringing affirmation of the right of conscience and of freedom of thought, speech, and action in pursuit of the truth.
   2. Socrates argues against the charges, claiming that he is wise precisely because he knows he is not. “I am the most Athenian of Athenians,” he boldly claims.
   3. His is a ringing denunciation of the myth of majority rule.
C. Socrates is found guilty of corrupting youth and not believing in the gods of Athens.
D. Socrates offered his own verdict—free room and board for life. Then, at the suggestion of his students, he proposed a fine.
E. The punishment: death.

VI. Judgment.
A. Plato devoted four dialogues to the trial and execution of Socrates: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo.
   1. For Socrates, the belief in the immortality of the soul is a leap of faith.
   2. Thus, he dies the most pious of Athenians.
B. In these dialogues, the trial and execution of Socrates is presented as a travesty of justice and a condemnation of the Athenian democracy.
C. From the perspective of the ordinary citizen, the verdict against Socrates was just. By his refusal to participate in political life and by his rejection of majority rule to follow his own conscience, Socrates represented a profound threat to the very basis of democracy.

Essential Reading:
Plato, Apology.

Supplementary Reading:
Stone, Trial of Socrates.

Questions to Consider:
1. If you had been a juror, how would you have voted at the trial of Socrates?
2. Why did the Athenian democracy consider both impiety and the corruption of the young as forms of treason?
Lecture Six
Alexander the Great

Scope: The career of Alexander the Great opened a new epoch in the history of Greece, the world, and freedom. The victory of his father Philip at Chaeronea (338 B.C.) marked the end of the city-state as the dominant political form in the Greek world and the triumph of monarchy. The conquests of Alexander made possible the spread of Greek culture from Spain to India. In the course of those conquests, Alexander added a new dimension to the Greek concept of freedom. For his teacher, Aristotle, some men – the Greeks – were by nature free, others – the barbarians – were by nature slaves. Alexander sought to establish an empire on the idea of the essential equality of all men. The intellectual response to Alexander’s achievements was Stoic philosophy, with its teaching of natural law and the fundamental equality and inherent freedom of all humans.

Outline

I. New currents in Greece: after the Classical Age.
   A. The early comedies of Aristophanes (fifth century B.C.) were satirical, poking fun at great public figures. After the Peloponnesian War, however, the great comic playwright took up more frivolous topics, such as how to make money.
   B. Service in the army was no longer a civic duty—the Athenians hired a mercenary force.
   C. In philosophy, Plato, the pupil of Socrates, advocated monarchy as the best form of government. His ideal state was much more like Sparta than Athens.

II. The demise of the Greek city-state, 338 B.C.: Battle of Chaeronea and victory of Alexander’s father, King Philip of Macedonia, over Athenians and their allies.
   A. The Athenians, who had so bravely resisted the Persians in 490 and 480 B.C., now surrendered to Philip after a single defeat.
   B. Chaeronea marked the end of the city-state as the dominant political entity in the Greek world.
   C. The achievements of Alexander and Philip ushered in a new age in which monarchy was the dominant political form.

III. Alexander, son of Philip, dreamed of conquering the entire Persian empire. And so he did.
   A. Much to the amazement of his men, he marched east across Asia, winning victory after victory.
   B. In May of 326 B.C., on the banks of the River Hydaspes in India, Alexander the Great won a decisive victory over the Indian Maharajah Porus.
   C. This victory marked the culmination of ten years that had carried Alexander and his Macedonian army out of history and into legend.

IV. Monarchy and liberty.
   A. For Plato, monarchy, the rule of a single outstanding individual, was the best form of government. Such a good king would be regarded as a god for the benefits he bestowed on his subjects.
   B. Alexander was the pupil of Aristotle, but he took Plato’s ideal king as his model. Based on empirical evidence, Alexander rejected Aristotle’s view that some men, the Greeks, were by nature free, and some men, barbarians, were by nature slaves. For Alexander, this idea had been proven false on the field of battle.
   C. From these ideas, Alexander sought to build a new form of empire out of his conquests.
      1. All men were equal under the rule of Alexander.
      2. Men should be judged by their virtue, rather than by race and religion.
      3. Alexander’s own actions and policies set the model for an empire that was tolerant, multicultural, and diverse.
      4. The subjects of this empire should live in peace and harmony, and this peaceful existence should be encouraged by the social and economic policies of Alexander.
5. Only by intermarriage could men come to accept each other as brothers.

D. Some recent historians have sought to debunk Alexander the Great, his character and achievements. Such efforts are on a par with attempts to debunk the Founders of the United States: the products of mediocrities incapable of understanding greatness in others because it is lacking in themselves.

V. The Hellenistic Age.

A. The Hellenistic Age is the term used to describe the Greek world after Alexander the Great: 323–31 B.C.

B. Characteristics of the Hellenistic Age.

1. Greek culture and language spread from the Pillars of Hercules in Spain to India, forming a common intellectual and social environment.
2. New political forms, such as federalism, developed.
3. The focus was on individual, rather than political, liberty. The most prevalent definition of liberty was freedom to live as you choose.

C. The dominant philosophical current was stoicism. Following the example of Alexander, stoicism taught that all men were created free and equal by god.

1. The other side of stoicism was political apathy—why care what form of government you had if it had no effect on your soul?
2. The notion of inherent equality that the stoics preached would deeply influence the Roman Empire.

D. The very fact of cultural unity that Alexander—and later, Rome—promoted would eventually help aid the spread of Christianity.

E. Alexander’s rule rested not on the consent of the governed but on the will of god. The supreme god had chosen Alexander to rule earth as the vicegerent of the gods. Alexander’s achievements and virtues had made him a divinity.

VI. Alexander’s early death at the age of thirty-three (in 323 B.C.) prevented his realization of this dream. However, the forces he unleashed dominated the Greek world for the next three centuries and became the legacy of the Roman Empire and of Christianity.

Essential Reading:
Arrian, *Campaigns of Alexander (History of Alexander)*.
Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*.

Supplementary Reading:
Fox, *Alexander*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Do you believe history is made by great individuals or by anonymous social and economic forces?
2. Alexander’s story is, above all, a story of war and conquest. Do you think that war is a creative, as well as a destructive, force?
Lecture Seven
The Roman Republic

Scope: The Founders of the United States took the balanced constitution of the Roman Republic as a model for our own Constitution. Liberty was the definitive attribute of the Roman Republic, and the goal of its constitution was liberty under law. It achieved this by institutions that balanced a broad base of popular sovereignty with strong executive authority and the guidance of a Senate composed of 300 experienced, highly capable statesmen. These constitutional forms were vitalized by educational institutions that imbued Roman citizens with a strong sense of patriotism and civic virtue, the willingness to subordinate the interest of the individual to the good of the community as a whole. Under this republican constitution, Rome rose from being a small city by the Tiber River to being master of a world empire.

Outline

I. On August 2, 216 B.C., in what proved to be the turning point of the Second Punic War, the Carthaginian forces under Hannibal inflicted a devastating defeat on Roman forces in the Battle of Cannae.
   A. Seventy thousand Romans were killed on that one day. By contrast, in the Civil War Battle of Antietam, “the bloodiest day in American history,” fewer than five thousand men were killed, including Union and Confederate soldiers.
   B. The Battle of Cannae was one of the most decisive battles in world history.
      1. Rome would arise from its defeat at Cannae to win the war with Carthage.
      2. Even more significantly, Cannae convinced the Romans never again to be faced with national annihilation.

II. The Greek historian Polybius wrote his Histories to explain the rise of Rome to its future position of world dominance.
   A. For Polybius, the cause of Rome’s success was the excellence of its constitution.
      1. Polybius, like other classical writers, did not use the term constitution in the narrow sense of a written document.
      2. For Polybius, constitution meant the laws, customs, and entire way of life of a people.
   B. Polybius chose to give his description of the Roman constitution immediately following his account of the Battle of Cannae. He believed that the merit of a constitution was best shown in a time of greatest adversity.
   C. The Founders of the United States were profound students and admirers of Polybius. Such statesmen as James Madison carefully studied Polybius’s account of the Roman constitution. The Founders took the constitution of Rome as a model for our own Constitution.

III. The origins of the Roman Republic.
   A. Liberty was the definitive attribute of the Roman republic.
   B. According to Roman tradition, the Republic was born in an act of revolutionary violence.
      1. The last king, King Tarquin, was driven out of Rome in 509 B.C. His attempt to reclaim his throne with a mercenary army was defeated by the Roman people.
      2. From that moment, no word was more hateful to Roman ears than rex (king).

IV. The Roman constitution.
   A. According to Polybius, the Roman constitution was a model of a balanced constitution.
   B. In the classical view, a balanced constitution mixed in proper proportion the three essential elements of any government:
      1. Monarchy, or the need for strong executive leadership.
      2. Aristocracy, or the need for guidance by a small group composed of the best and most experienced citizens.
      3. Democracy, or the need for a broad base of popular support.
C. In the Roman constitution, these three elements were represented by the Consuls (monarchy-executive), Senate (aristocracy), and Assemblies of all Roman citizens (democracy).

D. The Roman constitution was marked by an elaborate set of checks and balances among the power of the Consuls, Senate, and Roman people.

E. The Consuls, like all magistrates, were elected by the Roman people.
   1. Every year, two Consuls were elected to serve for one year.
   2. As commanders-in-chief of the Roman armies, the power of the Consuls was enormous. In wartime, Consuls had power of life and death over Roman citizens.

F. Checks and balances, however, existed on the power of the Consul.
   1. Two Consuls were elected, and the negative vote of one Consul overrode the positive vote of his colleague.
   2. Consuls served only one year but could be reelected.
   3. The people elected the Consuls.
   4. The approval of the Senate was necessary before the Consuls could spend money.

V. The Assemblies of all Roman citizens.
   A. The assemblies were the sovereign power of Rome; their members (males only, military service required) passed laws and decided all matters of war and peace.
   B. They elected all magistrates.

VI. The Senate.
   A. The Senate was composed of three hundred former magistrates who served for life.
   B. The Senate was, thus, indirectly elected by the people.
   C. The Senate controlled public spending, thus serving as a check on the Consuls.
   D. The Senate controlled foreign policy.
   E. The Senate could not pass laws, but by tradition, the Roman people did not generally pass a law that had not been approved by the Senate.
   F. The power of the Senate was checked by power of the Assembly of all Roman citizens.

VII. The Tribunes.
   A. Every year, ten tribunes of the Roman people were elected. Tribunes were required to carry out the will of the people.
   B. A single tribune could—by his veto power—bring the entire machinery of the Roman government to a halt.
   C. In turn, the power of the people was checked by the Senate. The people could pass a law, but only the Senate could fund it.

VIII. Civic virtue and the Roman constitution.
   A. In the view of the Romans, Polybius, and the Founders of our country, civic virtue was essential to a free nation.
   B. Even the best of constitutions would fail unless it was vitalized by the civic virtue of its citizens.
   C. Roman education was intended to instill patriotism in young Romans.
   D. The Roman army was a citizen army, and all citizens were required to spend sixteen years in military service. In times of crisis, this requirement could be extended to twenty years. For the Romans, bravery in war was the highest form of civic virtue.
   E. Great processions heralded the feats of the ancestors. Unlike in the Athenian democracy, the Roman republic was guided by the leading families of the day.

IX. The Romans were the most successful imperialists in history.
   A. With this constitution and civic virtue, Rome rose from a small city-state by the Tiber River (in 509 B.C.) to the only superpower in the world (146 B.C.).
B. “Conquer or die” was the fundamental credo of Rome.
C. The Romans successfully adopted anything foreign that would serve their purposes.
D. The Roman citizen possessed many rights as an individual:
   1. The right to vote and participate in politics
   2. Equality under the law
   3. Freedom from arbitrary arrest
   4. The right to trial by jury
   5. Freedom of speech
E. Freedom of religion was not available, however; to be a Roman citizen was to worship the gods of Rome.
F. Romans believed in an ordered liberty within the framework of the Roman constitution.

**Essential Reading:**
Polybius, *Histories*, Book VI.

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. What is the role of civic virtue in America today?
2. Why did both the Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic deny their citizens freedom of worship?
Lecture Eight
Julius Caesar

Scope: By the first century B.C., Rome was the only superpower in its world. At the height of their military power, the Romans lost their political liberty. Money corrupted the political process. The competition of vested interests created political gridlock; and the institutions of republican government proved incapable of solving even minor problems. In these circumstances, the Roman People lost faith in the ability of democracy to solve its problems and turned to the leadership of Julius Caesar, a statesman of genius. Caesar and his son Augustus solved Rome’s problems, reestablished Rome as the only superpower, and brought the ordinary Roman citizen unprecedented security and material affluence. The price was the loss of political liberty and the establishment of a military dictatorship.

Outline

I. By 146 B.C., Rome was the only superpower in its world. The ensuing one hundred years brought the Roman people unprecedented material affluence and political turmoil.

II. The empire and the end of republican liberty at Rome.
   A. Greeks and Romans believed that there were laws of history. One such law was that imperial expansion corrupted civic virtue.
      1. Possessed of civic virtue and martial prowess, the Romans became a superpower, acquiring an empire and ruling over many foreign nations.
      2. The empire brought enormous wealth to the Roman people and their leaders.
      3. Such wealth corrupted civic virtue.
      4. Ambition and greed replaced civic virtue as the primary qualities of Rome’s leaders.
      5. Wealth corrupted every aspect of the political process. Elections were bought by money instead of won by virtue. The Senate and magistrates were in the control of wealthy vested interests.
   B. By 60 B.C., the Senate had reached such a stage of corruption and gridlock that not even minor problems could be solved.
   C. The failure of the Roman Senate undermined the confidence of the ordinary Roman in the institutions of republican government. The Romans sought for a great man to solve their problems for them, and they found him in Julius Caesar.

III. Gaius Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.).
   A. Caesar was one of the greatest figures in world history, a multifaceted genius.
   B. He was a genius of many sorts.
      1. A military genius: His conquests of Gaul and his victories in the civil wars establish him as one of the most brilliant and successful generals in history. Caesar was a master of every major facet of generalship: strategy, logistics, tactics, and battlefield command.
      2. A political genius: Caesar was a consummate politician, a master of every skill, who rose to absolute power in one of the most treacherous political environments in history.
      3. A statesman of genius: Caesar’s vision set the course for the next 1,500 years of European history. He possessed foresight, an essential ingredient for successful rule.
      4. A literary genius: Caesar wrote histories of his military campaigns, The Gallic War and The Civil Wars. These are masterpieces of historical writing, composed in an unsurpassed Latin style. Even Caesar’s political enemies admitted his genius as a writer.

IV. Caesar’s vision: Caesar understood that the only salvation for the Roman people and their empire was monarchy: the absolute rule of the most capable man in the world, himself.
   A. The Roman Empire must become a world state, in which provincials enjoy the same rights and benefits as Roman citizens. This meant not equality before the law, as in the Republic, but equality for all.
B. The Roman Empire must expand beyond the Mediterranean world, bringing new resources by the conquest of not only Gaul but also Germany and Iran.

C. Only a king could bring about and win acceptance for such a world state.

D. Caesar wanted both the power and the title of king. His unabashed pursuit of the title, in fact, led directly to his assassination.

V. On March 15, 44 B.C., Gaius Julius Caesar, Dictator for Life of the Roman Republic, was assassinated in the Senate House at Rome.

A. He was murdered by a conspiracy of sixty-three Senators, led by Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus.

B. Their publicly expressed motive was to restore liberty to the Roman people. Hypocrisy cloaked their real motives: ambition and greed. What brought Julius Caesar and his assassins to the Senate House that morning?

VI. Caesar’s assassination did not restore the Roman Republic.

A. It led to further civil war and the triumph of his adopted son, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, known to history as Augustus.

B. One of the most successful statesmen in history, Augustus brought peace, prosperity, and monarchy to the Roman world.

VII. The reforms of Caesar and Augustus transformed the Roman idea of liberty. The republican ideals of liberty were replaced by imperial ideals of liberty, defined as follows:

A. True liberty is found under the rule of an absolute and benevolent emperor.

B. The emperor is above the law.

C. Under the rule of the emperor, the individual is free to live as he chooses, relieved of the responsibilities of political involvement.

D. Freedom is the equality of all, Romans and provincials, under the rule of the emperor.

E. The emperor guarantees the rights of the individual.

F. Imperial liberty brings peace, prosperity, and security.

G. Imperial liberty is the perfection of democracy, in which every group receives its just due from the emperor.

H. Such freedom is not limited to a small group. Caesar, Augustus, and their imperial successors granted Roman citizenship freely. By a law of 212 A.D., every freeborn inhabitant of the Roman Empire was made a citizen, with the rights and duties this status entailed.

Essential Reading:
Plutarch, Life of Julius Caesar.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Do you see parallels between the Rome of Julius Caesar and America today?
2. Do you agree with the ancients that affluence destroys civic virtue?
Lecture Nine
Freedom in the Roman Empire

Scope: If the empire of the Caesars meant the end of political liberty, it also expanded and enhanced individual freedom. A day in the city of Pompeii provides an avenue to explore the nature of freedom in the Roman Empire. It suggests that, in many ways, Rome of the Caesars – rather than republican Rome – is the model for America today. Freedom to live as you chose was the most common definition of liberty. Security and economic opportunity were more important than political involvement. It was a tolerant, diverse, multicultural empire, with a focus on local control over local issues. Thoughtful citizens regarded the Roman empire as being a “perfect democracy” in which all elements of society received their just dues and in which individual freedoms were protected by a benevolent central government.

Outline

I. The nineteenth century admired the Roman Republic and its contribution to the history of freedom. Lord Acton shocked his contemporaries when he wrote that the Roman Empire did more for liberty than the Roman Republic. In fact, he was right in terms of individual liberty.

II. To understand freedom in the Roman Empire, we need to move from the abstract to the real, the general to the particular. We need to focus on the life of individual Romans in what began as a typical day, August 24, 79 A.D., in a typical Roman city, Pompeii.

III. The Roman Empire in 79 A.D.
   A. It is the first year of the reign of the Emperor Titus.
      1. An excellent general and administrator, Titus is beloved by his fellow Romans. He is called “the darling of the human race,” but he was also a great warrior.
      2. The Jews, alone in the empire, refused to accept tamely the yoke of Roman servitude under Titus.
      3. In 69–70, Jerusalem was battered into submission.
      4. In 73, the fortress at Masada fell to Rome—though the Jews committed mass suicide before they were overwhelmed.
   B. Geographical extent: The empire stretches from Britain to Iraq, from the North Sea to the sands of the Sahara.
   C. Unity: One law, one currency, one language will carry and protect the Roman citizen from one end of this empire to the other.
   D. Titus, rather than Caligula or Nero, is typical of the excellent CEOs who govern this great empire.
   E. Social mobility is characteristic of the empire; in composition, it is multicultural and diverse.
   F. The classical civilization of Greece, however, provides the unifying stamp of culture throughout the Roman domain.

IV. What Pompeii tells us about freedom in the Roman Empire.
   A. An affluent middle class is the support of the imperial system.
      1. This affluence is the product of the peace, security, and prosperity made possible by the empire.
      2. The frontiers of the empire are defended by a highly cost-efficient and capable army of 360,000 men.
      3. A superb infrastructure of roads and bridges exists.
      4. A free-market economy brings the goods of the world to Pompeii.
      5. Extremely low taxes encourage investment. The ordinary Roman works two days a year to pay his taxes.
      6. Social and economic opportunity: a man can be born a slave, work and earn his freedom, and go on to be a multibillionaire.
      7. It is an empire of cities, from York to Alexandria to Pergamum. Pompeii is the best preserved of these—and is the most instructive about daily Roman life.
   B. Local control in Pompeii and elsewhere.
1. The emperor decides the great issues of foreign and domestic policy.
2. Local issues, however, are decided on the local level.
3. The people show keen interest in local elections.
4. A strong sense of civic duty exists among the middle class, expressed in philanthropy.
5. At one end of the civic forum is a temple to Jupiter. There were temples to other divinities, such as Isis, as well—so long as one prayed first to Jupiter.
6. Women are endowed with a level of property and authority unthinkable in ancient Greece.

C. Many products of affluence can be found.
1. Homes could be lavishly furnished.
2. Public services were well established.
3. Schools—most citizens could read and write.
4. Theaters—both tragedies and sitcoms were played.
5. Health spas and baths were common.
6. Professional athletics and spectator sports—violence was essential to the Roman lifestyle.
7. Fast food flourished.

D. In short, Pompeii and hundreds of other Roman cities in the imperial age offer many parallels to America today.

V. Vesuvius and the lessons of history.
A. On August 24, 79 A.D., the volcano Vesuvius erupted. The lives of the citizens of Pompeii and nearby cities, such as Herculaneum, were changed forever.
B. To the immense majesty of the Roman Empire, the eruption was hardly a blip on the screen of progress, no more than a tornado striking a midwestern town today.
C. These citizens were people just like us, living lives of fulfilled freedom—until those lives came to a sudden and tragic end.

Essential Reading:
Zanker, *Pompeii*.

Questions to Consider:
1. The ordinary Roman worked two days to pay his taxes to the imperial government. Interest earned on investments was not taxed, nor were capital gains. The result was unprecedented prosperity. Would this system work today?
2. Compare the unity of the Roman Empire as a world state with “the global village” of today.
Lecture Ten
Rome: Freedom and Cultural Creativity

Scope: As in the Athenian democracy, freedom in the Roman empire led to a burst of intellectual creativity that in art, architecture, science, and medicine would lay the foundations for the next thousand years of European civilization. Roman law would incorporate the concept of natural law and with it the ideal that all men are created free and equal. The policy of the Roman emperors was to foster – within limits – intellectual and religious freedom; and the most innovative currents of thought focused upon individual salvation and liberty.

Outline

I. As it had in fifth-century Athens, freedom in the Roman Empire unleashed creative forces.
   A. Just as democracy in Athens was exclusive, so the cultural revolution was exclusive, largely focused on Athens.
   B. Freedom in the Roman Empire was inclusive, tolerant, diverse, and multicultural. People born as slaves could end up enormously wealthy—and such scenarios might occur anywhere in the empire.
   C. Moreover, under Trajan and Hadrian, the notion of the “divine right of kings” was established, an idea that would dominate Europe for 1,500 years. The dream of reestablishing such an empire would live all the way through Napoleon.

II. Rome and the legacy of Greece.
   A. From the early day of the Roman Republic, Greek culture was formative for Roman civilization.
   B. The Roman emperors viewed themselves as the heirs of Alexander the Great in his mission to spread Greek culture.
   C. The Roman emperors understood that their diverse empire required a common set of shared moral and cultural values based on the cultural legacy of classical Greece.
      1. The Roman Empire was officially bilingual: Greek and Latin.
      2. The Roman emperors fostered a revival of Greek literature, art, and architecture. Plutarch’s Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans is one of the most enduring monuments to the success of that revival.
      3. The sponsorship of the Roman emperors also led to a great age of Latin literature, based on Greek models: The Aeneid of Vergil, the histories of Livy and Tacitus, the lyric poetry of Horace all shaped European literature for centuries to come.

III. Not merely in literature, but in art and architecture, law and politics, medicine and science, and religion, the Roman Empire laid the cultural foundations for the next 1,500 years of European civilization.
   A. Law.
      1. This was the creative age of Roman jurisprudence, which developed a code of laws that is still the basis of the legal system of most of Europe, Latin America, and even the state of Louisiana.
      2. Roman law came to embody the ideal that all men were created equal and endowed by their creator with the inalienable right of liberty.
   B. Politics.
      1. Roman law also embodied the idea that governments derive their just power from the divine right of kings, not from the consent of the governed. This idea would dominate Europe until the American Revolution.
      2. The Roman Empire was the model for European unity, revived by Charlemagne (800 A.D.), Napoleon (1804–14), and the European community.
   C. Science and medicine: The mathematical, astronomical, and geographical work of Ptolemy (ca. 100–178 A.D.) and the medical writings of Galen were the authoritative textbooks in Europe and the Islamic world until the sixteenth century.
D. Art: The narrative reliefs of the Column of Trajan at Rome (112 A.D.) were the prototype for the purpose of art in Christianity—a visual narrative to spread the gospel. Both are “books” for the illiterate.

E. Architecture: The Pantheon in Rome (127 A.D.) was the prototype for the purpose of architecture in Christianity and Islam—using interior space to create a mystical experience for the worshipper. The Pantheon was meant, in its various parts, to represent the entire universe.

F. Religion.
1. The political, intellectual, and spiritual currents of the Roman Empire shaped Christianity and were a significant influence on Judaism and on the later emergence of Islam.
2. These religious developments in the Roman Empire are indicative of the growing focus by many Romans on spiritual matters (the world of the soul) at the expense of political involvement. The cult of Mithra was powerful and widespread. It was, at its heart, a cult of liberation—freedom from death itself.
3. The very word Islam means “submission.” Christianity and Islam both taught that true freedom is found by becoming the slave of god. This view was also central to Roman imperial political thought: True liberty is found by submitting to the will of the emperor.

Essential Reading:
Gibbon, chapters 1–3.

Supplementary Reading:
Acton, Selected Writings, pp. 5–28, 54–68.

Questions to Consider:
1. Compare the portrait of the Roman Empire presented in this course, especially in Lectures Ten and Twelve, with that presented by Hollywood in such films as Ben-Hur and Gladiator.
2. Would you agree that the model for America today is neither the Athenian democracy nor the Roman Republic, but rather the Roman Empire of the Caesars?
Lecture Eleven
Gibbon on Rome’s Decline and Fall

Scope: For the Founders of the United States and their contemporary Edward Gibbon, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was the sad story of the fate of a people who had traded the freedom of republican liberty for the false security of absolutism. The Founders not only noted but acted upon the parallels they drew between the Roman and British Empires. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire continues to offer insights for our own day. The failure of individual emperors to deal successfully with specific foreign policy issues in Eastern Europe and the Near East led to a political crisis. The response of the imperial government destroyed the very factors that had made it successful: ever-greater restrictions upon personal freedom; increased military spending; an enormous and ineffective bureaucracy; and an ever increasing burden of taxation that destroyed the middle class.

Outline

I. Great events and individuals become historical themes in their own right.
   A. This statement is true of Alexander the Great, Jesus of Nazareth, Napoleon, the Crusades, the French Revolution, and the fall of the Roman Empire.
   B. Each generation reinterprets these great figures and events in the light of its own experiences, values, and issues.

II. Edward Gibbon’s first volume on Rome was published in 1776 and was an immediate bestseller.
   A. Gibbon’s public was drawn to the parallels between the Roman and British empires.
   B. For Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic, Gibbon’s book addressed the supreme question of the day: the fate of English liberty.

III. Edward Gibbon’s The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
   A. Gibbon’s life.
      1. He was born in England and knew the reign of liberty.
      2. Gibbon came from a life of wealth and privilege.
      3. He was saved from a dreary and mind-numbing education at Oxford by conversion to Catholicism.
      4. He reconverted and began his serious study at Lausanne.
      5. He made a memorable visit to Rome in 1764.
   B. Gibbon as a Member of Parliament, 1774–1781.
      1. For Gibbon, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was the sad story of a people who had traded the freedom and responsibility of political liberty for the assumed security and prosperity of dictatorship.
      2. Gibbon was a silent but attentive observer of the great struggle for American independence.
      3. Parliament was for Gibbon a “school of civil prudence, the first and most essential virtue of an historian.”
      4. Gibbon voted with the government of Lord North in its efforts to crush the Americans. But in his heart, Gibbon sided with the American fight for freedom.
      5. Gibbon secretly believed that the British Empire would soon go the way of the Roman Empire. Parallels between Rome and contemporary Britain were “the hidden agenda” of his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
   C. The failures of empire.
      1. The civic virtue and liberty that had made the Roman Republic great were dead.
      2. Thus, the Roman Empire at its height was fatally ill, a “poison was gnawing at its vitals.” That poison was the loss of political liberty.
      3. For Gibbon, the militia was the best insurance of all against tyranny.
D. The pagan contemporaries of the fall of the Roman Empire saw its collapse as Rome’s punishment by the old, true gods who had been deserted for the Christian god. Christian observers, such as Salvian, saw the fall of the empire as God’s punishment visited on men for their sinful lives.

IV. The fall of the Roman Empire and its lessons for our own day.
   A. Gibbon’s explanation holds up better than most and offers salutary and sobering lessons to us today.
   B. Whatever the inner cause for Rome’s weakness (such as the loss of political liberty), the actual fall of the empire was the result of specific decisions, events, and consequences.
   C. The most important of these decisions was in the field of foreign policy.
   D. Despite their prosperity, peace, and military power, the Roman emperors of the first and second centuries A.D. never solved two great foreign policy issues: Germany and Iran. In today’s geopolitical terminology, these might be called the problem of Central and Eastern Europe and the problem of the Middle East.
      1. Julius Caesar intended to solve these issues by the conquest and annexation of Iran and Germany. His assassination thwarted these plans. His successor, Augustus, did not carry them out. The emperor Trajan (98–117 A.D.) attempted an extensive policy of conquest and annexation in central Europe and Iran, but his successor, Hadrian, renounced these plans. Instead Hadrian (117–138 A.D.) literally sought to wall out the barbarians with extensive frontier fortifications, such as Hadrian’s Wall in Britain.
      2. In the third century A.D., the decisions of Augustus and Hadrian came back to haunt the Romans. A revitalized Iran swept into the fairest portions of the eastern part of the empire, and the Germans ravaged the western part.
   E. The imperial government responded to these challenges in the third century A.D., but the response destroyed the structures that had made the empire so successful.
      1. A large and inefficient army and bureaucracy was created.
      2. Taxes became exorbitant.
      3. The middle class was destroyed.
      4. Social and economic mobility were severely limited.
   F. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the western part of the Roman Empire fell to the Germans, and Germanic kingdoms, the forerunners of France, England, and Spain, were erected on its ruins. In the east, the banner of Islam would be carried all the way across North Africa.

V. Issues of foreign policy are pressing ones for the American empire today—as they once were for Rome. Were Julius Caesar to visit our time, he would say that our failure to act with finality in the foreign sphere will ultimately cripple us.

Essential Reading:
Fears in Boren and Perkins, pp. 515–518.
Gibbon, pp. 436–444.

Supplementary Reading:
Grant, History of Rome, pp. 242–474.

Questions to Consider:
1. Romans of the second century A.D. had a tendency not to want to think about foreign policy. Do Americans today share that tendency?
2. Do you believe that our inability to deal decisively with the issues of Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East will come back to haunt America?
Lecture Twelve
Jesus

Scope: Christianity issued in a new era in the history of freedom. To the historian, the rise of Christianity is understandable only within the framework of the Roman Empire. From his birth to his death, the entire life and mission of Jesus took place within that framework. At an institutional level, the life and death of Jesus illustrates the interplay between imperial unity and the concepts of local control and ethnic and cultural diversity that were fundamental to the imperial concept of liberty. At the intellectual level, the message of Jesus reflects the focus on inner freedom and the autonomy of the soul – to the exclusion of political concerns- that would be definitive for the next 1500 years of the history of freedom.

Outline

I. Freedom and Christianity.
   A. Christianity arose in the context of the Roman Empire. It was profoundly shaped by the political, religious, and social currents of the Empire. The imperial example of Rome no doubt had an effect on universalist religious beliefs.
   B. In a historical sense, the emergence and ultimate triumph of Christianity represented the culmination of the focus on a search for inner freedom that was characteristic of so many individuals in the Roman imperial age.
   C. Christianity made its great contribution to the history of freedom by endowing the individual man and woman, their lives and their souls, with worth and dignity never held in pagan antiquity.

II. Jesus in the Roman world.
   A. The entire mission of Jesus takes place fully in the context of the Roman Empire.
   B. The only real sources we have for the life of Jesus are the Gospels.
      1. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give closely related accounts that led the early Christian Church to call them the Synoptic Gospels, because they saw things in the same way.
      2. The Gospel of John stands outside this tradition.
      3. Mark is the earliest and represents the actual firsthand account as taught by Peter and recorded by his disciple John Mark; Matthew was written for an audience of Jewish Christians; Luke was composed for a Gentile audience and is the most historically minded.

III. The birth of Jesus and the annexation of Judaea by Augustus in 6 A.D.
   A. Judaea was a land deeply torn by religious and ethnic hatreds: Jew and Gentile, Jew and Samaritan, Pharisee and Sadducee.
   B. Judaea was of great strategic value to the Romans. It was the lynchpin of the entire Roman defense of the eastern provinces of the empire. Thus, Augustus decided to annex Judaea.
   C. The mission of Jesus began in 36 A.D. and lasted one year. Jesus appeared suddenly—and was immediately perceived as a threat by the Pharisees.

IV. The message of Jesus.
   A. Jesus taught a message that—on the surface—seemed simple: “The time is at hand; repent; believe in the Gospel—the good news.”
   B. His message was a public one.
   C. The miracles of healing were fundamental to the message. These miracles were believed to be actually happening by those who observed them. They cannot be explained on rational grounds to our scientific age. But Jesus lived in an age of magic. The explanation was perfectly simple to his contemporaries: Jesus was possessed of divine, magical power. The question was, did that power come from God or Satan?
   D. In fact, Jesus’s words were profoundly ambiguous. They were easily misinterpreted by his enemies in an effort to prove that this teacher was preaching social revolution and the overthrow of Roman rule.
V. The trial and execution of Jesus.
   A. Jesus was arrested in Jerusalem by the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was composed of seventy leading Jewish priests, elders, and lawyers and presided over by the high priest. It was the highest tribunal of the Jews in Judaea, dealing with a wide range of issues.
   B. The Sanhedrin found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and, according to Jewish law, sentenced him to death.
   C. However, according to the Roman annexation treaty with Judaea, only the Roman governor could carry out an execution.
   D. Jesus was, thus, brought before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. Blasphemy was not—in this sense—a crime under Roman law. Hence, Pilate wanted to let Jesus go. However, the Sanhedrin then brought charges of treason, and Jesus refused to defend himself. Pilate found him guilty and sentenced him to death, according to Roman law.
   E. The Gospel accounts portray Pilate as a typical bureaucrat. The atmosphere of fear and suspicion fostered by the emperor Tiberius heavily influenced Pilate’s decision.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Kee, Jesus in History.
Renan, Jesus.

Questions to Consider:
1. How would you summarize the message of Jesus?
2. In what way do you think the miracles were an essential element in the message of Jesus to his contemporaries?
Timeline

B.C.
3000................................................ Birth of civilization in Egypt and Mesopotamia
550–529.......................................... Rise of Persian Empire
490 ................................................ Battle of Marathon
479–404.......................................... Golden Age of Athens
336–323.......................................... Alexander the Great
218–146.......................................... Rise of Roman Empire
48–31............................................. Julius Caesar and Augustus establish monarchy at Rome

A.D.
31 B.C.–180 A.D. .......................... Golden Age of Roman Empire
6 ................................................ Birth of Jesus
64 ................................................ Martyrdom of Peter and Paul
306–337 ........................................ Constantine the Great
330–1453 ....................................... Byzantine Empire
476 .............................................. Fall of Roman Empire in the West
527–565 ........................................ Justinian, Emperor of Byzantine Empire, codifies Roman law
800 .............................................. Charlemagne crowned Roman Emperor
1073–1085 ................................. Pope Gregory VII and height of the power of the papacy in the Middle Ages
1154–1189 ....................................... Reign of Henry II and formative period of English common law
1215 ............................................. Magna Carta
1295 ............................................. Model Parliament in England
1304–1527 .................................... Renaissance
1474–1603 ..................................... Theory of divine right of kings bolstered absolute monarchy in Spain, France, and England
1492 ............................................. Columbus’s voyage to America
1517–1648 ................................. Protestant Reformation
1642–1658 ....................................... English Civil War and Puritan Revolution under Oliver Cromwell
1643–1715 ....................................... King Louis XIV of France
1775–1783 ....................................... American Revolution
1787 ............................................. Constitutional Convention
1789–1805 ..................................... French Revolution and Napoleon
1861–1865 ..................................... American Civil War
1914–1918 ..................................... World War I
1929–1940 ..................................... Great Depression
1939–1945 ..................................... World War II
1945–1990........................................... Cold War
1945– ............................................. Scientific and technological revolution
Glossary

**Acropolis**: A hill in Athens that was the sacred center of the city and lavishly adorned with temples and other shrines.

**Asia Minor**: Classical term to describe the area now known as Turkey.

**Assembly**: A modern term to translate Greek *Ekklesia* and Latin *Comitia*; these were the legislative bodies of the Athenian democracy and Roman Republic, which were composed of all citizens and were the sovereign body.

**Birth of civilization**: Rise of complex political structures, writing, monumental architecture, and use of metal. These advancements occurred simultaneously in Egypt and Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C.

**Carthage**: Town in North Africa and chief rival with Rome for domination of the western Mediterranean (264–201 B.C.).

**Chaeronea**: Town in Greece, site of a battle in 338 B.C. between King Philip of Macedonia and the Athenians and their allies; the victory of Philip effectively ended the history of the Athenian democracy.

**Classical antiquity**: Greece and the Roman world roughly in the period 800 B.C. (Homer) to 476 A.D. (fall of Roman Empire in Western Europe).

**Classics**: The writings of classical antiquity.

**Communism**: An ideology maintaining that society should be organized so that the means of production and subsistence should be held in common and that labor should be organized for the common benefit of all. As a political system, communism has been marked by the creation of the totalitarian state and party apparatus to subordinate all facets of society and the economy to control of the state.

**Constantinople**: Modern Istanbul; founded by Constantine in 330, it was the capital of the Byzantine Empire and, later, the Ottoman Empire.

**Constitution**: The fundamental laws of a country or other organization. A constitution can be a single document, such as the Constitution of the United States, or a collection of written and unwritten laws, customs, and practices, such as the Athenian, Roman, or English constitutions.

**Consul**: Chief magistrate of the Roman Republic and commander-in-chief of Roman armies; two elected annually.

**Darwinism**: Ideology based on the teaching of English biologist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and holding to a theory of biological evolution; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has been applied to support social, political, and racial theories based on “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest.”

**Determinism**: The antithesis of free will, determinism argues that humans have no control over decisions, actions, and events, which are the inevitable consequence of forces independent of the human will.

**Dunkirk**: Town on the coast of northern France; site of evacuation of British and French armies under German attack, May 27–June 3, 1940.

**Founders (Founding Fathers)**: A collective designation for the statesmen who signed the Declaration of Independence, waged the Revolutionary War, and framed the Constitution.

**Free will**: The idea that humans make their own choices, unconstrained by necessity or external circumstances.

**Freedom**: See Lecture One.

**Gentile**: A non-Jew.

**Ideology**: A complex set of ideas and values that unifies a community, directs its actions, and validates its decision making. Democracy, for example, is the ideology of the United States.

**Law (Jewish)**: The complex code of laws and regulations, based on interpretation of the Ten Commandments, that in the time of Jesus and later, governed every aspect of a pious Jew’s life. The Pharisees were the chief interpreters of the Law.
Liberty: See Lecture One.

Macedonia: In classical antiquity, a nation in northeastern Greece. Although related to the Greeks, the Macedonians were a distinct people. King Philip and his son, Alexander the Great, were the two most famous Macedonians.


Marxism: An ideology based on the ideas of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engles (1820–1895) and the intellectual foundation of communism.

Mesopotamia: “Land between the rivers”; a geographical term used historically to identify the region, now largely in Iraq, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Location of early civilizations of Sumer, Akkad, and Babylonia.

Middle Ages (medieval period): The period between the fall of the Roman Empire in the West (476 A.D.) and the Renaissance (fourteenth century).


Pharisee: Member of influential Jewish group in Judaea at the time of Jesus; Pharisees insisted on the strict interpretation of Jewish Law. Their role in society might be compared to that of professors in our own day.

Renaissance: The beginning of the modern age, marked by the Renaissance (rebirth) of interest in classical antiquity. As is true of most chronological designations, such as the Middle Ages, precisely defining the chronological limits of the Renaissance is difficult. It began in Italy, then spread to northern Europe. Defensible dates are from the Italian poet Petrarch (1304–1374) to the sack of Rome in 1527.

Roman Empire: Rome from 44 B.C.–476 A.D. Used in this way, the term Roman Empire describes the political system of monarchy established by Julius Caesar and his successors. However, starting in 246 B.C., long before Caesar, the Roman Republic began to conquer and rule a vast overseas area that the Romans called an empire (imperium). Thus, historians commonly, if confusingly, speak of the Roman Republic governing the Roman Empire. Caesar and his successors transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy but continued to rule the overseas empire.

Roman Republic: Rome from 509–48 B.C.

Sadducees: Members of an influential group in Judaea in the time of Jesus. Sadducees tended to be wealthy and insisted on the Temple as the focus of the Jewish religion.

Samaritan: A religious sect closely related to Judaism.

Senate: Chief deliberative body of the Roman Republic; it was composed of three hundred men who had held high office. It could not pass laws, but its recommendations were usually determinative for the Roman Assembly.

Socialism: A term that first appeared in English in 1832 to describe an ideology opposing laissez-faire economics in favor of some form of communal ownership of productive assets.

Soviet Union (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics): The political entity that in 1922 replaced the Russian Empire. In 1991, it fragmented into numerous nations, including the Russian Federation.

Sparta: Greek city-state and chief rival of Athens.

Stoicism (Stoics): Leading intellectual current in Greco-Roman world from the third century B.C. until the third century A.D.

Sumer: A nation of Mesopotamia that developed one of the earliest historical civilizations. The Sumerian language seems to be unrelated to any other known language.

Tory: In English politics, the party and traditions supportive of monarchy, with the connotation of conservative. Hence, during the Revolution, American loyalists were called “Tories.” For more, see Whig.
**Treaty of Paris (1783):** Treaty between Great Britain and the United States, ending the Revolutionary War and recognizing the independence of the United States.

**Whig:** In English politics, the party and tradition supportive of parliamentary government, with the connotation of liberal. The terms *Whigs* and *Tories* were first introduced in 1679 in the debates over excluding James from the royal succession because of his Catholic sympathies. *Whig* was a term applied in Scotland to cattle and horse thieves. The connotation, used by Whig opponents, was one of Scottish Presbyterianism and rebellion. *Tory* was a term used in Ireland of Catholic outlaws. Its connotation used by the enemies of Tories was one of Catholicism and subservience to monarchy.
Biographical Notes

Aquinas, Saint Thomas: Philosopher (1215–1274). One of the most influential philosophers in history, Thomas’s work Summa Theologica (1266–1273) represents the apex of medieval Catholic thought. Thomas was deeply indebted to Aristotle. His political theory argued that the earthly governments are subordinate to the power of the Church and that a limited monarchy is the best form of government. Lord Acton called Thomas “the first Whig.”

Aristotle: Greek philosopher (386–322 B.C.). Not an Athenian by birth, Aristotle spent much of his life teaching in Athens. He was the pupil of Plato. Plato was the greatest philosopher in history, but his political thought contributed more to the history of authoritarian rule than to liberty. Aristotle was perhaps the most profound mind Greece produced. His empirical and historical studies and his life made three important contributions to the history of freedom. His Athenian Constitution is the best source for the workings of the radical democracy at Athens. His Politics is a careful analysis of the faults and merits of democracy. He was the teacher of Alexander the Great, who ushered in a new era in freedom.

Augustus: Roman statesman (63 BC–14 A.D.). Born Gaius Octavius, he was the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Modern historians generally refer to him as Octavian during his early political career (44–27 B.C.), from his adopted name Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Building on his relationship with the martyred Caesar, Octavian, at the age of nineteen, raised an army on his own initiative. With astounding political skills, he achieved absolute mastery over the Roman world, winning decisive victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C. He then carried out a series of political, military, economic, and social reforms that successfully transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy. He brought peace and prosperity to the Roman Empire that endured for two centuries. In 27 B.C., to mark the inauguration of his new order, he took a new name: Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus. The names emphasized (1) that the gods made him all victorious (Imperator); (2) his relationship to Julius Caesar (Caesar, Divi Filius—the son of the god Caesar); and (3) his own unique relationship to the gods (Augustus—the one sent by the gods). Augustus is rightly regarded as one of the greatest statesmen in history. He redefined the concept of liberty at Rome.

Blackstone, Sir William: English jurist (1723–1780). In terms of the development of the concept and institutions of liberty in America, Blackstone and Coke were the two most influential English jurists. Judge, Member of Parliament, and Professor of Law at Oxford, Blackstone is best known for his Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765). Even more influential in America than in England, Blackstone enshrined the principle that the common law derived its validity from natural law. This idea was instrumental in the Founders’ view that they were defending both their rights as Englishmen and the natural rights of all mankind.

Burke, Edmund: British statesman and political thinker (1729–1797). In his parliamentary career and writings, Burke made fundamental contributions to the history of liberty. He defended the cause of freedom in America and sought to ensure justice and humanity in British imperial rule in India. To that end, he tried to impeach Warren Hastings and conducted a bitter, fourteen-year campaign to achieve that goal. His Reflections on the Revolution in France did not contradict, but rather complemented, his lifelong commitment to the cause of liberty under law.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius: Roman statesman (106–43 B.C.). Much admired by the Founders of the United Sates. Cicero was born of a wealthy, but not aristocratic, family in the Italian town of Arpinum. His abilities as a lawyer and orator enabled him to break into the aristocratically dominated world of Roman politics. Consul in 63 B.C., Cicero believed in liberty under the constitution. He sought to steer Rome on a middle course between domination by a corrupt Senate and the dictatorship of Caesar. Cicero believed that political principles must be built on intellectual principles. He sought to adapt the most profound intellectual currents of Greece to Roman life. He wrote books on religion, philosophy, and oratory. His orations were models of political and legal persuasion, carefully studied by the Founders. His book De Officiis (On Moral Duties) was one of the most influential works ever written on ethics and their practical application. After the assassination of Caesar, Cicero fought with great personal courage for a return to republican liberty. He was brutally murdered on the order of Mark Antony.

Coke, Sir Edward: English jurist (1552–1634). Edward Coke was a fundamental figure in the development of the common law and its role as a bastion of English liberty. Unsurpassed in his time for his knowledge of the common law, he defended it against the claim of royal prerogatives and the challenges of other courts of law. In 1610, Coke ruled that the king has no power to change the common law. He also argued that the common law was above Parliament. Coke held a series of judicial appointments, including Lord Chief Justice of England. He served as a
Member of Parliament and was instrumental in the formulation of the 1628 Petition of Right. He engaged in a bitter personal and professional rivalry with Francis Bacon, frequently to his own disadvantage.

**Cromwell, Oliver**: English soldier and statesman (1599–1658). A country squire and man of deep religious faith, Cromwell took a leading role in Parliament’s growing opposition after 1637 to King Charles I. When civil war came, Cromwell proved to be a military genius, organizing the parliamentary army and leading it to victory. He secured the execution of King Charles in 1649. The monarchy dissolved, Cromwell was led by the need for stability and efficient government to assume what was, in fact, a dictatorship under the title of Lord Protector. He conducted brutal campaigns of pacification in Scotland and Ireland. His government of England was marked by enforced codes of public morality. His son Richard failed in his efforts to continue the Protectorate, and in 1660—to general relief—the monarchy was restored under Charles II. Cromwell contributed to the history of liberty by establishing two precedents, both influential on the Founders. He set a precedent for the overthrow of a tyrannical king in the name of liberty. He also demonstrated that such revolutions more often end in tyranny than in liberty.

**Darius and Xerxes**: Kings of the Persian Empire. Darius ruled from 518–486 B.C. He restored order to the empire and established excellent administrative and financial systems. The revolt of the Greek cities of Asia Minor under his rule and Athenian support of the revolt led Darius to attempt to conquer Athens and to the Battle of Marathon. Xerxes was the son of Darius and ruled from 486–465. He took over his father’s plan to conquer Greece. Persian defeats at the Battles of Salamis (480), Plataea (479), and Mycale (479) and Xerxes’s ignominious retreat from Greece in 480 marked the beginning of the decline of the Persian Empire. The threat of conquest by Darius and Xerxes played a fundamental role in the development of the idea of freedom in Greece. It coalesced in the Greek mind inchoate ideas of freedom and led the Athenians to develop true democracy.

**Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand**: Indian political leader and philosopher (1869–1948). From a prominent and wealthy Indian family, Gandhi studied in England and became an attorney. In South Africa and in India, he fought to achieve political rights for those dispossessed of them. He took on the most formidable empire in the world, Britain, and led India to independence. His achievements came through a philosophy of nonviolence. Gandhi contributed to the history of liberty by his seminal role in ending colonialism. The India he led to independence became a functioning democracy. Even more important, in his actions and teachings, Gandhi demonstrated the universal relationship among religion, morality, and freedom. He was assassinated in 1948. Gandhi stands as a representative of those leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, who have striven to bring independence, liberty, and dignity to their fellow countrymen.

**Gregory VII**: Pope (1073–1085). Gregory sought to reform the papacy and the Catholic Church. He expressed the view of the absolute supremacy of the Roman pontiff. His determination to enforce this supremacy in the matter of the nomination and investiture of bishops led to a bitter and violent struggle with the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV (Investiture Controversy). Himself an absolutist, Pope Gregory nonetheless contributed to the history of freedom by his insistence that there are limits to the power of the secular state and that the state is subordinate to the law—the laws of God.

**Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich**: German philosopher (1770–1831). Hegel has been called the most influential philosopher of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His philosophy was determinative for the thought of Karl Marx. Hegel’s own contribution to the history of liberty is ambiguous. Hegel celebrated liberty. He saw the process of history as the unfolding of liberty. But in Hegel and his followers, the state becomes the instrument by which liberty is realized. Individual liberty is less important than national liberty. History is a deterministic force, and morality must not stand in the way of the achievement of the historical destiny of the state. “The might force of the state must trample many an innocent flower.”

**Herodotus**: Greek historian (484?–425? B.C.). Probably in 445 B.C., Herodotus recited his *Histories* to the Athenian people. His account of the Persian Wars and their background was the first true work of history ever written. Herodotus fled from tyranny in his native Greek city of Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. The prize money he received from Athens made him wealthy, and he spent his later years in the Greek city of Thurii in south Italy. Herodotus’s *Histories* contributed to the history of freedom by portraying the war against Persia as a struggle of liberty against despotism and by drawing a close relationship among freedom, morality, and religion.

**Jefferson, Thomas**: American president (1843–1826; president, 1801–1809). The author of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was one of the most gifted of the Founding Fathers. He embodied their belief in liberty. Perhaps the only American president to deserve the title genius, Jefferson made significant contributions to
agriculture and education. As president, he established precedents that considerably enhanced the power of the executive branch. For example, he used his authority as commander-in-chief to conduct military operations against the Barbary pirates without a congressional declaration of war. His purchase of the Louisiana Territory (1803) was a milestone in the history of liberty, ensuring the economic viability and territorial expansion of liberty in the United States.

**John:** King of England (1199–1216). The brother of King Richard the Lion-Hearted, John utterly lacked the military and personal qualities of Richard. He was immoral, cowardly, lazy, dishonest, and ungrateful. His military and political ineptitude alienated almost every element in his realm. The Pope excommunicated him. Faced with revolt, not only of his barons but also by most of England, he was forced to sign the Magna Carta. This document is the foundation of liberty in England and, ultimately, the United States. Historians are not entirely certain that the Magna Carta would ever have come into being if John had been a brave, capable, and efficient king.

**John Paul II:** Pope, 1978– (born Karol Wojtyla, 1920). John Paul II may well be remembered as one of the most important figures of the late twentieth century. This Polish-born pope, the first non-Italian pontiff in over four centuries, recalls the great reforming popes of the Middle Ages. He is a man of tireless energy and remarkable personal courage, an intellectual and linguist. He overcame an assassination attempt that was almost certainly instigated by the Soviet Union. A strict conservative in matters of doctrine, he has a profound commitment to individual liberty. His moral authority played a significant role in the growing resistance of Poland to communism in the late 1970s and to the ultimate collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.

**King, Martin Luther, Jr.:** American civil rights leader (1929–1968). A minister and son of a minister, King was a man of profound faith and courage. He stood up against a corrupt social and political system in the American South, which denied to American citizens their constitutional rights on the basis of race. Like apartheid in South Africa, segregation in the South was based on racial theories that are antithetical to liberty. Influenced by Gandhi, King led nonviolent resistance to segregation that resulted in major legislation and the collapse of segregation. In 1964, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. His view of freedom led him into increasing opposition to the policies of the American government in Vietnam. His assassination in 1968 remains a mystery.

**Madison, James:** American president (1751–1836; president, 1809–1817). A graduate of Princeton, Madison took a significant part in the Revolution, first in the Virginia legislature, then in the Continental Congress. His patriotism, energy, and historical knowledge were instrumental in the success of the Constitutional Convention. His essays in *The Federalist* represent major contributions to the political philosophy of liberty and constitutional government. After the Constitution was adopted, Madison was instrumental in drafting the Bill of Rights. His two terms as president were marked by the difficult War of 1812 with Britain and his increasing unpopularity, but the “Father of the Constitution and Bill of Rights” has a secure place in the history of liberty.

**Marsilius of Padua:** Medieval political thinker (1270–1342). Medical doctor, scholar, and man of affairs, Marsilius attacked the political power of the papacy in his book *Defensor Pacis* (1324). He argued that government should rest on the consent of the governed. For Marsilius, the sovereign body in the state was the general assembly of all citizens, who should elect the executive power. The executive power was accountable to the citizens and could be punished by it. Like Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius represents important steps in the development of the liberal tradition of limited government.

**Polybius:** Greek historian (205?–125? B.C.). The son of a distinguished Greek political figure, Polybius was brought to Rome as a political hostage in 167 B.C. Talented and well educated, he became closely associated with the rising generation of Roman statesmen, especially Publius Cornelius Scipio, the grandson of the conqueror of Hannibal. Polybius wrote his *Histories* to explain to both Greeks and Romans how Rome rose to be ruler of the world. Along with Herodotus and Thucydides, Polybius ranks as one of the three greatest Greek historians. His careful analysis of the Roman constitution and the political and moral values of the Romans greatly influenced the Founders, particularly in framing the Constitution.

**Reagan, Ronald:** American president (1911–; president, 1981–1989). Ronald Reagan was a movie actor turned politician who grew to be one of the leading statesmen of the twentieth century. When he became president, America’s role as leader of the free world was seriously imperiled. Foreign policy was a shambles; the economy, in chaos; and national confidence, at its nadir. Reagan’s policies restored the economy and national confidence and led directly to the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Reagan represented the successful
culmination of the policies of a series of American presidents aimed at the expansion of freedom by the containment of communism, including Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.

**Sophocles**: Athenian writer of tragedy (496–406 B.C.). Along with Aeschylus and Euripides, Sophocles was one of the three most important writers of tragedy. In his plays, including *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Antigone*, and others, Sophocles probed some of the deepest questions of freedom: the limits of human knowledge, free will versus fate, liberation from sin, the duties of a citizen to country and to the gods, and the relationship among liberty, religion, and morality.

**Thucydides**: Athenian historian (died c. 400 B.C.). Thucydides wrote the monumental *History of the Peloponnesian War* (431–404 B.C.). His failure as a general in 424 B.C. led to his exile by the Athenian democracy. Thucydides was a profound admirer of Pericles but believed the Athenian democracy to be a failed form of government. His history is one of the most influential books ever written. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarded it as “the eternal manual of statesmen.” Thucydides contributed in three important ways to the history of freedom through his insistence that human nature never changes and, hence, the past is the best guide to the present; his analysis of the corrupting influence of power; and his examination of the strength and weakness of democracy in action.

**Tiberius**: Roman emperor (14–37 A.D.). The adopted son of Augustus, Tiberius was a capable soldier and administrator who did an excellent job of governing the Roman Empire. He was, however, a paranoid personality who sought to maintain power by exercising a policy of systematic terror over the Roman Senate. In particular, allegations of treason were used to destroy any apparent threat to his power. Modern historians have been too kind to a man who, of all the Roman emperors, most resembled Joseph Stalin. The Roman historian Tacitus knew better. Tiberius was succeeded by his grandnephew Gaius (Caligula), who as emperor (37–41 A.D.), raised the family predilection toward insanity to new heights.

**Washington, George**: American soldier and statesman (1732–1799; president, 1789–1797). Washington proved his bravery and capability as a soldier during the French and Indian War (1756–1763). His ability as a surveyor and farmer, as well as his marriage, made Washington, at the outbreak of the Revolution, one of the wealthiest men in America. Like other wealthy patriots, Washington had far more to lose than to gain materially by the Revolution. He chose, however, to follow his honor, conscience, and love of liberty. His skills as a general have been much underrated. His ability in tactics, strategy, logistics, and battlefield command led the American army to victory. His sense of public duty guided him to assume a critical role in framing the Constitution and to serve as the first president. As president, he established precedents that set a course of liberty under law for the new republic.
Annotated Bibliography

Note: The Essential Readings focus largely on primary sources. I have recommend as Supplementary Reading books that expand on the material covered in the lectures and textbooks and other secondary works that place the history of liberty into the broader political and cultural framework.

I. Essential Reading


———. *Freedom in the Modern World*. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. This two-volume history of freedom represents a very different approach than that of our lectures. Our lectures insist that ideas make history. Patterson presents essentially a Marxist construct, in which social and economic conditions make ideas. In particular, he insists that the Greek idea of freedom arose out of the social institution of slavery. Paraphrasing Epictetus and Lord Acton, the ignorant person recommends books with which that person agrees. The person who has made some progress in wisdom does just the opposite. In that spirit, I recommend Patterson.


Plutarch. Trans. Bernadotte Perrin. *Lives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. The Loeb Classical Library, 1914–1926 (numerous subsequent reprints.) Plutarch wrote these biographies to illustrate moral character by comparing a famous Roman with a famous Greek. His purpose is preserved by the translation I have recommended.


Powell, Jim. *The Triumph of Liberty*. New York: The Free Press, 2000. An attempt to tell the history of liberty through the biographies of important figures. Very different in approach and presuppositions from our course. Powell ignores Greece, and a pantheon of the heroes of liberty could be established from the individuals he leaves out: Socrates, Jesus and Paul, Pericles, Lincoln, Churchill, Susan B. Anthony, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and many others.


### II. Supplementary Reading


J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.
Professor of Classics, University of Oklahoma

J. Rufus Fears is Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma, where he holds the G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. He rose from Assistant Professor to Professor of History at Indiana University. From 1986–1990, he was Professor of Classics and Chairman of the Department of Classical Studies at Boston University.

Professor Fears holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His research has been supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the Kerr Foundation, and the Zarrow Foundation. Professor Fears was chosen as Indiana University’s first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. He is listed in Who’s Who in America and Who’s Who in the World.

Professor Fears is the author of more than seventy articles and reviews on ancient history, the history of liberty, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome, The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology, The Theology of Victory at Rome, and The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology. He has published a three-volume edition of Selected Writings of Lord Acton, the great British historian of liberty. In addition, Professor Fears’s comments on the lessons of history have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals in the United States and abroad.

On fifteen occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, he was chosen as the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year.
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A History of Freedom

Scope:

Our course explores the history of freedom, from the birth of the idea of liberty in classical Greece to our own day. Our course rests upon the premise that ideas change history. No idea in the history of the world has been more influential than freedom. Indeed, it can be argued that freedom is the definitive idea of our civilization, and the march towards freedom the central theme of our history. Our course deals with the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of freedom. We also deal with the moral dimension of freedom, and we ask a question as old as classical Greece and as current as today’s newscasts: can we separate liberty, religion and morality, and is there a dichotomy between public and private morality in a free society?

Our course recognizes the many definitions that have been given to the words *freedom* and *liberty*. However, our course proceeds with a two-fold working definition. Liberty is freedom under the law: the freedom of a People to govern itself under laws it gives to itself. Complementing this political freedom is the freedom of the individual: the liberty of the individual to live as he or she chooses as long as that individual does not infringe upon the rights of another individual. Finally, our working definition of freedom maintains that responsibility is the other side of liberty and that for every right there is a corresponding duty.

Our course also rests on the premise that history is made by great individuals and great events, not by anonymous social and economic forces. Accordingly, we center our course around six seminal epochs in the history of liberty and the great individuals and events that shaped them: Greece, Rome, Christianity, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, World War II, and the last decades of the twentieth century.

Lectures One--Six focus on the birth of freedom in Greece and the history of the world’s first democracy, Athens. Our first lecture sets the stage by defining the Greek idea of liberty within the framework of the struggle against the absolutism of the Persian king and his vast empire. Lectures Two--Four describe the institutions and values of the Athenian democracy and the intellectual revolution brought about by this first government “of the People, by the People, and for the People.” Lecture Five examines the trial and execution of Socrates as a test case in the values of the Athenian democracy. Lecture Six concludes our section on Greece with a discussion of the new political and intellectual world brought about by the achievements of Alexander the Great.

Lectures Seven--Eleven trace the history of freedom at Rome. For the Founders of America, the history of Rome was filled with lessons for the citizens of our new Republic. Lecture Seven describes the balanced constitution of the Roman republic, which served the Founders as a model for our own Constitution. Lecture Eight asks why the Romans, at the height of military power and material affluence, lost their republican liberty and accepted the military dictatorship of the Caesars. Lectures Nine and Ten evaluate the contribution made to the history of freedom by the Roman Empire of the Caesars. Lecture Eleven discusses the reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the new forms of liberty that arose out of its ruins.

Lectures Twelve--Seventeen are devoted to the role of Christianity in the history of freedom. Lecture Twelve, on Jesus, places his life and mission within the framework of the political and religious currents of the Roman Empire. Lecture Thirteen compares Jesus and Socrates and asks why the two greatest teachers in history were tried and put to death on trumped-up charges. Lecture Fourteen on Paul explores liberation as a central theme in the message of early Christianity. Lecture Fifteen analyzes the contribution of the institutional church to ideas and institutions of freedom. Martin Luther and the new forces of freedom unleashed by the Protestant Reformation are the subject of Lecture Sixteen. Our section on freedom and Christianity concludes with the intellectual and political opposition offered to freedom by the ideas of Machiavelli and that of the divine right of kings.

Herman Melville wrote, “we Americans are a chosen people, who bear the ark of the liberties of the world.” Our course believes that the United States, its foundation and history, is the most important single event in the history of freedom. Accordingly, we devote eleven lectures to this theme. Lectures Eighteen--Twenty discuss the ideas and events that led up to the American Revolution. Lectures Twenty-One and Twenty-Two analyze the Declaration of Independence, its sources, and its meaning. The United States Constitution is the subject of Lectures Twenty-Three—Twenty-Five. Lecture Twenty-Three describes the ideas, personalities, and events that shaped the...
Constitutional Convention of 1787. Lectures Twenty-Four and Twenty-Five analyze the ideas and institutions of liberty embodied in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Founders and their Constitution did not resolve two great questions: slavery, and whether a citizen’s ultimate loyalty lay with his state or with the United States. Lectures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven discuss the American Civil War as the great struggle that resolved these issues. The focus is on Robert E. Lee and Abraham Lincoln as paradigms of the conflicting ideas of liberty over which the Civil War was fought. Lecture Twenty-Eight presents Franklin Roosevelt—his social, economic, and political program—as the fulfillment of Abraham Lincoln’s ideal of government “of the People, by the People, and for the People.”

The twentieth century witnessed unprecedented challenges to freedom. Lectures Twenty-Nine—Thirty-Three focus on World War II as a decisive moment in the history of freedom, a struggle between good and evil as embodied in Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler and the traditions each represented. The section begins with the French Revolution and its ambiguous legacy to the history of freedom. Lectures Thirty and Thirty-One are devoted the liberal tradition and Winston Churchill. Lectures Thirty-Two and Thirty-Three explore the illiberal tradition and Adolf Hitler.

Our final three lectures look at the Cold War and the extraordinary march towards freedom witnessed by the last decade of the twentieth century. America as the bastion of liberty is the central figure in these concluding lectures. It was American Presidents from Truman to Reagan who understood and fought Communism and the Soviet system as archetypal enemies of true liberty. Lecture Thirty-Five examines the relationship between liberty and civil disobedience in the ideals and actions of Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our last lecture summarizes our course and looks into the future. Americans entered the twenty-first century convinced that we are the only superpower and that the innovations of science, technology, and industry have opened a new era of individual liberty, prosperity, and peace. It should be remembered that Europeans entered the twentieth century under similar delusions. This course of lectures ends on a cautionary note, one that was already voiced in the Athenian democracy of the fifth century BC. Excessive individualism is not liberty but rather license. There can ultimately be no separation between public and private morality. A democratic society can survive only if its citizens have a shared set of moral and political values. Excessive prosperity can lead to that public apathy about politics which is the death knell of liberty. In the end, the true test of a free society is its ability to produce leaders of ability, vision, and moral character.
Scope: Jesus and Socrates invite comparison as two of the greatest teachers in history and as seminal figures in the story of freedom. Both were true philosophers, lovers of wisdom who saw their teaching as a vocation— not a career—and who lived and died as witnesses to the truth. Both brought messages of individual liberation and salvation to societies rooted in communal concepts of freedom. Both aroused bitter enmity among their peers—Sophists and Pharisees. Both were tried and sentenced to death by a jury of their peers on charges of blasphemy and treason. Both proved even more powerful in death than in life. Socrates laid the foundation for the modern university. Jesus was the founder of Christianity.

Outline

I. This lecture compares two seminal figures in the history of freedom. They were not statesmen or warriors or authors of great books. In fact, both eschewed any involvement in politics and neither published a word. But both opened new worlds for the spirit of individual freedom, and both rank as two of the most influential figures in history.
   A. Socrates: freedom of inquiry and freedom of conscience.
   B. Jesus: freedom of the individual from sin and death.
   C. Socrates as founder of the intellectual tradition of universities.
   D. Jesus as founder of Christianity.

II. Socrates and Jesus both lived in an age of freedom.
   A. Socrates and the Athenian democracy.
      1. Political freedom existed.
      2. The individual had the freedom to live as he chose.
   B. Jesus and the Roman Empire.
      1. The individual possessed the freedom to live as he chose.
      2. Tolerance and local political freedom existed.

III. Socrates and Jesus were both teachers. Why were the two greatest teachers in history tried and convicted on trumped up charges by a jury of their peers, then executed? This question is clearly loaded—with value judgments.

IV. Socrates and Jesus as teachers.
   A. They were unconventional.
   B. They can be contrasted with their peers, Sophists and Pharisees.
      1. They received no salary; held no office.
      2. They had no credentials.

V. For both Socrates and Jesus, teaching was a vocation, not a career.
   A. A vocation is a calling from God.
      1. Socrates was called by the god Apollo of Delphi.
      2. Baptism of Jesus: “You are my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”
   B. The word career is derived from the French word carrière, a highway. A career is not a calling from God, but merely a way to get somewhere better. Modern professors are careerists. Socrates and Jesus were philosophers.
   C. Neither Socrates nor Jesus would receive tenure in a modern American university.
VI. A true philosopher is a lover of wisdom. Such love of wisdom has nothing in common with the modern academic discipline of philosophy.

A. A distinction can be drawn among information, knowledge, and wisdom.
   1. Information is facts.
   2. Knowledge is placing these facts into an interpretative framework.
   3. Wisdom is the use of this knowledge to live your life in a moral fashion.

B. As lovers of wisdom, Both Socrates and Jesus were concerned with the individual’s soul.
   1. Socrates turned from the study of science to the soul.
   2. Jesus had no interest in a political kingdom of God; his kingdom of God was in the individual’s soul.

C. The teachings of both Socrates and Jesus aimed at leading the individual to ethical decisions.

VII. The teaching of Socrates and Jesus.

A. Ambiguity was a means of forcing the individual to his or her own ethical decision.
   1. Socrates asked questions; he did not lecture.
   2. Jesus did not answer directly such questions as “What is the kingdom of God?”

B. Neither Socrates or Jesus published. This absence of publication made their teaching seem even more ambiguous and easy for others to misrepresent.

C. Why did Socrates and Jesus not publish?

D. Publication is an act of finality. It suggests that you know the truth. The true philosopher is always searching for the truth, and in this search, there is no earthly finality.

VIII. Conflict with their peers.

A. Both Socrates and Jesus directed their messages of individual salvation to societies that were communally based.
   1. Athenian democracy was rooted in majority rule. The individual was subordinate to the rule of the majority.
   2. Judaism honored the fundamental role of the Jewish law. Salvation was for the Jewish people as a whole.

B. Both Socrates and Jesus went out of their way to be in conflict with their peers, the Sophists and the Pharisees.

C. By the time Socrates and Jesus were brought to trial, both had alienated almost every constituency in their societies.

IX. Sources for Jesus and Socrates.

A. The similarity between Socrates and Jesus continues in the matter of our sources of knowledge for them.

B. What we know about Socrates and Jesus derives from the “gospels” written by their students and followers.
   1. The Apology of Plato and the Memorabilia of Xenophon were written to show that Socrates was the best, the wisest, and the most just man of his time.
   2. The Gospels were written “so that ye might believe” that Jesus is the savior.

X. The trials of Socrates and Jesus were both legal and reflected the ideal of liberty under law.

XI. The charges.

A. Socrates was charged:
   1. With blasphemy or atheism: refusing to believe in the gods of Athens, but in new, different divinities.
   2. With treason: corrupting the young.

B. Jesus was convicted:
   1. Of blasphemy before the Jewish Sanhedrin.
   2. Of treason, for claiming to be king of the Jews, before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

C. In each case, the charges were completely false. Both Socrates and Jesus were the victims of envy and slander. The most effective form of slander, “the Big Lie,” was used against both teachers.
XII. The real reason that both teachers were convicted and executed was that both Socrates and Jesus struck at the heart of the community.

A. Socrates had contempt for the ideal of majority rule, on which the Athenian democracy rested.
   1. He had contempt for the Athenian democracy.
   2. The Athenian democracy could not survive if many followed his call to abandon politics and be concerned only with their souls.

B. Jesus gave no importance to the elaborate code of Jewish Law. Salvation was found outside the law in the individual’s personal decision. Judaism could not survive without the Law.

XIII. Both men courted death. Both men proved even more powerful in death than in life. However, for both, this posthumous impact could be achieved only by institutionalizing them.

A. Plato reduced the message of Socrates to writing and, along with Aristotle, laid the foundation of the modern university.

B. St. Paul interpreted the message of Jesus in a form comprehensible to Greeks and Romans and laid the foundation for the Christian church.

Essential Reading:
Xenophon, Memorabilia.
Gospel of Matthew.

Supplementary Reading:
Mill, On Liberty, pp. 84–86.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why were the two greatest teachers in history both tried by their peers on trumped up charges, convicted, and put to death?

2. Compare Plato’s Apology and Xenophon’s Memorabilia with the Gospels as historical sources.
Lecture Fourteen
Paul the Apostle

Scope: Unlike Jesus, Paul was a Roman citizen. His success in spreading the message of Christianity was made possible by the political, economic, and cultural unity of the Roman Empire. His career illustrates basic freedoms guaranteed by Roman citizenship, such as freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right of appeal, protection against cruel or unusual punishment. His theology of salvation as liberation drew upon concepts of freedom in some of the most innovative currents of Roman imperial thought. Paul’s letter to the Galatians is rightly regarded as the Magna Carta of Christian liberty. However, his view that the secular powers were ordained of God was instrumental in the development of the idea of the divine right of kings.

Outline

I. The history of Christianity began with the belief by students and other followers of Jesus that he had been resurrected from the dead and had appeared to them in bodily form.
   A. The resurrection was the manifestation of the ultimate power of Jesus: the power to conquer death itself.
   B. From the perspective of the history of liberty, this power was the ultimate freedom—freedom from death, the fate of all humans.

II. Next to Jesus, Paul is the most important figure in the history of Christianity. Paul is one of the most powerful intellects in history.
   A. By his mission and teaching, Paul transformed belief in a Jewish teacher as Jewish messiah into a religion that was comprehensible to Greeks and Romans and that was capable of expanding throughout the Roman Empire and beyond its frontiers.
   B. The mission of Paul took place entirely in the framework of the Roman Empire.
   C. After beholding a vision, Paul began his mission of preaching the gospel about 39 A.D.

III. Paul the Roman citizen.
   A. Paul was born a Roman citizen and, thus, was guaranteed fundamental rights as an individual:
      1. Freedom of speech carried Paul through the empire. Even in Rome, he spent two years preaching the gospel.
      2. Freedom of travel. He traveled widely, unimpeded by boundaries.
      3. Freedom from arbitrary arrest. He must break a Roman law before the Romans will arrest him.
      4. Freedom from cruel and unusual punishment. He avoided a beating by citing his citizenship.
      5. Right of appeal to Caesar had replaced the appeal to the people as a basic right of the citizen.
   B. These rights were very real and are frequently demonstrated in the course of Paul’s career, as recorded in the Book of Acts.
   C. The Book of Acts, written by the historically minded Luke, is an excellent source for daily life in the Roman Empire of the first century A.D.
      1. The peace of the Roman Empire and its political and economic unity allowed Paul to travel widely and—in general—safely, teaching and spreading his message.
      2. The linguistic unity of the Roman Empire allowed Paul to spread that message in the commonly understood language of Greek.
      3. The cultural unity of the Roman Empire provided Paul with a common currency of ideas that made his message comprehensible to Gentiles.

IV. Paul was highly educated in Greco-Roman, as well as Jewish, learning. The message of Paul drew on a wide range of Greco-Roman religious, philosophical, and political ideas.
   A. Greek and Roman mythology.
      1. Hercules was the son of a god (Zeus or Jupiter) born of a mortal woman.
2. He carried out deeds of great benefit to mankind. He triumphed over death, became a god, and joined his father, Zeus, in heaven. Hercules thus provided a prototype that made Paul’s concept of Jesus comprehensible to pagans.

B. The worship of the emperor.
1. Such emperors as Julius Caesar and Augustus were sincerely believed by ordinary inhabitants of the Roman Empire to be gods. The emperors were mortals who, by outstanding deeds of power and benefit to mankind, had won immortality and been raised to heaven by the gods.
2. The religious terms used in the cult of the emperors had a strong impact on Paul’s theology of Christ. The name Augustus meant “the one sent by the gods” or “the messiah.” Augustus and other emperors were called “the savior of the human race.”
3. But the emperor could not give eternal life. That belonged to the notion of savior gods and monotheism.

C. Stoicism and other philosophical and religious currents taught a monotheistic view of god. God is one, all powerful, all knowing, all good.

D. Natural law taught that all men are created free and equal in the sight of god.

E. Individual cults of savior divinities, so-called “mystery cults,” carried messages of individual salvation.
1. Thus, worshippers of Isis believed that they would find eternal life by accepting the goddess as their personal savior, undergoing ritual initiation, and living an ethical life.
2. Such cults of personal salvation placed great emphasis on the idea of liberation from death: True freedom was defined as slavery to the savior god.

V. Freedom in the thought of Paul.
A. Paul’s letters to the Romans and to the Galatians are fundamental documents in the history of liberty. They treat:
1. Salvation as liberation from the Jewish Law. Paul proposes a Magna Carta of Christian liberty, freeing one from the strictures of law.
2. Salvation as liberation from sin.
3. Salvation as liberation from death. The triumph over death, the final liberation of man, is central to Paul’s message.

B. Paul’s message is a message of individual liberation. It is not a call to political revolution. Paul’s statement that the earthly governments are ordained by God reflected the imperial view that the emperors were chosen by the gods and accountable only to the gods.
1. Paul is, thus, the fountainhead for the medieval and early modern view of the divine right of kings.
2. Paul shaped Martin Luther’s view that Christians owed obedience even to an evil earthly ruler. This notion would be used by Germans in the Third Reich to justify their obedience to Hitler.
3. Paul also believed in the equality of all Christians. Salvation was the result of becoming the slave of God—as the Romans had believed that servitude to the emperor brought the fulfillment of liberty.

VI. In 64 A.D., the Roman Emperor Nero launched the first persecution of Christians. Nero was seeking a scapegoat for the blame attached to him for the fire that had destroyed much of the city of Rome. Christians were an easy group to marginalize and, hence, persecute. However, the persecution by Nero and later emperors also demonstrated a deeper issue between the imperial government and Christianity.
A. Christians were persecuted, tried, and executed as traitors, the first group to be so treated. They refused to worship the gods of Rome. Their refusal tested the limits of tolerance of the Roman government.

B. The persecution of the Christians is a moving story in the history of freedom of conscience. It would continue for centuries to come until the conversion of Constantine.
C. Peter and Paul both were put to death in the persecution of Nero. Their deaths illustrate the rights inherent in the freedom of a Roman citizen.
1. Peter was not a Roman citizen, and he was crucified.
2. Crucifixion was cruel and unusual punishment for a Roman citizen. Hence Paul, a citizen, was beheaded. This was a profound testimony to the power of the individual conscience.

Essential Reading:

**Supplementary Reading:**
Sanders, *Paul*.

**Questions to Consider:**
1. Do you believe that Paul’s words in Romans 13.1–6 are an admonition against resisting an evil government?
2. In George Orwell’s *1984* and in Paul’s letter to the Romans (6:22), freedom is defined as slavery. How do you interpret and explain this idea?
Lecture Fifteen
Freedom in the Middle Ages

Scope: The conversion of the emperor Constantine in 312 A.D. was a watershed in history, with consequences still felt today. The continuance of the Roman–Byzantine Empire at Constantinople led to development of the ideas and institutions of Caesaropapism, the complete subordination of the Church to the emperor. By contrast, the collapse of Roman power in the West (476 AD) and the emergence of the papacy as a political as well as spiritual power created the Church as an effective equipoise to secular powers. The belief that the spiritual power was ultimately superior to the secular was reinforced by the policy of vigorous popes like Gregory VII. Far from being an age of absolutism, the Middle Ages in western Europe was marked by the development of ideas and institutions fundamental to the history of liberty: government is under—not above—the law; government should rest upon the consent of the governed; representative government; and the right to revolution. The different course of Christianity in Western Europe and Byzantium continues to be reflected in the contrast between the history of freedom in the United States and in Russia.

Outline

I. The Roman empire of the first centuries A.D. experienced a time of deep piety. Conflict resulted between pagans and Christians, each with profound beliefs.
   A. Christians refused repeated admonitions to sacrifice to the gods—and accepted the dire consequences.
   B. Some of their peers were inspired by such conviction.

II. On October 29, 312 A.D., the army of Constantine marched in triumph through the streets of Rome, celebrating victory over his imperial rival, Maxentius.
   A. Rome had seen the triumphant procession of many armies led by many great men: from Scipio to Caesar, from Augustus to Caesar.
   B. But the army of Constantine bore on their helmets a strange, new sign: the Greek letters chi-rho, the first two letters of the name of Christus. Constantine was a Christian.
   C. He believed his victory over Maxentius and, ultimately, his absolute mastery over the Roman Empire were the gifts of the Christian God.

III. The conversion of the emperor Constantine was one of the most decisive events in world history.
   A. Constantine was a sincere and deeply believing Christian.
   B. Constantine was an absolute ruler, with all the power and governmental machinery of the Roman imperial state at his disposal.
   C. Constantine believed that he was chosen by God to spread the Christian faith throughout the world.
   D. The conversion of Constantine transformed Christianity from a small, persecuted sect into the favored religion of the empire.
   E. Constantine raised his sons to be strong Christians.
      1. Christianity became the state religion of the empire.
      2. Pagans and their religious practices were proscribed. This meant the official persecution by the Roman state of the religious traditions of 1,000 years of Roman history.

IV. Reasons for the triumph of Christianity.
   A. Christianity was supported by the full weight of the Roman Empire.
   B. It answered the deepest needs of an age of spirituality, in which the soul and its salvation were the focus of the attention of most men and women.
   C. It offered not only salvation in the afterlife, but the advantages, now, of career advancement.
V. The conversion of the Roman Empire by Constantine and his Christian successors was one of the most revolutionary events in history. By 361 A.D., the majority of Romans were sincere Christians. It proved impossible for the emperor Julian (361–363) to turn the empire back to paganism.

A. In 330 A.D., Constantine founded his city, Constantinople, as a second and purely Christian capital of the empire.

B. By his conversion to Christianity and the establishment of Constantinople, Constantine can be called “the Founder of the Middle Ages.”
   1. Christianity was a dominant and defining force of the Middle Ages.
   2. The Christian Roman Empire (Byzantine) centered at Constantinople was a dominant political, economic, and intellectual center of the early Middle Ages.

VI. The consequences of the triumph of Christianity for Christianity.

A. Enormous wealth, power, and influence accrued to the Church.

B. The corrupting effects of wealth, power, and influence made themselves known.

C. The church became as imperial in outlook as the empire had been.

VII. The consequences of the triumph of Christianity for the Roman Empire.

A. Financial drain.
   1. Development and support of an elaborate and expensive ecclesiastical bureaucracy was required.
   2. Religious building took place on a massive scale.

B. Desperately needed manpower resources were drained.
   1. Plagues had decimated as much as one-quarter of the population in some places.
   2. Through the clergy and monasticism, the church increased the drain on manpower.

C. The demands for religious orthodoxy brought about dissension and disunity throughout the empire.

VIII. The consequences for the history of liberty.

A. The demand for religious orthodoxy subjected freedom of thought, speech, writing, and conscience to controls unthinkable in the classical world.
   1. Intellectual freedom was reduced.
   2. Though founded on the principle of freedom of conscience, Christianity began to enlist its own persecutions.

B. The Byzantine Empire followed the precedent set by Constantine. The emperor is both king and priest and master of the Church. This idea—caesaropapism—would become the doctrine of the Orthodox Church.

C. The collapse of imperial authority in the West led to the rise of the papacy as an independent ecclesiastical and political power. (When Attila approached Rome, it was the pope who went out to meet him.) A separation of sacred and secular powers—the “theory of the two swords”—developed.
   1. The pope is independent and superior to any earthly government, because the spiritual is superior to the secular authority.
   2. Throughout the Middle Ages, vigorous popes on numerous occasions proved this superiority. This activism provided a check on secular governments that didn’t exist in the East.
   3. In these terms, the power of the Church acted as check and balance on the growth of royal absolutism in the Middle Ages, in practice as well as in theory.
   4. In this framework, ideas and institutions of limited government developed: Government is under—not above—the law.

D. The different course of Christianity in Byzantium and Western Europe may well explain the different course of freedom in the United States and in Russia.
Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Do you agree that Constantine’s conversion is one of the decisive events in history?
2. How would you distinguish between the different course of history in the United States and in Russia?
Lecture Sixteen
Luther and the Protestant Reformation

Scope: Martin Luther is one of the proofs that great men and women – not anonymous social and economic forces – make history. Luther is also proof that the times and conditions must be ripe for the Great Individual to succeed. Luther shattered the medieval world and unleashed forces that continue to shape the history of freedom. Like St. Paul, the influence of Luther is two-fold. He established the individual conscience as the ultimate authority. He accustomed men and women to break with established authorities and to see in spiritual freedom a justification for social and economic liberty and equality. Protestant sects played a major role in the history of freedom, especially in the New World. Much of this was contrary to Luther’s wishes; and his insistence on the individual’s subordination to secular authority would reverberate in Germany on down until the Third Reich. The ideas of liberal, limited government and that of state absolutism can both find justification in Luther.

Outline

I. The Church in the Middle Ages was the most powerful institution in Europe.
   A. It possessed political and economic power.
   B. It wielded spiritual power over what men and women deemed to be most important: the salvation of their souls.
   C. It controlled knowledge.

II. Martin Luther stood up against the full weight of that power and authority because he believed that doing so was his duty, because he believed he was right, and because he believed that the truth would make men free.
   A. A professor at the University of Wittenberg, he was educated in the church teaching that meritorious works and deeds were intrinsic to salvation.
   B. However, reading the New Testament, especially Paul, in Greek, Luther became convinced that salvation was dependent only on faith and the grace of God: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast” (2 Ephesians: 8-10).

III. Luther is one of the strongest proofs that great men and women change history. He is also proof that the times must be ripe for the great individual to succeed.
   A. Luther’s career was one example of the social mobility provided by the Church.
   B. A thorough scholar, dynamic teacher, and capable administrator, Luther— in today’s academic system—would have been granted tenure and made a full professor with ratings of “excellent” in all three categories: research, teaching, and service.

IV. On October 31, 1517, the monk and professor at the University of Wittenberg nailed to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg ninety-five theses that he proposed for an academic debate.
   A. The debate was to be over the abuse of “indulgences,” the practice of granting remission from temporal punishment for sins in return for monetary donations to the Church.
   B. This professor, Martin Luther, would unleash a historical cataclysm as great as that caused by the conversion of Constantine.
   C. Eventually, he was forced to argue that the conscience of the interpreter was responsible for understanding God. Thus, although the individual was absolutely free of the Church, he was also an absolute slave of divine will.
   D. Luther was a man of indomitable energy, courage, and deep religious faith. He refused to recant his ideas when confronted by the authorities.
   E. He was a many-sided genius, whose translation of the Bible was formative for the modern German language.
V. At its core, the Reformation was a debate over freedom. It focused on two central questions, questions already posed in Athens in the fifth century.

A. Freedom of the will versus determinism.
   1. One of the central issues of Athenian tragedy: Does the tragic hero destroy himself by actions freely chosen, or do the gods predestine his actions and destruction?
   2. Christianity posed the question, as follows: God is all knowing and all powerful. Are we predestined for salvation or damnation, or do we find salvation by our own free choice of Christ as savior?
   3. Paul and St. Augustine leaned toward predestination, as did Luther. Much of the most influential theology of the Middle Ages, including that of St. Thomas Aquinas, leaned toward free will.

B. Freedom of conscience.
   1. The teaching of the medieval Church insisted that the only way to salvation was through the Church. The Church Fathers and teachings of the Church were accorded equal authority with the Bible.
   2. Luther insisted on the absolute priority of the Bible and on the freedom of the individual conscience.

VI. Luther’s teachings were not original. He was not the first to preach the need for reforming the Church. However, other reformers, such as Jan Hus, had been burned at the stake. Luther’s success was aided by powerful forces of his time:

A. Nationalistic: The desire of many rulers of the numerous German states to be free of the control of the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. This desire built on a growing sense of German nationalism.

B. Economic: Capitalism both fostered and was fostered by the Reformation. Luther himself wrote about the dignity of ordinary work.

C. Humanistic: The revival of classical learning was critical in the intellectual origins of the Reformation. Luther’s own religious thought was deeply shaped by his ability to read the Bible in Hebrew and Greek.

VII. Luther is also proof that the great individual can unleash forces that go far beyond his or her intentions.

A. The Reformation taught men and women to question authority on a wide scale.

B. Luther was essentially conservative in his political and social views.
   1. He followed St. Paul in his belief that earthly governments are ordained by God. Luther believed that even evil rulers are ordained by God and must be obeyed.
   2. Luther’s insistence on the submission to state authority was formative for Germany and continued to resonate in the Third Reich.

C. Luther’s original Reformation split into numerous Protestant currents. Some became mainstream and were essentially conservative, such as Calvinism, built on John Calvin’s notion of predestination.

D. Others, such as Anabaptists and Quakers, developed far more radical religious, social, and political views, including the ideas of absolute authority of the individual’s conscience, separation of church and state, and nonviolent resistance to governmental authority.

E. The desire for freedom of worship was instrumental in transplanting these ideas and institutions of liberty to the New World.

Essential Reading:
Bainton, Here I Stand.
Martin Luther, On Christian Liberty.

Supplementary Reading:
Luther’s Ninety-five Theses, Address to the German Nobility, and Peasants’ Manifesto (1524), in Viorst, Documents, pp. 85–96.

Questions to Consider:
1. The period from 1517 until 1648 (the Peace of Westphalia) was dominated by great struggles and wars over religion. Why do you think religion was of such importance in this period?

2. The view in classical antiquity, throughout the Middle Ages, and of Luther himself was that church and state must be united to ensure morality and the social order. Do you agree?
Lecture Seventeen
From Machiavelli to the Divine Right of Kings

Scope: The Renaissance in Italy saw the rebirth of classical forms in art, literature, and politics. Italian city-states like Florence and Venice hearkened back to Greek and Roman models and invoked classical concepts of liberty. Intrinsic to those concepts was the question of private versus public morality: are the state and its leaders bound by the same moral values that should govern the conduct of private individuals, or are the state and statesmen beyond traditional concepts of good and evil, and is success the only justification for their actions? Cicero’s work *On Moral Duties* is the most profound and influential defense of the belief that there can be no dichotomy between public and private morality. Machiavelli’s *The Prince* was written as a conscious critique of Cicero and provided the intellectual foundation for the state as absolute and amoral, an ideal and reality that has presented the greatest single challenge to freedom in the modern age. This concept of state absolutism received its preeminent early modern statement in the concept of the divine right of kings: the belief that the king derives his power from God and is accountable to God alone. Divine right of kings drew upon classical, biblical, and medieval sources, but it reached its clearest formulation in seventeenth century France in the figure of Louis XIV. However, in contrast to France, the attempt in England to establish absolute monarchy on the ideal of the divine right of kings led to civil war, the beheading of King Charles, and the establishment of the rule of Parliament under “the reign of liberty.”

Outline

I. The Italian Renaissance was a “rebirth” of the legacy of classical antiquity. The Renaissance was marked by the rebirth of classical forms in art, architecture, literature, philosophy, and politics.
   A. This rebirth took place in the political framework of city-states, which were, in many ways, similar to the city-states of classical Greece and Rome. Florence and Venice were two of the greatest of these city-states.
   B. The Renaissance was an age of individualism and power politics. Secularism, rather than Christianity, dominated the social, political, and intellectual forces of the age. In the Renaissance, even popes, such as Julius II (1503–1513), were secularists and political adventurers. Cesare Borgia (1475–1507) and his unscrupulous career typified the lack of political morality in the age.

II. *The Prince* by Machiavelli epitomizes the age of the Renaissance in Italy.
   A. Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527) was a citizen of the Republic of Florence.
   B. Middle class in background and well educated in the classics, Machiavelli was a civil servant of the Republic of Florence. He served it capably in a number of positions, including diplomatic service.
   C. In 1512, the republican government of Florence fell and was replaced by the authoritarian regime of the Medici. Machiavelli lost his position, was briefly imprisoned, and forced to retire to his farm outside of Florence.
   D. He devoted himself to the study of history and to writing. Machiavelli was many faceted.
      1. His comedy *Mandragola* is celebrated as one of the best works of its kind ever written in Italian.
      2. Above all, however, Machiavelli wrote books that used the past to illuminate the present: *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* and, most important, *The Prince* (1513).
   E. In terms of personal character, Machiavelli was adulterous and licentious.

III. *The Prince* as a great book.
   A. Definition of a great book.
      1. It deals with a great theme.
      2. It speaks across the ages.
      3. It is written in noble language. It is not the specific language, for example, Latin or English, that is noble. The nobility lies in the ability of the author to convey ideas in powerful and memorable language.
      4. It summarizes the values of a great age.
B. *The Prince.*
1. It deals with a great theme: power.
2. Indeed, it speaks across the ages. It is one of the most influential books ever written.
3. Machiavelli chose not to write in Latin, as would have been common. He writes in a clear, forceful Italian that was formative for the later history of the language.
4. The book summarizes the values and ideals of the Italian Renaissance.

IV. The ideas of *The Prince.*
A. The Italian title, *Il Principe,* is correctly but inadequately translated into English as *The Prince.* A better rendition is *The Leader,* in the sense Mussolini—*il Duce*—and Hitler—*Der Fuhrer*—were called the Leader. Machiavelli’s *Principe* was a dictator.
B. Machiavelli built on a great tradition of debate on morality in politics. *The Prince* is a tacit but direct critique of Cicero’s work *On Moral Duties* (*De Officiis,* 44 B.C.).
C. For Cicero, a dichotomy can never exist between morality and expediency, and no separation can exist between public and private morality. Machiavelli argues exactly the opposite.
D. Machiavelli argues that expedient acts are frequently immoral. Machiavelli is a complete secularist. He does not deny God and the idea of divine punishment. They simply do not enter his calculations. Success is the only criterion by which to judge a leader or his actions.
E. Machiavelli bases his conclusions on the empirical evidence of history.

V. The influence of Machiavelli’s *The Prince.*
A. Machiavelli failed in his intention of writing *The Prince:* to be called to high position in the new Florentine state of the Medici.
B. His ideas were too honest, too free of cant, to be openly embraced. In fact, however, *The Prince* has served as a self-help manual for leaders in all fields down to our own day.

VI. Machiavelli and the history of liberty.
A. Lord Acton believed that the modern political world began with Machiavelli. The Middle Ages taught that the state was subject to God and his moral code.
B. Machiavelli revived the classical Greek idea, found in Thucydides, that the state is subject to no limits and no code of morality. Machiavelli was, thus, at the foundation of the greatest enemies faced by freedom in the modern age: the totalitarian regimes of Nazism and communism.

VII. Machiavelli saw himself as an Italian patriot and ended *The Prince* with a call for the unification of Italy. That would remain a dream for three and a half centuries. A more successful demonstration of Machiavelli’s principles was seen in the “new monarchies” elsewhere in Europe: England of the Tudor monarchs, France of Louis XI and his successors, and Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella.
A. The new monarchies were national, rather than dynastic, states.
B. The king was the guarantor of law and order against the chaos of unruly feudal nobility.
C. The new monarchies were centralized and bureaucratic.
D. The new monarchies were strongly supported by the middle class, which wanted a government that would ensure peace, prosperity, and efficiency.
E. Parliaments and other institutions of representative government were viewed as anachronistic holdovers of feudalism.
F. Roman law was fostered as the legal vehicle of royal absolutism.
G. While cloaking themselves in the hypocrisy of traditional values, the rulers of these new monarchies operated on the basis that might makes right and success is the only criterion of justice.

VIII. Every government requires a myth of supranational legitimization, a set of beliefs that unites the political community and validates decision making.
A. In a democracy, this set of beliefs is majority rule.
B. In the new monarchies, it was the concept of the divine right of kings.
IX. The divine right of kings.
   A. Definition: The king is chosen and ordained by God. The king rules as the earthly vicegerent of God; therefore, the king is accountable to God alone. Resistance to the king’s rule is blasphemy.
   B. Origins of the idea of divine right of kings.
      1. The idea is as old as monarchy itself. It was fundamental to the concept of monarchy in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.
      2. In Greece, the idea was known to Homer and was adopted by Alexander the Great as the ideological foundation of his world empire.
      3. The divine right of the emperor served as the unifying ideology of the vast, disparate, and supranational empire of the Caesars. Divine right of the emperor was written into Roman law.
      4. In the Bible, the divine right of kings finds support in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Paul’s political views provided the strongest possible support for the doctrine of the divine right of kings.

X. The idea of limited government and the concept that government should rest on the consent of the governed were represented in important currents of medieval political thought and in the work of two writers in particular:
   A. Thomas Aquinas.
   B. Marsilius of Padua, whose work one pope declared the most heretical he had ever seen.

XI. However, divine right was much more suited to bolster the absolutist claims of the new monarchies. The political institutions of the new monarchies and the concept of the divine right of kings reached their apex in the France of Louis XIV (1643–1715).
   A. The dictum of King Louis, “l’etat, c’est moi”—“the state is myself,” reflects the absolute position of the king as sole source of justice and power in the kingdom.
   B. Bishop Bossuet (1627–1724) justified this royal absolutism by the doctrine of the divine right of kings.
   C. Eventually, the French would transform the divine right of kings into the divine right of the people—by way of revolution.
   D. England, as we shall see, would take a far different course.

Essential Reading:
Machiavelli, The Prince.
Locke, Two Treatises on Government.

Supplementary Reading:
Burckhardt, Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy.
Fears, Princeps.
Figgis, Divine Right of Kings.
Barzun, Dawn, pp. 3–190.
Questions to Consider:
1. The divine right of kings is essentially a paternalistic form of government. It assumes that government rather than the individual is the best judge of the individual’s interest. Do you see similarities between this view and the social welfare state of the twentieth century?
2. Are the ideas presented in Machiavelli immoral or merely a statement of facts?
Lecture Eighteen

The Anglo-American Tradition of Liberty

Scope: The Founders of the United States rightly regarded June 15, 1215 as a monumental date in their own history and in the history of freedom. Magna Carta established the principle that government is under—not above—the law. Consent of the governed is the foundation of legitimate government. Magna Carta established such rights as trial by jury and habeas corpus, considered by the Founders to be bastions of their liberty. Often challenged by kings, the principles of Magna Carta were defended and expanded by the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution and were embodied in the institutions of government of the American colonies. This historical experience of England was the single most decisive factor in the American declaration and justification of independence.

Outline

I. “Caesar had his Brutus, Charles I his Cromwell, and George III may profit by their example.”
   A. In his immortal speech urging resistance to the Stamp Act in 1765, Patrick Henry invoked the two most important historical paradigms for the Americans in their resistance to tyranny: Rome and England.
   B. The experience of England was the more immediate and the more decisive.
      1. The history of England provided more than 500 years of precedents that justified resistance to a tyrannical government.
      2. These precedents included civil war and the beheading of a king. The most recent, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, stood closer in time to the Founders than our Civil War does to us.

II. Anglo-Saxons.
   A. In the historical understanding of the Founders, the Anglo-Saxon invaders brought freedom out of the forests of Germany and to the shores of Britain.
      1. These ferocious Germanic tribesmen, forerunners of the Vikings, came from what is today the northwestern part of Germany and Denmark.
      2. Their sea-borne invasions of the Roman province of Britannia began in 450 A.D. By 600, they were founding kingdoms.
      1. According to Tacitus, the Germans possessed the love of freedom and the warlike and moral virtues that had once characterized the Romans.
      2. Some of the political beliefs and practices of the Germans included consent of the governed, trial by jury, governance by assembly, and the right to bear arms.
   C. Following the historical knowledge of their own day, the Founders credited the Anglo-Saxons with fundamental institutions of English liberty, such as the origins of Parliament and trial by jury.

III. Magna Carta.
   A. On June 15, 1215, at Runnymede, near Windsor castle, King John signed the Magna Carta.
   B. John was one of the more incompetent rulers in history. He managed to alienate every constituency in his kingdom. The rebellion of his barons forced him to sign a charter granting basic liberties to every freeman in the realm.
   C. Recent historians have sought to debunk the Magna Carta, minimizing its significance. It is, in fact, what the Founders believed it to be: “The Great Charter” of English liberties.
      1. Magna Carta established the principle that government is subject to the law, not above the law.
      2. It provided a mechanism for forcing the government to obey the law.
      3. The government cannot levy taxes without the consent of the General Council of the Realm (Parliament). This power of the purse was fundamental to the growth of parliamentary democracy in England.
4. Other rights were enumerated: freedom of trade, freedom of travel, equal justice, a fair and speedy trial, compensation for the taking of private property, and trial by jury.

IV. Parliament.
   A. By 1295, the right of all classes of Englishmen to be represented in Parliament was established.
   B. Parliament served as the main check on the growth of royal absolutism in England.

V. The English common law.
   A. The Founders regarded the English system of jurisprudence, the common law, as the bastion of liberty.
   B. Common law goes back to the Germanic law of the Anglo-Saxons. The reign of King Henry II (1154–1189) was formative for the medieval development of the common law.
   C. The term “common law” derives from the Middle Ages.
      1. The common law is *lex terrae*, the law of the land.
      2. It means the law that is common to the realm as a whole, rather than local laws or laws intended for a particular group of people, for example the Law Merchant.
   D. The English common law differs fundamentally from Roman law, which is the foundation for the legal systems of the rest of Europe.
      1. Roman (or civil law) is based ultimately on the codification of Roman law compiled at the order of the Emperor Justinian (527–565), distilling the best and most useful laws and judicial opinions from 1,000 years of Roman jurisprudence.
      2. Roman law uses different procedures and rules of evidence than common law does.
      3. Most important, in Roman law, the government is above the law. The tradition of the common law is that government is under the law.
   E. Common law is based on court decisions, the principles derived from those decisions, and on usage and customs, rather than on written, codified laws.
      1. Common law is judge-made law.
      2. It is contrasted with statutory legislation, laws promulgated by the sovereign body, king or Parliament.
   F. Outstanding English jurists, such as Edward Coke (1552–1634), Francis Bacon (1561–1626), and William Blackstone (1723–1780) shaped the common law.
      1. For Blackstone, common law was a statement of universal natural law.
      2. Coke argued that the common law controlled even acts of Parliament.
   G. Common law remains the basis of the American judicial system.

VI. The English revolutionary tradition.
   A. By 1776, England had a well-established tradition that justified revolution in the name of liberty.
   B. English Civil War (1642–1649): Parliament overthrew King Charles I and executed him.
   C. In 1688, Parliament drove King James II into exile and gave the throne to King William and Queen Mary. Parliament showed, once again, that it had the power to make and break kings.

VII. This English tradition of liberty insisted on guarantees of specific individual freedoms: Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Rights (1628), and the Bill of Rights (1689).

Essential Reading:
Urofsky, *March of Liberty*, pp. 1–79.
McClellan, *Liberty*, pp. 1–144.
Questions to Consider:
1. The American system of justice still today rests on the common law tradition. Would you consider it a bastion of our liberties?
2. Do you think that giving the president of the United States a line-item veto would violate the long tradition of legislative control over finances?
Lecture Nineteen

The Shot Heard ‘Round the World

Scope: The first half of our course on the history of freedom began with the Battle of Marathon; the second half begins with the events of April 19, 1775, at Lexington and Concord. To Revolutionary leaders like Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, there were profound parallels between Marathon and Lexington and Concord. All were battles of freemen, fighting the slaves of a despot in the name of liberty. In fact as well as myth, the American Revolution was a war for freedom. An analysis of the events and personalities of April 19 provide rich material for understanding the concepts of liberty held by Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic.

Outline

I. The immediate background to Lexington and Concord.
   A. From the perspective of King George and his government, the Americans had contumaciously resisted the king’s officials in their lawful pursuit of policies intended to benefit the empire as a whole.
   B. In the view of the king and his government, the sole reason for this resistance was the unwillingness of the Americans to pay their fair share of taxes.
   C. The rebellious spirit of the Americans had risen to the level that they denied the authority of Parliament to govern for them. This was treason.
   D. Accordingly, harsh measures were taken to break the spirit of rebellion in the American colonies. In particular, Massachusetts was singled out as the seat of rebellion.
   E. Tensions and the threat of armed rebellion led the king to appoint a military man, General Thomas Gage, as both civil and military governor.

II. In the predawn darkness of April 19, 1775, seventy-seven citizens of the Massachusetts town of Lexington assembled on the town commons.
   A. They were armed and members of the Massachusetts militia. They were subjects of the English crown. They were the freest, most prosperous, and lightly taxed people in the world.
   B. The most profound thinkers of Europe, including Montesquieu, admired the constitutional monarchy and Parliament of England. Yet these men of Massachusetts came to resist, by force, if necessary, the troops of King George approaching their town.
   C. The king’s soldiers were on a legitimate mission: to confiscate illegal weapons being stored by the colonists. These weapons were not hunting rifles. They were cannons and other weapons, the sole purpose of which was to kill the king’s soldiers.
   D. What transpired next in Lexington and on the same morning in Concord would transform history. The Battles of Lexington and Concord would take their place alongside Marathon as seminal events in the history of liberty.
   E. Lord Acton later said that the American Revolution was the only one that was founded on an idea.

III. From the American perspective, these measures all had only one purpose: to destroy their traditional liberties as Englishmen and to establish an absolute tyranny over the colonies. In the name of liberty, the Americans were willing to go to war with their own government, England—Parliament and crown. England was the greatest empire in the world, possessing the best army and navy in the world.
   A. The thirteen colonies showed remarkable unity in their determination to resist the king. This unity was the product of the long colonial tradition and institutions of self-government, the long colonial tradition of self-defense, and the leadership of an extraordinarily gifted group of men who possessed character and integrity.
   B. Each colony had long been accustomed to governing its local affairs.
1. Each colony possessed an assembly based on the principles of election and representative government.
2. The first meeting of the Virginia House of Burgesses took place in 1619. These assemblies controlled finances, including the salary of the royally appointed governor.
3. Local government at the town and county level was vigorous.

C. Each colony had long been accustomed to defending itself. By law, every able-bodied man from sixteen to sixty was liable for military service. Each colony possessed well-regulated militias. American troops had played an important role in all of England’s wars in America. In the recent French and Indian War (1756–1763), American soldiers and officers had distinguished themselves.

D. As a group, the American leaders of the Founding Era were of a moral distinction and political capability unsurpassed in world history.

E. Leaders of the American Revolution in 1775–1776:
   1. Samuel Adams, cousin of John, an inspiration to take up arms.
   2. John Adams, who had defended the British soldiers of the Boston Massacre.
   3. John Hancock, a wealthy merchant.
   5. Benjamin Franklin, self-educated, a celebrated scientist and polymath, and a supporter of colonial unity.
   7. George Washington, the man, the general, the statesman.

IV. The unity of the colonies was realized in the Continental Congress, which convened in Philadelphia in 1774 and took leadership in directing resistance to the king.

V. From Lexington to Bunker Hill.
   A. The Battles of Lexington and Concord drove the British back into Boston, which was promptly and effectively besieged by militia units. The attempt by the British to break the siege of Boston led to the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, a tactical victory for the British but a strategic and moral victory for the Americans.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Birnbaum, *Lexington*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Can you think of instances challenging our assertion that the American leaders of the Founding Era “are unsurpassed in world history”?
2. Based on your life experience, do you think that Americans today are capable of the kind of unified action taken in 1775–1776?
Lecture Twenty
The Tyranny of George III

Scope: George III may seem to us a poor substitute for Julius Caesar. But to the leaders of the American Revolution, the machinations of King George were no less fiendish than that of the dictator who destroyed republican liberty at Rome. Like Caesar, George III had as his goal: “the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states.” This lecture examines the events between 1760 and 1776 that transformed loyal subjects of the British Crown into armed traitors declaring their independence. The focus of the grievances was taxes. The lecture examines the profound significance, for 1776 and for today, of Edmund Burke’s comment that in England “the great contests for freedom were, from the earliest times, chiefly upon the question of taxes.”

Outline

I. King George ruled from 1760–1820.
   A. He was the first king of the House of Hanover to feel himself thoroughly British.
   B. He was determined to rule, as well as reign, through control of Parliament.
   C. He chose his minters for their character as yes-men rather than their abilities as statesmen: George Grenville, Charles Townshend, and Lord North.
   D. He was determined to govern the colonies in a cost-efficient manner. The colonies, in fact, were very lightly taxed.

II. The Founders and the lessons of history.
   A. Greece and Rome: The excellence of America’s revolutionary leaders was the result of their education.
      1. They had been educated for freedom. This was true for Harvard men, such as John Adams, and for self-educated men, such as Benjamin Franklin. Their education was rooted in the classics; they had been taught to read and think critically and to write clearly.
      2. The Founders were educated to think historically. They used the past to illuminate the present. They viewed the histories of Greece, Rome, and England as an inexhaustible storehouse of wisdom, filled with salutary examples to aid them in their decision making.
      3. The Founders saw particular immediacy in the history of the Roman Republic, the corruption of republican liberty, and the rise of Julius Caesar. The Founders came to view King George as a new Julius Caesar, determined to break the spirit of a free people and establish an absolute tyranny over the colonies. This historical thinking played a critical role in the colonies’ decision to declare independence from Britain.
   B. England: In presenting their grievances and declaring their independence, the Founders drew extensively on the precedents of English history.
      1. Liberty and taxes: King George and his ministers believed that the American complaints were all subterfuges for the real issue, which was that the Americans did not want to pay taxes.
      2. In assessing this claim, Edmund Burke warned: “...the great contests for freedom were, from the earliest times, chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates or on the balance among the several orders of the state. The question of money was, not with them, so immediate. But in England, it was otherwise. On this point of taxes, the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues have been exercised, the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people themselves must, in effect, mediate or immediately possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. The colonies draw from you, as with their lifeblood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, is fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe or might be endangered in twenty other particulars without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound.”
3. Throughout the struggle, the Americans had strong supporters, like Burke, in Parliament.
4. From the beginning of colonization, the colonists had been viewed as Englishmen, possessed of all the political and civil liberties of Englishmen at home. They had control over their own affairs.

III. From loyal Englishmen to rebels: 1763–1776.
   A. In 1763, the Americans had played an important role in the victory over France in the French and Indian War (1756–1763) and gloried in the grandeur of the British Empire.
      1. The Treaty of Paris had vastly expanded Britain’s empire in North America. The war had been expensive, and administration of the expanded empire was costly.
      2. The king and his government felt that the Americans had profited greatly from the war and should help pay its costs. American resistance to this idea was dismissed as the churlish response of ungrateful subjects once they had been freed from the French menace at British cost.
   B. To make the Americans pay their fair share of taxes, Parliament passed a series of laws. American resistance led to escalation as the issue turned from one of money to that of obedience to the rule of Parliament.
   C. The crux of the issue was “taxation without representation.”
      1. The legal view was that the Americans were represented in Parliament and that Parliament had the right to legislate in all matters for all British subjects in the empire.
      2. The American position was without strong legal foundation and potentially corrosive to the empire.
      3. The Americans insisted that they must be geographically represented in Parliament and that the colonial assemblies, not Parliament, was the proper legislative body for the internal affairs, including taxation, of each colony.

IV. Parliament and the colonies.
   A. The Proclamation of 1763 limited settlement west of the Appalachians.
   B. The Sugar Act of 1764 raised revenues by more efficient collection of import duties.
   C. The Currency Act of 1764 prohibited colonies from issuing paper money.
   D. The Stamp Act of 1765 imposed a direct tax in the form of stamps on various items, including newspapers and legal documents. Colonial resistance, including the convocation of a congress attended by representatives from nine colonies, led to the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766.
   E. The Declaratory Act of 1766 declared the legal right of Parliament to legislate for the colonies in all matters.
   F. The Townshend Acts of 1767 raised revenues by import duties.
   G. The French and Indian War had brought tensions to the surface between the British and their fellow Englishmen in America.
      1. The British troops and their officers had a contemptuous attitude toward the American militia.
      2. The song “Yankee-Doodle Dandy” typified this attitude of British hauteur.
   H. In the Boston Massacre of March 5, 1770, five Americans were killed by British troops.
   I. The Tea Act of 1773 sought to create a monopoly for the East India Tea Company.
   J. Destruction of private property by American mobs during the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773, shifted public opinion in Britain to support of the king’s policy
   K. The Coercive or Intolerable Acts of 1774 sought to divide and conquer the colonies by subjecting Massachusetts to exemplary punishment. The result was the opposite and led to the convocation of the First Continental Congress, attended by representatives of all the colonies except Georgia.
   L. The Quebec Act of 1774 was intended to provide efficient government for newly acquired Canada but was interpreted by the colonists as a precedent for establishing absolutism in the American colonies.
   M. On April 19, 1775, the Battles of Lexington and Concord were fought.
   N. May 10, 1775, was the convocation of the Second Continental Congress, attended by representatives of all thirteen colonies. In an effort to deescalate the situation, Congress sent the “Olive Branch Petition” to King George, professing the attachment of the Americans for the king.
O. In September 1775, King George declared the American colonies to be in open rebellion and outside his protection.

P. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Essential Reading:
Paine, Common Sense.

Supplementary Reading:
Patrick Henry, “Give me liberty or give me death” speech (1775), in Suriano, Speeches, pp. 1–5.

Questions to Consider:
1. As a member of Parliament would you have taken the side of the king or of the Americans?
2. How do Burke’s comments on taxation and liberty apply today?
The Declaration of Independence can be divided into two basic parts: a statement of fundamental principles and a list of the specific grievances of the American states against King George. America is the first nation in history founded upon a statement of principles rather than ethnic identity or accidents of history. Among these principles are the right of self-determination, government by the consent of the governed, the right of revolution, and natural law. Jefferson’s statement in later life that he drew chiefly upon Aristotle and Cicero, Sidney and Locke is worthy of serious examination. The Declaration of Independence draws upon two great legacies of freedom: the natural law tradition of Greece and Rome and the historical experience of England.

**Outline**

I. The Declaration of Independence is a powerful statement of enduring political principles.
   A. Along with the Constitution and Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, the Declaration of Independence is one of the three founding documents of the United States.
   B. It is a masterpiece of rhetoric, of the art of persuasion.
   C. But it persuades because the author, Thomas Jefferson, and the signers believed in these principles.

II. The American cause was in the hands of statesmen, not politicians, by men who led their fellow countrymen rather than being guided by public opinion polls. When the Second Continental Congress met on May 10, 1775, there was still strong feeling that relations with England could be repaired and no final break was necessary. This was the purpose of the “Olive Branch Petition” drafted by John Dickinson. By the next year, the leadership of the revolutionary cause, supported by public opinion, determined that independence must be declared.
   A. In September 1775, King George had tacitly rejected the American petition and, in effect, declared war on the colonies.
   B. The colonies were in fact waging a war. The practicalities of that war, including potential alliances with such foreign powers as France, made independence advisable. Otherwise, the colonists would seem mere pirates or traitors.
   C. The powerful arguments presented for independence in Tom Paine’s bestseller *Common Sense*, published in January 1776, served as a catalyst for shifting public opinion to the side of independence.

III. Declaring independence.
   A. On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee presented, on behalf of the delegates from Virginia, a resolution favoring independence to the Continental Congress.
   B. On June 10, a committee of five delegates was appointed by Congress to draft such a Declaration of Independence: John Adams of Massachusetts, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and Robert Livingston of New York. By common agreement, Jefferson assumed the task of writing a draft of the declaration.
   C. On June 28, the document was submitted to Congress, which debated it and made some changes. On July 4, Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.

IV. Thomas Jefferson is the author of the Declaration of Independence. He crafted this declaration to fall into three main parts:
   A. A statement of principles on which the new nation was founded.
   B. A list of specific actions of King George that forced the Americans to declare independence.
   C. An appeal for the justice of the American cause and the commitment of the signers to the struggle for independence.
V. Statement of principles.

A. The United States is the only nation founded on principles. Other nations are the result of historical circumstances or have been founded on the basis of ethnicity.

B. The Declaration of Independence is the statement of those principles.
   1. The Declaration begins with an appeal to history: “When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another…”
   2. The Americans are called a people; they are now distinct from the English. The Declaration of Independence thus calls on the principle of self-determination. A people have the right to decide for themselves that they are a separate people and have the right to establish a country for themselves.
   3. The declaration then invokes the principle of natural law.
   4. It appeals to God as the author of natural law. God is invoked four times in the Declaration of Independence.
   5. Natural law is the self-evident truth on which the new nation is founded. God and the natural law that he has established endow humans with unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the latter a grander concept than the “property” that John Locke had written about.
   6. Governments are instituted among men to secure these rights.
   7. Legitimate government must rest on the consent of the governed.
   8. When a government becomes destructive of these natural rights, men have the right and duty to overthrow that government and establish a new one. The Declaration of Independence thus invokes the right to revolution.
   9. The justification for revolution lies in specific actions of King George that demonstrate his intention of establishing a tyranny over the Americans.

C. The declaration then lists the specific actions of King George.
   1. This list is not random. The Founders were not throwing mud at King George to see how much would stick.
   2. The list is carefully organized, moving from smaller incidents to a rising crescendo of indictments against the king.

D. This list of grievances is carefully fashioned to invoke the five criteria given by John Locke to demonstrate that a government is tyrannical and revolution is justified.
   1. It substitutes arbitrary will for law.
   2. It hinders the legislative power from assembling in good time or from acting freely.
   3. It alters the mode of electing the legislative body.
   4. It delivers the people into the jurisdiction of a foreign power.
   5. It abandons the trust to govern its people.

E. The specific grievances.
   1. Grievances 1–3 indict the king for interfering with the laws of the colonies.
   2. Grievances 4–6 deal with his interference with the legislative assemblies of the colonies.
   3. Grievance 7 deals with the attempt of the king to destroy the prosperity of his people.
   4. Grievances 8–10 relate the king’s interference with the judicial process in the colonies.
   5. Grievances 11–12 deal with the king’s attempt to establish a standing army as the vehicle of his tyranny.
   6. Grievance 12 condemns the king for having “combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution.” By “others” the Declaration of Independence means Parliament. It then lists ten illegal and tyrannical actions taken by Parliament to rob the Americans of their liberty.
   7. The last five grievances raise the level of the king’s tyranny to a crescendo. By these actions, the king has now abandoned his trust to govern for the benefit of his people and is actually waging savage war against them.

F. The conclusion of the Declaration of Independence.
   1. The conclusion of the declaration establishes the attempt of the Americans and the refusal of the king to settle the matter peacefully.
   2. It establishes that King George is a tyrant.
   3. It establishes that the Americans have tried to tell the British people of the injustice, and the British people, as well as their king, have refused to listen.
4. Having demonstrated their moderation and legality, the Americans now invoke God as the supreme judge of the justice of their cause.
5. In the concluding sentence, the declaration again calls on God, the author of natural law.
6. The conclusion is powerful rhetoric: “We mutually pledge to each other are lives, fortunes, and sacred honor.”
7. These were not empty words. The Americans were, in English eyes, traitors. Failure meant the direst consequences. The signers of the Declaration of Independence held their lives and fortunes to be important, but their honor was “sacred.” This sense of honor establishes the Declaration of Independence as a true reflection of the values of the eighteenth century.

Essential Reading:
The Declaration of Independence.

Supplementary Reading:
Becker, Declaration.
Wills, Inventing America.

Questions to Consider:
1. How would George III have refuted the charges leveled at him in the Declaration of Independence?
2. Can you challenge the statement that “the United States is the only nation founded on principles”?
Scope: The idea of natural law is the greatest single contribution of Greece and Rome to the United States. Cicero defines natural law as “right reason in agreement with nature, derived from God, universal, consistent, and eternal.” The concept of natural law was born in the Athenian democracy, took root in the age of Alexander the Great, and flourished in the Roman Empire. Accepted by St. Paul and incorporated into Roman law, it was fundamental to the political ideas of the Middle Ages and was introduced into the English Common Law. Justifying the right to revolution, natural law was critical to the colonies' movement for independence and the foundation stone of the new republic.

Outline

I. The Declaration of Independence is one of the most influential writings in world history. Its ideas have transformed history.
   A. Thomas Jefferson, however, claimed no originality for the language and ideas of the Declaration of Independence. He stated quite rightly that its authority rested in the fact that the Declaration of Independence was “an expression of the American mind… the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversations, letters, printed essays or the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, and Sidney.”
   B. The authors cited by Jefferson were not picked haphazardly. They were chosen to represent the twin sources of the Declaration of Independence and, later, the Constitution:
      1. Locke and Sidney: the legacy of English liberty.

II. The concept of natural law was the most significant contribution of Greece and Rome to the Declaration of Independence.

III. The best definition of natural law was given by the Roman lawyer and statesman Cicero in his book *On the Republic*, written in 55–51 B.C.

   “True law is right reason in agreement with nature, universal, consistent, everlasting, whose nature is to advocate duty by prescription and to deter wrongdoing by prohibition. Good men obey its prescriptions and prohibitions, but evil men disobey them. It is forbidden by God to alter this law, nor is it permissible to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish the whole of it. Neither the Senate nor the People can absolve us from obeying this law and we do not need to look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of this law. There will not be one law at Rome and another law at Athens. There is now and will be forever one law, valid for all peoples and all times. And there will be one master and ruler for all of us in common, God, who is the author of this law, its promulgator, and enforcing judge. Whoever does not obey this law is trying to escape himself and to deny his nature as a human being. By this very fact, he will suffer the greatest penalties, even if he should somehow escape conventional punishments.”

IV. Essential features of natural law.
   A. It is the law of God, who rewards good and punishes evil.
   B. Absolute truths and absolute values based on those truths exist and are valid in all places and all times. Among those absolute values are truth, justice, good, and piety.
   C. Natural law reflects the mind of God; therefore, it is reasonable. As God gave man the gift of reason, natural law accords with the common sense possessed by all reasonable men.
   D. God punishes violations of natural law.

V. History of natural law.
   A. Natural law was developed in the Athenian democracy of fifth century B.C. and was expressed in:
1. Sophocles’s *Antigone*. The heroine goes to her death following the dictates of her conscience. She adheres to the universal laws of the gods.

2. Herodotus, sometimes seen as a mere storyteller, was a profound moral thinker. Beneath the surface of custom, he proposes, is a universal law of morality for all mankind.

3. Socrates. His tradition cites the example of *Antigone*.

4. Plato establishes, in *The Laws*, that law is the product of reason.

5. Aristotle cites *Antigone* as evidence for the existence of natural law.

B. The idea of natural law was given a powerful impetus by the achievements of Alexander the Great and the idea of the brotherhood of mankind. It was expounded by the adherents of Stoicism, the most influential Greek philosophical school in the period after Alexander the Great and a very important influence on the Romans.

1. Seneca placed profound emphasis on natural law as a unifier of all mankind.

2. With Marcus Aurelius, a Stoic came to rule over the entire Roman Empire.

C. Natural law became the foundation of Roman legal thought and was canonized in the law codes of the Emperor Justinian (527–565 A.D.).

D. Natural law was taught by St. Paul, a student of Stoic philosophy.

1. For St. Paul, the Gentiles had an unwritten but natural law.

2. Its importance in Roman law and the authority of St. Paul established natural law as the foundation of Christian legal thought.

E. John Locke was the culmination of this natural law tradition. Locke’s view of natural law, which he used to justify the revolution that occurred in England in 1688, was formative for Jefferson.

VI. Natural law and the meaning of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and today.

A. The most important and familiar statement of natural law in the Declaration of Independence is: “we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these rights are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

B. What did Jefferson and the signers understand by these words?

1. All men are created free and equal by the law of God. It is the laws of men that impose slavery and inequality.

2. Life is given by God, and only God can take it away. But even today, we cannot agree on what constitutes life.

3. “Liberty is the power that every man has over his actions and his right to enjoy the fruits of his labor and industry in so far as by it he hurts not the society nor any member of it by taking from any member or by hindering him from enjoying what he himself enjoys.” This definition of freedom is from *Cato’s Letters*, a collection of newspaper articles published in England between 1720–23 and written by Thomas Gordon and John Trenchard. *Cato’s Letters* was extremely influential in the colonies at the time of the Revolution. It is most certainly one of the “published essays” to which Jefferson refers.

C. Ours is not a culture that believes in absolutes.

1. To us, the law is not a set of absolutes but of tricks. Relativism abounds.

2. And yet, it was multicultural Rome that developed this early notion of universal law.

D. Could Americans today agree on definitions of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

**Essential Reading:**

**Supplementary Reading:**
Questions to Consider:
1. How would you define “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?”
2. Do you believe in natural law?
Lecture Twenty-Three
Miracle at Philadelphia

Scope: “Miracles do not cluster. Hold on to the Constitution of the United States.” Daniel Webster’s words are evocative. However, the “miracle in Philadelphia” was neither supernatural nor inexplicable. It was the product of statesmen educated for freedom, educated in the lessons of our course on the History of Freedom. The Framers of the Constitution were educated in the Classics. They were educated to think historically, to use the lessons of the past to make decisions in the present. The lecture surveys the events leading up to the Constitutional Convention and the Convention, with a focus on the intellectual equipment that the Framers brought to their task and the way in which the Constitution was shaped by the legacy of Greece and Rome, England, colonial America, and thinkers like Locke and Montesquieu.

Outline

I. The background.
   A. The Treaty of Paris in 1783 not only secured the independence of the United States but also possession of the territory stretching to the Mississippi River.
   B. By 1787, however, the new nation seemed on the verge of collapse. Leading figures of the Revolution, such as George Washington, attributed the problem to the weakness of the Articles of Confederation, the constitution under which the United States had fought and won the war and was now governing itself.
   C. The Articles of Confederation were just that, the constitution of a federation of independent states. The federal government had very limited power: no executive, no army, and no power to collect taxes.
      1. The nation was having serious financial problems.
      2. Issues of debt and taxation made the threat of internal disorder serious. Oppressed by taxes and debt, farmers in Massachusetts committed armed violence. Led by a revolutionary soldier, Captain Daniel Shays, this “rebellion” caused grave concern.
      3. The inability of the federal government to administer the western territories effectively led to the prospect of secession by the settlers in those regions.
      4. The United States was becoming a laughingstock to foreign powers. Its weakness led to real fears of foreign conquest, by Britain and Spain.
   D. Younger members of the revolutionary generation, such as James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, led a movement to have a convention of delegates from the thirteen states to amend the Articles of Confederation.
   E. The Articles of Confederation seemed hopelessly incompetent. Still, the notion of a centralized government struck terror in the hearts of men like Patrick Henry.
   F. The Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia on May 25, 1787. Presided over by George Washington, the delegates were the most gifted and successful group of statesmen in history.

II. The issue was how to create a federal or national government that was strong enough to secure the general welfare, yet to preserve the sovereignty of the individual states. To solve this problem, the Founders drew on the lessons of history.

III. Greece and Rome offered the only real examples of successful republics. But the Greeks and Romans never developed successful federations, uniting the numerous city-states into a central power while preserving the sovereignty of the individual states.
   A. The most fundamental lesson the Founders drew from Greece and Rome was that power corrupts. Power must be limited by checks and balances.
   B. Antiquity taught the lesson that an excess of democracy leads to tyranny. Many delegates to the Convention believed that the problems of the United States flowed from an excess of democracy. They intended the new constitution to be a bulwark against democracy.
C. Polybius was perhaps the most influential political thinker from classical antiquity in terms of the issues dealt with at the Convention.

D. Polybius admired the balanced constitution of Rome. Rome, rather than Greece, was the model for the Founders. Polybius and the history of Greece and Rome taught that the best constitution was a balanced one in which the three basic elements in government were mixed in proper proportion:
   1. Monarchy, or the need for strong executive leadership: Roman consuls, the American president.
   2. Democracy, or the need for a broad base of popular support: Roman Assemblies, the American House of Representatives.
   3. Aristocracy, or the guiding policy by a small group of exceptionally capable individuals: the Roman Senate, the American Senate.

IV. England.
   A. For many delegates to the Convention, such as Alexander Hamilton, the English constitution was the best ever devised by mankind.
   B. The Americans needed to remove its imperfections and adapt it to a more democratic society.
      1. This excellence of the English constitution was supported by the writings of the Baron Montesquieu (1689–1755).
      2. Montesquieu was the European thinker who was most influential on the Framers of the Constitution.
      3. Published in 1748, Montesquieu’s Spirit of the Laws was a sustained argument, based on the empirical evidence of history, that the best form of government is a balanced constitution.
      4. Montesquieu declared that England was the only country in the world to have political liberty as the direct goal of its constitution.
      5. He stressed the importance of an independent judiciary and understood well that each part of government had its vitalizing spirit.

V. The state constitutions.
   A. In fact, the thirteen states had already achieved the successful adaptation of the English constitution to the more democratic requirements of America.
   B. The constitutions of the newly independent states drew on their colonial institutions of government. Except for Pennsylvania, the new state governments had bicameral legislatures, reflecting—in American fashion—the British Parliament with its House of Lords and House of Commons.
   C. In some states, the supreme court exercised the power of judicial review.

VI. What the Framers of the Constitution actually did was to take the most successful elements of the state constitutions and establish them at the national level. Unlike the revolutionaries in France, the American leaders would not sweep away the past, but take what was best from it.

VII. The Convention was scheduled to begin on May 14, 1787. By May 25, a sufficient number of delegates had arrived to constitute a quorum, and the Convention began.

VIII. The delegates ultimately totaled fifty-five.
   A. Twelve states sent delegates. Rhode Island, under the control of radical democratic elements, refused to send delegates.
   B. In some cases, the state legislature elected the delegates. Other state legislatures authorized the governor to appoint the delegates.
   C. The delegates have been called “more conservative” than the signers of the Declaration of Independence.
      1. It is true that only six men signed both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
      2. Some leading figures of the Revolution, such as Patrick Henry, refused to attend. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were abroad on diplomatic service and did not attend.
   D. The delegates were men of property, frequently wealthy.
      1. Many were college educated. Princeton was the alma mater of the largest number of delegates (eight).
      2. More than half were lawyers or judges. Twenty-one had fought in the Revolution. Forty-six had served in colonial or state legislatures. In short, these were successful men of proven ability, experience, and patriotism.
3. They came alone, without attendants or staff. They also took a vow of silence about their proceedings—and kept it.

IX. The events.
   A. It quickly became clear that the Convention would exceed its mandate. Instead of revising the Articles of Confederation, the delegates began to consider framing an entirely new constitution.
   B. It also became clear that a major problem existed between large states, such as Virginia, and small states, such as New Jersey, over the issue of the legislature. Under the Articles of Confederation, every state had an equal vote. New Jersey and other small states wanted to retain this. Virginia and the more populous states wanted proportional representation.
   C. The first of the great compromises established proportional representation in the House of Representatives and equal votes for each state in the Senate.
   D. In spite of suspicions many delegates held about a strong executive, the candidacy of George Washington calmed their fears.
   E. More difficult was to find a compromise over slavery. In the end, slavery was not only recognized but was made an integral part of the Constitution.
   F. On July 26, a committee of detail worked the various resolutions into a balanced constitutional text.
      1. After six more weeks of debate, a committee of style, led by Gouverneur Morris of Pennsylvania, put the document into penultimate form, writing it in an English of remarkable eloquence for a government document.
      2. On September 17, 1787, after more debate and final changes, thirty-nine representatives from twelve states signed the Constitution.

Essential Reading:
The Constitution of the United States.

Supplementary Reading:
Banning, *Sacred Fires of Liberty*.
Bowen, *Miracle in Philadelphia*.

Questions to Consider:
1. The Convention did its work in secret. Would that be possible or advisable today?
2. Do you believe that the Constitution was truly adopted as a bulwark against the excesses of democracy?
Lecture Twenty-Four
What the Constitution Says

Scope: The lecture places the student at one of the ratifying conventions. It analyzes the fundamental concepts of the Constitution, such as federalism, separation of powers, and the rule of law. The essays in The Federalist, written by Jay, Hamilton, and Madison, are worthy to rank with Plato and Aristotle in the history of political science. However, despite the success of our Constitution, there is much to ponder in their opponents, the so-called Anti-Federalists and their arguments that small republics, civic virtue, and private and public morality are the best guardians of liberty.

Outline

I. The Convention met in secret, but it then subjected the proposed Constitution to the closest possible public examination and debate.
   A. The delegates to the state ratifying conventions were directly elected by the people.
   B. The merits of the Constitution were widely and vigorously debated in the public press.
      1. The debate over ratification called forth a series of seventy-six articles written for New York newspapers. The authors were Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison. Published in book form, The Federalist is recognized as one of the most significant treatises on government ever written. Lord Acton ranked it alongside The Politics of Aristotle.
      2. Opponents of the Constitution were called Anti-Federalists. They included distinguished figures, such as Governor Clinton of New York and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia.

II. The five fundamental principles of the Constitution.
   A. The consent of the governed: The preamble expresses a very broad mandate “to promote the general welfare.”
   B. The rule of law: The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. No individual is above the law.
   C. The tenets of Federalism: The Founders knew that the confederations of the Greeks had been too weak, while those of the Holy Roman Empire had been an obstacle to unity. The Founders were to take a new course.
      1. The states are an intrinsic part of the Constitution.
      2. The states give up essential aspects of sovereignty, such as the right to coin money or maintain a standing army.
      3. By establishing the Constitution as the supreme law of the land, the national government is clearly superior to the state governments.
   D. Separation of powers: legislative, executive, judicial.
      1. The separation is not complete. Some blending occurs.
      2. For example, the vice president is president of the Senate and can vote in the case of a tie.
      3. The Senate has the sole power to try the impeachment of the president.
   E. The legislative branch is preeminent.
      1. Enormous power is vested in Congress, especially its power to make all laws necessary and proper for executing its stated powers. This provision alarmed many people.
      2. Although Congress has the power to block a presidential veto, control funding, regulate commerce, and so on, there are also checks on its strength. The president has enormous implied powers, for example, and the Supreme Court can declare a Congressional law unconstitutional.
      3. In fact, the Constitution established precisely the same strong centralized power that George III had sought to create in America and that the colonists had resisted.
   F. The principle of change.
      1. New states can be admitted on equal terms.
      2. The United States would be a commonwealth rather than an empire.
G. The Constitution can be amended. It is not perfect. By establishing the amending process, the Founders ensured the viability of the Constitution, the growth of its democratic elements, and its adaptability to new times and circumstances.

III. Arguments of the Anti-Federalists.
   A. The Constitution creates a powerful national government. Such centralized power is a threat to the liberty we won in the Revolution. We declared independence because King George wanted to establish such a powerful centralized government.
   B. Liberty is best protected in small republics, based on the civic virtue of citizens.
      1. The Constitution will create an imperial power like Rome with a national capital, standing army, bureaucracy, and a diversified population with no shared values.
      2. Living in a distant national capital, the legislators will no longer be accountable to the electorate.
   C. The system of checks and balances is too complicated to work.
   D. The broad mandate in the preamble gives unlimited power to Congress. This is enhanced by the unlimited power of Congress to tax.
   E. There is no Bill of Rights.
      1. This argument found the strongest support among the people at large.
      2. The Constitution was ratified with the understanding that a Bill of Rights would be added. This was done by the First Congress to meet under the Constitution of the United States of America.

IV. On June 21, 1787, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the Constitution, securing its adoption. Eleven states had ratified the Constitution when the first Congress convened. North Carolina only ratified after the Bill of Rights had been added. Rhode Island did not ratify and join the Union until May 1790.

Essential Reading:
Hamilton, Jay, Madison, Federalist.

Supplementary Reading:
Storing, Anti-Federalist, Vol. I.

Questions to Consider:
1. If you were a delegate at a ratifying convention in 1787–1788, would you have voted to adopt the Constitution?
2. Looking back today, were the Anti-Federalists correct in any of their arguments?
Timeline

B.C.
3000............................... Birth of civilization in Egypt and Mesopotamia
550–529.......................... Rise of Persian Empire
490................................. Battle of Marathon
479–404............................ Golden Age of Athens
336–323............................ Alexander the Great
218–146............................ Rise of Roman Empire
48–31............................... Julius Caesar and Augustus establish monarchy at Rome

A.D.
31 B.C.–180 A.D. .................. Golden Age of Roman Empire
6..................................... Birth of Jesus
64..................................... Martyrdom of Peter and Paul
306–337............................ Constantine the Great
330–1453........................... Byzantine Empire
476.................................. Fall of Roman Empire in the West
527–565............................ Justinian, Emperor of Byzantine Empire, codifies Roman law
800................................... Charlemagne crowned Roman Emperor
1073–1085......................... Pope Gregory VII and height of the power of the papacy in the Middle Ages
1154–1189.......................... Reign of Henry II and formative period of English common law
1215.................................. Magna Carta
1295.................................. Model Parliament in England
1304–1527.......................... Renaissance
1474–1603.......................... Theory of divine right of kings bolstered absolute monarchy in Spain, France, and England
1492.................................. Columbus’s voyage to America
1517–1648.......................... Protestant Reformation
1642–1658.......................... English Civil War and Puritan Revolution under Oliver Cromwell
1643–1715.......................... King Louis XIV of France
1775–1783.......................... American Revolution
1787................................. Constitutional Convention
1789–1805.......................... French Revolution and Napoleon
1861–1865.......................... American Civil War
1914–1918.......................... World War I
1929–1940.......................... Great Depression
1939–1945.......................... World War II
1945–1990.............................. Cold War
1945– ............................................. Scientific and technological revolution
Glossary

**Acropolis**: A hill in Athens that was the sacred center of the city and lavishly adorned with temples and other shrines.

**Asia Minor**: Classical term to describe the area now known as Turkey.

**Assembly**: A modern term to translate Greek *Ekklesia* and Latin *Comitia*; these were the legislative bodies of the Athenian democracy and Roman Republic, which were composed of all citizens and were the sovereign body.

**Birth of civilization**: Rise of complex political structures, writing, monumental architecture, and use of metal. These advancements occurred simultaneously in Egypt and Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C.

**Carthage**: Town in North Africa and chief rival with Rome for domination of the western Mediterranean (264–201 B.C.).

**Chaeronea**: Town in Greece, site of a battle in 338 B.C. between King Philip of Macedonia and the Athenians and their allies; the victory of Philip effectively ended the history of the Athenian democracy.

**Classical antiquity**: Greece and the Roman world roughly in the period 800 B.C. (Homer) to 476 A.D. (fall of Roman Empire in Western Europe).

**Classics**: The writings of classical antiquity.

**Communism**: An ideology maintaining that society should be organized so that the means of production and subsistence should be held in common and that labor should be organized for the common benefit of all. As a political system, communism has been marked by the creation of the totalitarian state and party apparatus to subordinate all facets of society and the economy to control of the state.

**Constantinople**: Modern Istanbul; founded by Constantine in 330, it was the capital of the Byzantine Empire and, later, the Ottoman Empire.

**Constitution**: The fundamental laws of a country or other organization. A constitution can be a single document, such as the Constitution of the United States, or a collection of written and unwritten laws, customs, and practices, such as the Athenian, Roman, or English constitutions.

**Consul**: Chief magistrate of the Roman Republic and commander-in-chief of Roman armies; two elected annually.

**Darwinism**: Ideology based on the teaching of English biologist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and holding to a theory of biological evolution; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has been applied to support social, political, and racial theories based on “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest.”

**Determinism**: The antithesis of free will, determinism argues that humans have no control over decisions, actions, and events, which are the inevitable consequence of forces independent of the human will.

**Dunkirk**: Town on the coast of northern France; site of evacuation of British and French armies under German attack, May 27–June 3, 1940.

**Founders (Founding Fathers)**: A collective designation for the statesmen who signed the Declaration of Independence, waged the Revolutionary War, and framed the Constitution.

**Free will**: The idea that humans make their own choices, unconstrained by necessity or external circumstances.

**Freedom**: See Lecture One.

**Gentile**: A non-Jew.

**Ideology**: A complex set of ideas and values that unifies a community, directs its actions, and validates its decision making. Democracy, for example, is the ideology of the United States.

**Law (Jewish)**: The complex code of laws and regulations, based on interpretation of the Ten Commandments, that in the time of Jesus and later, governed every aspect of a pious Jew’s life. The Pharisees were the chief interpreters of the Law.
Liberty: See Lecture One.

Macedonia: In classical antiquity, a nation in northeastern Greece. Although related to the Greeks, the Macedonians were a distinct people. King Philip and his son, Alexander the Great, were the two most famous Macedonians.


Marxism: An ideology based on the ideas of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) and the intellectual foundation of communism.

Mesopotamia: “Land between the rivers”; a geographical term used historically to identify the region, now largely in Iraq, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Location of early civilizations of Sumer, Akkad, and Babylonia.

Middle Ages (medieval period): The period between the fall of the Roman Empire in the West (476 A.D.) and the Renaissance (fourteenth century).


Pharisee: Member of influential Jewish group in Judaea at the time of Jesus; Pharisees insisted on the strict interpretation of Jewish Law. Their role in society might be compared to that of professors in our own day.

Renaissance: The beginning of the modern age, marked by the Renaissance (rebirth) of interest in classical antiquity. As is true of most chronological designations, such as the Middle Ages, precisely defining the chronological limits of the Renaissance is difficult. It began in Italy, then spread to northern Europe. Defensible dates are from the Italian poet Petrarch (1304–1374) to the sack of Rome in 1527.

Roman Empire: Rome from 44 B.C.–476 A.D. Used in this way, the term Roman Empire describes the political system of monarchy established by Julius Caesar and his successors. However, starting in 246 B.C., long before Caesar, the Roman Republic began to conquer and rule a vast overseas area that the Romans called an empire (imperium). Thus, historians commonly, if confusingly, speak of the Roman Republic governing the Roman Empire. Caesar and his successors transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy but continued to rule the overseas empire.

Roman Republic: Rome from 509–48 B.C.

Sadducees: Members of an influential group in Judaea in the time of Jesus. Sadducees tended to be wealthy and insisted on the Temple as the focus of the Jewish religion.

Samaritan: A religious sect closely related to Judaism.

Senate: Chief deliberative body of the Roman Republic; it was composed of three hundred men who had held high office. It could not pass laws, but its recommendations were usually determinative for the Roman Assembly.

Socialism: A term that first appeared in English in 1832 to describe an ideology opposing laissez-faire economics in favor of some form of communal ownership of productive assets.

Soviet Union (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics): The political entity that in 1922 replaced the Russian Empire. In 1991, it fragmented into numerous nations, including the Russian Federation.

Sparta: Greek city-state and chief rival of Athens.

Stoicism (Stoics): Leading intellectual current in Greco-Roman world from the third century B.C. until the third century A.D.

Sumer: A nation of Mesopotamia that developed one of the earliest historical civilizations. The Sumerian language seems to be unrelated to any other known language.

Tory: In English politics, the party and traditions supportive of monarchy, with the connotation of conservative. Hence, during the Revolution, American loyalists were called “Tories.” For more, see Whig.
**Treaty of Paris (1783):** Treaty between Great Britain and the United States, ending the Revolutionary War and recognizing the independence of the United States.

**Whig:** In English politics, the party and tradition supportive of parliamentary government, with the connotation of liberal. The terms Whigs and Tories were first introduced in 1679 in the debates over excluding James from the royal succession because of his Catholic sympathies. *Whig* was a term applied in Scotland to cattle and horse thieves. The connotation, used by Whig opponents, was one of Scottish Presbyterianism and rebellion. *Tory* was a term used in Ireland of Catholic outlaws. Its connotation used by the enemies of Tories was one of Catholicism and subservience to monarchy.
Biographical Notes

Aquinas, Saint Thomas: Philosopher (1215–1274). One of the most influential philosophers in history, Thomas’s work Summa Theologica (1266–1273) represents the apex of medieval Catholic thought. Thomas was deeply indebted to Aristotle. His political theory argued that the earthly governments are subordinate to the power of the Church and that a limited monarchy is the best form of government. Lord Acton called Thomas “the first Whig.”

Aristotle: Greek philosopher (386–322 B.C.). Not an Athenian by birth, Aristotle spent much of his life teaching in Athens. He was the pupil of Plato. Plato was the greatest philosopher in history, but his political thought contributed more to the history of authoritarian rule than to liberty. Aristotle was perhaps the most profound mind Greece produced. His empirical and historical studies and his life made three important contributions to the history of freedom. His Athenian Constitution is the best source for the workings of the radical democracy at Athens. His Politics is a careful analysis of the faults and merits of democracy. He was the teacher of Alexander the Great, who ushered in a new era in freedom.

Augustus: Roman statesman (63 BC–14 A.D.). Born Gaius Octavius, he was the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Modern historians generally refer to him as Octavian during his early political career (44–27 B.C.), from his adopted name Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Building on his relationship with the martyred Caesar, Octavian, at the age of nineteen, raised an army on his own initiative. With astounding political skills, he achieved absolute mastery over the Roman world, winning decisive victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C. He then carried out a series of political, military, economic, and social reforms that successfully transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy. He brought peace and prosperity to the Roman Empire that endured for two centuries. In 27 B.C., to mark the inauguration of his new order, he took a new name: Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus. The names emphasized (1) that the gods made him all victorious (Imperator); (2) his relationship to Julius Caesar (Caesar, Divi Filius—the son of the god Caesar); and (3) his own unique relationship to the gods (Augustus—the one sent by the gods). Augustus is rightly regarded as one of the greatest statesmen in history. He redefined the concept of liberty at Rome.

Blackstone, Sir William: English jurist (1723–1780). In terms of the development of the concept and institutions of liberty in America, Blackstone and Coke were the two most influential English jurists. Judge, Member of Parliament, and Professor of Law at Oxford, Blackstone is best known for his Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765). Even more influential in America than in England, Blackstone enshrined the principle that the common law derived its validity from natural law. This idea was instrumental in the Founders’ view that they were defending both their rights as Englishmen and the natural rights of all mankind.

Burke, Edmund: British statesman and political thinker (1729–1797). In his parliamentary career and writings, Burke made fundamental contributions to the history of liberty. He defended the cause of freedom in America and sought to ensure justice and humanity in British imperial rule in India. To that end, he tried to impeach Warren Hastings and conducted a bitter, fourteen-year campaign to achieve that goal. His Reflections on the Revolution in France did not contradict, but rather complemented, his lifelong commitment to the cause of liberty under law.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius: Roman statesman (106–43 B.C.). Much admired by the Founders of the United States. Cicero was born of a wealthy, but not aristocratic, family in the Italian town of Arpinum. His abilities as a lawyer and orator enabled him to break into the aristocratically dominated world of Roman politics. Consul in 63 B.C., Cicero believed in liberty under the constitution. He sought to steer Rome on a middle course between domination by a corrupt Senate and the dictatorship of Caesar. Cicero believed that political principles must be built on intellectual principles. He sought to adapt the most profound intellectual currents of Greece to Roman life. He wrote books on religion, philosophy, and oratory. His orations were models of political and legal persuasion, carefully studied by the Founders. His book De Officiis (On Moral Duties) was one of the most influential works ever written on ethics and their practical application. After the assassination of Caesar, Cicero fought with great personal courage for a return to republican liberty. He was brutally murdered on the order of Mark Antony.

Coke, Sir Edward: English jurist (1552–1634). Edward Coke was a fundamental figure in the development of the common law and its role as a bastion of English liberty. Unsurpassed in his time for his knowledge of the common law, he defended it against the claim of royal prerogatives and the challenges of other courts of law. In 1610, Coke ruled that the king has no power to change the common law. He also argued that the common law was above Parliament. Coke held a series of judicial appointments, including Lord Chief Justice of England. He served as a
Member of Parliament and was instrumental in the formulation of the 1628 Petition of Right. He engaged in a bitter personal and professional rivalry with Francis Bacon, frequently to his own disadvantage.

**Cromwell, Oliver**: English soldier and statesman (1599–1658). A country squire and man of deep religious faith, Cromwell took a leading role in Parliament’s growing opposition after 1637 to King Charles I. When civil war came, Cromwell proved to be a military genius, organizing the parliamentary army and leading it to victory. He secured the execution of King Charles in 1649. The monarchy dissolved, Cromwell was led by the need for stability and efficient government to assume what was, in fact, a dictatorship under the title of Lord Protector. He conducted brutal campaigns of pacification in Scotland and Ireland. His government of England was marked by enforced codes of public morality. His son Richard failed in his efforts to continue the Protectorate, and in 1660—to general relief—the monarchy was restored under Charles II. Cromwell contributed to the history of liberty by establishing two precedents, both influential on the Founders. He set a precedent for the overthrow of a tyrannical king in the name of liberty. He also demonstrated that such revolutions more often end in tyranny than in liberty.

**Darius and Xerxes**: Kings of the Persian Empire. Darius ruled from 518–486 B.C. He restored order to the empire and established excellent administrative and financial systems. The revolt of the Greek cities of Asia Minor under his rule and Athenian support of the revolt led Darius to attempt to conquer Athens and to the Battle of Marathon. Xerxes was the son of Darius and ruled from 486–465. He took over his father’s plan to conquer Greece. Persian defeats at the Battles of Salamis (480), Platea (479), and Mycale (479) and Xerxes’s ignominious retreat from Greece in 480 marked the beginning of the decline of the Persian Empire. The threat of conquest by Darius and Xerxes played a fundamental role in the development of the idea of freedom in Greece. It coalesced in the Greek mind inchoate ideas of freedom and led the Athenians to develop true democracy.

**Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand**: Indian political leader and philosopher (1869–1948). From a prominent and wealthy Indian family, Gandhi studied in England and became an attorney. In South Africa and in India, he fought to achieve political rights for those dispossessed of them. He took on the most formidable empire in the world, Britain, and led India to independence. His achievements came through a philosophy of nonviolence. Gandhi contributed to the history of liberty by his seminal role in ending colonialism. The India he led to independence became a functioning democracy. Even more important, in his actions and teachings, Gandhi demonstrated the universal relationship among religion, morality, and freedom. He was assassinated in 1948. Gandhi stands as a representative of those leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, who have striven to bring independence, liberty, and dignity to their fellow countrymen.

**Gregory VII**: Pope (1073–1085). Gregory sought to reform the papacy and the Catholic Church. He expressed the view of the absolute supremacy of the Roman pontiff. His determination to enforce this supremacy in the matter of the nomination and investiture of bishops led to a bitter and violent struggle with the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV (Investiture Controversy). Himself an absolutist, Pope Gregory nonetheless contributed to the history of freedom by his insistence that there are limits to the power of the secular state and that the state is subordinate to the law—the laws of God.

**Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich**: German philosopher (1770–1831). Hegel has been called the most influential philosopher of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His philosophy was determinative for the thought of Karl Marx. Hegel’s own contribution to the history of liberty is ambiguous. Hegel celebrated liberty. He saw the process of history as the unfolding of liberty. But in Hegel and his followers, the state becomes the instrument by which liberty is realized. Individual liberty is less important than national liberty. History is a deterministic force, and morality must not stand in the way of the achievement of the historical destiny of the state. “The might force of the state must trample many an innocent flower.”

**Herodotus**: Greek historian (484?—425? B.C.). Probably in 445 B.C., Herodotus recited his Histories to the Athenian people. His account of the Persian Wars and their background was the first true work of history ever written. Herodotus fled from tyranny in his native Greek city of Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. The prize money he received from Athens made him wealthy, and he spent his later years in the Greek city of Thurii in south Italy. Herodotus’s Histories contributed to the history of freedom by portraying the war against Persia as a struggle of liberty against despotism and by drawing a close relationship among freedom, morality, and religion.

**Jefferson, Thomas**: American president (1843–1826; president, 1801–1809). The author of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was one of the most gifted of the Founding Fathers. He embodied their belief in liberty. Perhaps the only American president to deserve the title genius, Jefferson made significant contributions to
agriculture and education. As president, he established precedents that considerably enhanced the power of the executive branch. For example, he used his authority as commander-in-chief to conduct military operations against the Barbary pirates without a congressional declaration of war. His purchase of the Louisiana Territory (1803) was a milestone in the history of liberty, ensuring the economic viability and territorial expansion of liberty in the United States.

**John:** King of England (1199–1216). The brother of King Richard the Lion-Hearted, John utterly lacked the military and personal qualities of Richard. He was immoral, cowardly, lazy, dishonest, and ungrateful. His military and political ineptitude alienated almost every element in his realm. The Pope excommunicated him. Faced with revolt, not only of his barons but also by most of England, he was forced to sign the Magna Carta. This document is the foundation of liberty in England and, ultimately, the United States. Historians are not entirely certain that the Magna Carta would ever have come into being if John had been a brave, capable, and efficient king.

**John Paul II:** Pope, 1978– (born Karol Wojtyla, 1920). John Paul II may well be remembered as one of the most important figures of the late twentieth century. This Polish-born pope, the first non-Italian pontiff in over four centuries, recalls the great reforming popes of the Middle Ages. He is a man of tireless energy and remarkable personal courage, an intellectual and linguist. He overcame an assassination attempt that was almost certainly instigated by the Soviet Union. A strict conservative in matters of doctrine, he has a profound commitment to individual liberty. His moral authority played a significant role in the growing resistance of Poland to communism in the late 1970s and to the ultimate collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.

**King, Martin Luther, Jr.:** American civil rights leader (1929–1968). A minister and son of a minister, King was a man of profound faith and courage. He stood up against a corrupt social and political system in the American South, which denied to American citizens their constitutional rights on the basis of race. Like apartheid in South Africa, segregation in the South was based on racial theories that are antithetical to liberty. Influenced by Gandhi, King led nonviolent resistance to segregation that resulted in major legislation and the collapse of segregation. In 1964, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. His view of freedom led him into increasing opposition to the policies of the American government in Vietnam. His assassination in 1968 remains a mystery.

**Madison, James:** American president (1751–1836; president, 1809–1817). A graduate of Princeton, Madison took a significant part in the Revolution, first in the Virginia legislature, then in the Continental Congress. His patriotism, energy, and historical knowledge were instrumental in the success of the Constitutional Convention. His essays in *The Federalist* represent major contributions to the political philosophy of liberty and constitutional government. After the Constitution was adopted, Madison was instrumental in drafting the Bill of Rights. His two terms as president were marked by the difficult War of 1812 with Britain and his increasing unpopularity, but the “Father of the Constitution and Bill of Rights” has a secure place in the history of liberty.

**Marsilius of Padua:** Medieval political thinker (1270–1342). Medical doctor, scholar, and man of affairs, Marsilius attacked the political power of the papacy in his book *Defensor Pacis* (1324). He argued that government should rest on the consent of the governed. For Marsilius, the sovereign body in the state was the general assembly of all citizens, who should elect the executive power. The executive power was accountable to the citizens and could be punished by it. Like Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius represents important steps in the development of the liberal tradition of limited government.

**Polybius:** Greek historian (205?–125? B.C.). The son of a distinguished Greek political figure, Polybius was brought to Rome as a political hostage in 167 B.C. Talented and well educated, he became closely associated with the rising generation of Roman statesmen, especially Publius Cornelius Scipio, the grandson of the conqueror of Hannibal. Polybius wrote his *Histories* to explain to both Greeks and Romans how Rome rose to be ruler of the world. Along with Herodotus and Thucydides, Polybius ranks as one of the three greatest Greek historians. His careful analysis of the Roman constitution and the political and moral values of the Romans greatly influenced the Founders, particularly in framing the Constitution.

**Reagan, Ronald:** American president (1911–; president, 1981–1989). Ronald Reagan was a movie actor turned politician who grew to be one of the leading statesmen of the twentieth century. When he became president, America’s role as leader of the free world was seriously imperiled. Foreign policy was a shambles; the economy, in chaos; and national confidence, at its nadir. Reagan’s policies restored the economy and national confidence and led directly to the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Reagan represented the successful
culmination of the policies of a series of American presidents aimed at the expansion of freedom by the containment of communism, including Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.

**Sophocles**: Athenian writer of tragedy (496–406 B.C.). Along with Aeschylus and Euripides, Sophocles was one of the three most important writers of tragedy. In his plays, including *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Antigone*, and others, Sophocles probed some of the deepest questions of freedom: the limits of human knowledge, free will versus fate, liberation from sin, the duties of a citizen to country and to the gods, and the relationship among liberty, religion, and morality.

**Thucydides**: Athenian historian (died c. 400 B.C.). Thucydides wrote the monumental *History of the Peloponnesian War* (431–404 B.C.). His failure as a general in 424 B.C. led to his exile by the Athenian democracy. Thucydides was a profound admirer of Pericles but believed the Athenian democracy to be a failed form of government. His history is one of the most influential books ever written. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarded it as “the eternal manual of statesmen.” Thucydides contributed in three important ways to the history of freedom through his insistence that human nature never changes and, hence, the past is the best guide to the present; his analysis of the corrupting influence of power; and his examination of the strength and weakness of democracy in action.

**Tiberius**: Roman emperor (14–37 A.D.). The adopted son of Augustus, Tiberius was a capable soldier and administrator who did an excellent job of governing the Roman Empire. He was, however, a paranoid personality who sought to maintain power by exercising a policy of systematic terror over the Roman Senate. In particular, allegations of treason were used to destroy any apparent threat to his power. Modern historians have been too kind to a man who, of all the Roman emperors, most resembled Joseph Stalin. The Roman historian Tacitus knew better. Tiberius was succeeded by his grandnephew Gaius (Caligula), who as emperor (37–41 A.D.), raised the family predilection toward insanity to new heights.

**Washington, George**: American soldier and statesman (1732–1799; president, 1789–1797). Washington proved his bravery and capability as a soldier during the French and Indian War (1756–1763). His ability as a surveyor and farmer, as well as his marriage, made Washington, at the outbreak of the Revolution, one of the wealthiest men in America. Like other wealthy patriots, Washington had far more to lose than to gain materially by the Revolution. He chose, however, to follow his honor, conscience, and love of liberty. His skills as a general have been much underrated. His ability in tactics, strategy, logistics, and battlefield command led the American army to victory. His sense of public duty guided him to assume a critical role in framing the Constitution and to serve as the first president. As president, he established precedents that set a course of liberty under law for the new republic.
Annotated Bibliography

Note: The Essential Readings focus largely on primary sources. I have recommend as Supplementary Reading books that expand on the material covered in the lectures and textbooks and other secondary works that place the history of liberty into the broader political and cultural framework.

I. Essential Reading


Aristotle. Trans. P. J. Rhodes. The Athenian Constitution. New York: Penguin, 1984. Despite the reservations of some scholars, this work was actually written by Aristotle. In it, the most profound mind of classical Greece describes the constitution of history’s first democracy.

———. Trans. M. Heath. Poetics, New York: Penguin, 1997. This classic has been called, rightly, “the one indispensable work of literary theory.” Fundamental for understanding how the Greeks responded to tragedy.


Machiavelli, Niccolo. The Prince. New York: Penguin, 1999. One of the most influential and controversial books ever written; basic to an understanding of the moral dimension of freedom.


———. *Freedom in the Modern World*. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. This two-volume history of freedom represents a very different approach than that of our lectures. Our lectures insist that ideas make history. Patterson presents essentially a Marxist construct, in which social and economic conditions make ideas. In particular, he insists that the Greek idea of freedom arose out of the social institution of slavery. Paraphrasing Epictetus and Lord Acton, the ignorant person recommends books with which that person agrees. The person who has made some progress in wisdom does just the opposite. In that spirit, I recommend Patterson.


Plutarch. Trans. Bernadotte Perrin. *Lives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. The Loeb Classical Library, 1914–1926 (numerous subsequent reprints.) Plutarch wrote these biographies to illustrate moral character by comparing a famous Roman with a famous Greek. His purpose is preserved by the translation I have recommended.


Powell, Jim. *The Triumph of Liberty*. New York: The Free Press, 2000. An attempt to tell the history of liberty through the biographies of important figures. Very different in approach and presuppositions from our course. Powell ignores Greece, and a pantheon of the heroes of liberty could be established from the individuals he leaves out: Socrates, Jesus and Paul, Pericles, Lincoln, Churchill, Susan B. Anthony, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and many others.


II. Supplementary Reading


A History of Freedom
Part III
Professor J. Rufus Fears

THE TEACHING COMPANY®
J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.
Professor of Classics, University of Oklahoma

J. Rufus Fears is Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma, where he holds the G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. He rose from Assistant Professor to Professor of History at Indiana University. From 1986–1990, he was Professor of Classics and Chairman of the Department of Classical Studies at Boston University.

Professor Fears holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His research has been supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the Kerr Foundation, and the Zarrow Foundation. Professor Fears was chosen as Indiana University's first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. He is listed in Who's Who in America and Who's Who in the World.

Professor Fears is the author of more than seventy articles and reviews on ancient history, the history of liberty, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome, The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology, The Theology of Victory at Rome, and The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology. He has published a three-volume edition of Selected Writings of Lord Acton, the great British historian of liberty. In addition, Professor Fears's comments on the lessons of history have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals in the United States and abroad.

On fifteen occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, he was chosen as the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year.
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## A History of Freedom

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A History of Freedom

Scope:

Our course explores the history of freedom, from the birth of the idea of liberty in classical Greece to our own day. Our course rests upon the premise that ideas change history. No idea in the history of the world has been more influential than freedom. Indeed, it can be argued that freedom is the definitive idea of our civilization, and the march towards freedom the central theme of our history. Our course deals with the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of freedom. We also deal with the moral dimension of freedom, and we ask a question as old as classical Greece and as current as today’s newscasts: can we separate liberty, religion and morality, and is there a dichotomy between public and private morality in a free society?

Our course recognizes the many definitions that have been given to the words freedom and liberty. However, our course proceeds with a two-fold working definition. Liberty is freedom under the law: the freedom of a People to govern itself under laws it gives to itself. Complementing this political freedom is the freedom of the individual: the liberty of the individual to live as he or she chooses as long as that individual does not infringe upon the rights of another individual. Finally, our working definition of freedom maintains that responsibility is the other side of liberty and that for every right there is a corresponding duty.

Our course also rests on the premise that history is made by great individuals and great events, not by anonymous social and economic forces. Accordingly, we center our course around six seminal epochs in the history of liberty and the great individuals and events that shaped them: Greece, Rome, Christianity, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, World War II, and the last decades of the twentieth century.

Lectures One--Six focus on the birth of freedom in Greece and the history of the world’s first democracy, Athens. Our first lecture sets the stage by defining the Greek idea of liberty within the framework of the struggle against the absolutism of the Persian king and his vast empire. Lectures Two--Four describe the institutions and values of the Athenian democracy and the intellectual revolution brought about by this first government “of the People, by the People, and for the People.” Lecture Five examines the trial and execution of Socrates as a test case in the values of the Athenian democracy. Lecture Six concludes our section on Greece with a discussion of the new political and intellectual world brought about by the achievements of Alexander the Great.

Lectures Seven--Eleven trace the history of freedom at Rome. For the Founders of America, the history of Rome was filled with lessons for the citizens of our new Republic. Lecture Seven describes the balanced constitution of the Roman republic, which served the Founders as a model for our own Constitution. Lecture Eight asks why the Romans, at the height of military power and material affluence, lost their republican liberty and accepted the military dictatorship of the Caesars. Lectures Nine and Ten evaluate the contribution made to the history of freedom by the Roman Empire of the Caesars. Lecture Eleven discusses the reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the new forms of liberty that arose out of its ruins.

Lectures Twelve--Seventeen are devoted to the role of Christianity in the history of freedom. Lecture Twelve, on Jesus, places his life and mission within the framework of the political and religious currents of the Roman Empire. Lecture Thirteen compares Jesus and Socrates and asks why the two greatest teachers in history were tried and put to death on trumped-up charges. Lecture Fourteen on Paul explores liberation as a central theme in the message of early Christianity. Lecture Fifteen analyzes the contribution of the institutional church to ideas and institutions of freedom. Martin Luther and the new forces of freedom unleashed by the Protestant Reformation are the subject of Lecture Sixteen. Our section on freedom and Christianity concludes with the intellectual and political opposition offered to freedom by the ideas of Machiavelli and that of the divine right of kings.

Herman Melville wrote, “we Americans are a chosen people, who bear the ark of the liberties of the world.” Our course believes that the United States, its foundation and history, is the most important single event in the history of freedom. Accordingly, we devote eleven lectures to this theme. Lectures Eighteen--Twenty discuss the ideas and events that led up to the American Revolution. Lectures Twenty-One and Twenty-Two analyze the Declaration of Independence, its sources, and its meaning. The United States Constitution is the subject of Lectures Twenty-Three—Twenty-Five. Lecture Twenty-Three describes the ideas, personalities, and events that shaped the
Constitutional Convention of 1787. Lectures Twenty-Four and Twenty-Five analyze the ideas and institutions of liberty embodied in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Founders and their Constitution did not resolve two great questions: slavery, and whether a citizen’s ultimate loyalty lay with his state or with the United States. Lectures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven discuss the American Civil War as the great struggle that resolved these issues. The focus is on Robert E. Lee and Abraham Lincoln as paradigms of the conflicting ideas of liberty over which the Civil War was fought. Lecture Twenty-Eight presents Franklin Roosevelt--his social, economic, and political program--as the fulfillment of Abraham Lincoln’s ideal of government “of the People, by the People, and for the People.”

The twentieth century witnessed unprecedented challenges to freedom. Lectures Twenty-Nine—Thirty-Three focus on World War II as a decisive moment in the history of freedom, a struggle between good and evil as embodied in Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler and the traditions each represented. The section begins with the French Revolution and its ambiguous legacy to the history of freedom. Lectures Thirty and Thirty-One are devoted the liberal tradition and Winston Churchill. Lectures Thirty-Two and Thirty-Three explore the illiberal tradition and Adolf Hitler.

Our final three lectures look at the Cold War and the extraordinary march towards freedom witnessed by the last decade of the twentieth century. America as the bastion of liberty is the central figure in these concluding lectures. It was American Presidents from Truman to Reagan who understood and fought Communism and the Soviet system as archetypal enemies of true liberty. Lecture Thirty-Five examines the relationship between liberty and civil disobedience in the ideals and actions of Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our last lecture summarizes our course and looks into the future. Americans entered the twenty-first century convinced that we are the only superpower and that the innovations of science, technology, and industry have opened a new era of individual liberty, prosperity, and peace. It should be remembered that Europeans entered the twentieth century under similar delusions. This course of lectures ends on a cautionary note, one that was already voiced in the Athenian democracy of the fifth century BC. Excessive individualism is not liberty but rather license. There can ultimately be no separation between public and private morality. A democratic society can survive only if its citizens have a shared set of moral and political values. Excessive prosperity can lead to that public apathy about politics which is the death knell of liberty. In the end, the true test of a free society is its ability to produce leaders of ability, vision, and moral character.
Lecture Twenty-Five  
The Bill of Rights

Scope: Fundamental to the success of the Constitution has been the ability to shape it to new conditions. The Bill of Rights began this amending process. The lecture examines the Bill of Rights from the perspective of the intent of the Framers. It briefly surveys the idea of individual liberty in Greece and Rome and the English Magna Carta, 1628 Petition of Right, the 1689 Bill of Rights, and their legacy to our Bill of Rights. A careful analysis of the First and Second Amendments provides a springboard discussion of the relevance of the Framers’ intent to the role of individual liberty in contemporary American society and the belief of the Founders that every right entails a corresponding duty.

Outline

I. The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the Constitution.
   A. The Framers did not put a bill of rights into the Constitution itself. This omission raised grave concerns when the Constitution was submitted to the ratifying conventions. Thomas Jefferson was especially vocal in his criticism of this aspect of the Constitution.
   B. It is doubtful that the Constitution would have been ratified had Madison and other leading Federalists not agreed to add a bill of rights.

II. In ratifying the Constitution, five states sent proposed amendments to be considered by the First Congress.
   A. James Madison, who had been elected to the House of Representatives, headed a special committee to prepare a report on these proposed amendments.
   B. The list was reduced to twelve proposed amendments, which were adopted by Congress, then sent to the states for ratification under Article V. Two of the amendments were not ratified, one dealing with congressional salaries and one with proportional representation in the House of Representatives.

III. Precedents for the Bill of Rights: Greece and Rome, the English tradition, state constitutions.
   A. The Bill of Rights is effectively a guarantee that the federal government will not encroach on the individual’s civil rights.
   B. In the Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic, no written bills of rights or written constitutions existed. However, the individual citizen was guaranteed specific rights by law and custom.
      1. Freedom of speech was, for the Athenian, one of the most basic rights of the citizen.
      2. Freedom of the press: In Athens, broad license was given to authors, including the public performance of plays. However, authors could be fined for outraging public sentiment or slandering Athens in the eyes of foreigners.
      3. Freedom of religion did not exist in Athens or Rome. Citizens had a duty to worship the gods who protected their country. Socrates was legally put to death on the charge of not worshiping the gods of Athens.
      4. The right to bear arms was linked to service in the citizen army (militia).
      5. The Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic guaranteed to the citizen: freedom from arbitrary search and seizure, freedom from arbitrary arrest, and the right to a fair and speedy trial by a jury of his peers.
      6. The separation of church and state, however, was recognized in neither the Roman Republic nor the Empire.
   C. The important precedent for the Founders, however, was the English tradition of bills of rights, in which the ruler guarantees specific civil rights of his subjects.
      1. Magna Carta (1215).
      2. The Petition of Right (1628) reaffirmed the rights proclaimed in the Magna Carta.
3. The Bill of Rights (1689), in which William and Mary agreed to respect specific rights, most particularly those of Parliament, was the major English precedent for the United States Bill of Rights.

4. Bills of rights were contained in the constitutions of the individual states, and these state guarantees of rights were the most immediate and compelling precedent for a federal bill of rights.
   a. They more clearly defined the rights of the citizen against government.
   b. The Virginia Bill of Rights, for example, begins with a statement of natural law. In this document, Montesquieu’s virtues are made concrete.

IV. Freedom and the Bill of Rights.

A. As intended by the Founders, the Bill of Rights guaranteed freedom at two levels: that of the state and the individual citizen.
   1. The Bill of Rights limited only the power of the federal government, not the state government.
   2. The Bill of Rights guaranteed that the federal government would not infringe specific rights of the individual.
   3. The Bill of Rights also guaranteed that the federal government would not interfere with the power of the states to determine the civil liberties of their citizens.

B. The freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.
   1. The First Amendment guarantees that the federal government cannot interfere with the individual’s freedom of religion. Congress cannot make one denomination, say, the Episcopal Church, as the national church of the United States and support it with federal taxes. Congress cannot interfere in any way with freedom of speech, press, or peaceable assembly.
   2. The Second and Third Amendment reflected the great fear of standing armies as vehicles to oppress liberty. Precedents for the Second Amendment included the English Bill of Rights of 1689 and the Virginia Bill of Rights. The amendment does not limit the right of people to bear arms in any way.
   3. The Fourth through the Eighth Amendments guarantee the freedom and protections of the common law. These amendments ensured that the common law, as opposed to Roman law, would be the law of the land. In this way, as in others, the revolutionary Founders chose not to break with tradition.
   4. The Ninth Amendment was intended to protect liberty by limiting as far as possible the federal government’s power over the individual.
   5. The Tenth Amendment was intended to protect liberty by limiting as far as possible the federal government’s power over individual states. The amendment left unanswered whether one’s first duty was to a state of the United States or the federal government. Such would be the dilemma of Robert E. Lee.

Essential Reading:
The Bill of Rights.

Supplementary Reading:
McClellan, Liberty, pp. 248–280.

Questions to Consider:
1. Should the Second Amendment be repealed?
2. Does the Bill of Rights include a right to privacy?
Lecture Twenty-Six
Liberty and Lee at Gettysburg

Scope: Two great issues not resolved by the Constitutional Convention or the Bill of Rights were slavery and whether the ultimate loyalty of a citizen was to his state or the federal government. The resolution of these issues came only on the battlefields of the American Civil War. This lecture examines the life of Robert E. Lee and asks why a man of such demonstrated character and honor, a man who believed slavery a great moral wrong, chose to follow his state and the cause of the Confederacy. From this perspective, the lecture explores the question of federalism versus centralized authority as fundamental to the nature of governmental power and to the history of liberty.

Outline

I. Liberty under law was the goal of the Constitution. In achieving its goal, the Constitution of the United States has established the most successful form of government in history.
   A. The United States today enjoys the best government in the world. It is a model to the rest of the world.
   B. However, the enduring success of the United States and its Constitution came at a high price: the American Civil War, the bloodiest war in the history of the United States.

II. The Civil War was a constitutional crisis. Its origins lay in the failure of the Founders to resolve two critical issues of freedom.
   A. The course and outcome of the Civil War changed so fundamentally the character of the Constitution and the Republic that we may well speak of a Second Founding.
   B. That Second Founding was proclaimed in the Gettysburg Address of Abraham Lincoln.

III. The two great issues of freedom left unresolved by the Constitution were slavery and states’ rights. The failure to resolve these issues was the result of compromises made at the Constitutional Convention in order to make a workable constitution that would be adopted by all the states.
   A. Slavery was made an intrinsic part of the Constitution.
      1. Slaves were counted in determining representation—reckoned at 3/5 of a person.
      2. The slave trade was recognized and taxed by the federal government.
      3. The Constitution obliged states to cooperate in the return of fugitive slaves.
      4. Throughout history, liberty and slavery have been held to be compatible. Such great minds as Aristotle and Cicero held this view. It was true of the Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic. The natural law tradition, on which the Declaration of Independence rested, recognized slavery as a legitimate institution, sanctioned by the laws of mankind.
      5. Yet even such slaveholders as Thomas Jefferson and George Mason felt that a profound dichotomy existed in a nation founded on liberty and a constitution that endorsed slavery.
   B. This dichotomy grew greater over the next eighty years. The progress of liberty was marked elsewhere in the world by the abolition of slavery, including in the British Empire in 1833.

IV. The Civil War was fought over conflicting ideas of liberty—democratic versus republican liberty.
   A. The Union represented the cause of democratic liberty.
      1. It offered a broad, inclusive concept of liberty. All men are free and equal.
      2. An expansionistic ideal of liberty, suited to a vast, diverse empire and capable of spreading freedom all over the world, was central to its mission.
   B. The Confederacy represented the republican idea of liberty.
      1. Narrow and exclusive, it believed that men are equal only before the law. Like the classical concept of freedom, it believed that liberty could be compatible with slavery.
      2. It was fostered in small, homogeneous republics and was incapable of expanding to diverse nations and cultures.
3. Yet this was the liberty established by the Founders and protected by the Constitution. Constitutionally, slavery was a domestic institution, for each state to deal with as its citizens chose. If slavery were abolished, the individual states should do it. To allow the federal government to interfere was to destroy states’ rights and to create an all-powerful, tyrannical federal government. States’ rights—specifically on the question of slavery—was the ultimate check on the power of the federal government.

4. With good reason, the Confederacy believed it stood for the principles of the American Revolution. As Americans then had declared independence from a tyrannical British government, so the eleven Confederate states now declared their independence from a tyrannical United States.

V. The Civil War was the gravest crisis in American history. On both sides, it called forth men of great integrity, character, and patriotism. One such was Robert E. Lee (1807–1870).

A. Before the Civil War.

1. Lee was the son of famous Revolutionary War General Henry (Light Horse Harry) Lee and scion of a distinguished Virginia family.

2. His father was a close friend of George Washington, and Washington was Robert E. Lee’s model. His father’s promising political career ended in financial failure. Robert E. Lee grew up in rather straitened circumstances.

3. He graduated with distinction from West Point, class of 1829.


5. He had a superb record in the Army, including service in the Mexican War.

B. On April 18, 1861, President Lincoln offered him command of the armies of the United States. He refused and offered his services to Virginia.

C. Why Lee chose the Confederacy.

1. He owned no property. The magnificent plantation in Arlington belonged to his wife.

2. He believed slavery to be a great moral wrong. Slavery must be abolished, but it must be done by the individual states.

3. After the war, Lee wrote his reasons in a letter to Lord Acton. He believed in the Constitution. He believed that states’ rights were essential to the balance of the Constitution and the safeguard of the continuance of free government. The consolidation of the states into one vast republic, sure to be aggressive abroad and despotic at home, would be the ruin of freedom.

4. The South fought for the supremacy of the Constitution and its laws. He and other citizens of Virginia had long wanted slavery abolished but wanted it done by the states. After the war, Lee accepted in all good faith the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery and hoped that the Constitution would undergo no further change.

D. Civil War.

1. On June 1, 1862, Lee assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia. His military genius was displayed in the battles of Second Manassas (August 29–30, 1862), Antietam (September 17, 1862), Fredricksburg, (December 13, 1862), and Chancellorsville (May 2–5, 1863). He was ranked with Napoleon as one of the greatest generals of all time. His victories carried the cause of the Confederacy to the pinnacle of its success.

2. His strategy and tactics failed at Gettysburg (July 1–3, 1863). Defeat there began the long road to surrender at Appomattox (April 9, 1865). There, General U. S. Grant conveyed to Lee generous terms of surrender.

E. After the war, Lee served as president of Washington College (later Washington and Lee), where he proved himself an innovative educator.

F. Lee died, thinking himself a failure. However, Theodore Roosevelt ranked Lee with Washington in the pantheon of American heroes, men who chose to follow their moral consciences in the cause of liberty.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Questions to Consider:
1. Would you have fought for the North or the South?
2. How might slavery have been ended without a civil war?
Lecture Twenty-Seven
Liberty and Lincoln at Gettysburg

Scope: This lecture places us at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863, as Lincoln delivers his speech. The Gettysburg Address is one of the three founding documents of the United States, as fundamental as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The lecture analyzes the Gettysburg Address in detail, as a masterpiece of rhetoric, as a profound statement of the ideals of democratic liberty, and as a testimony to the moral growth and understanding of Abraham Lincoln, possibly the greatest president in American history.

Outline

I. More than 7,000 men, Union and Confederate, were killed at Gettysburg.
   A. The Union states whose troops had fought at Gettysburg decided to create a cemetery there. November 19, 1863, was the date of the dedication of the cemetery.
   B. The distinguished diplomat and scholar and famous orator Edward Everett was the keynote speaker.
   C. As a courtesy, President Lincoln was asked to make a few remarks. Lincoln’s speech lasted two minutes. It was not well received by the audience or by much of the press.

II. However, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address remains with us today as one of the seminal documents in the history of freedom. It is the greatest speech in American political history. It ranks with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States as one of the three founding documents of American liberty.

III. Lincoln the statesman.
   A. Lincoln, despite only one year of education, joins Pericles and Winston Churchill as one of the three greatest democratic statesmen in history. He shared with them the four qualities that distinguish a statesman from a politician:
      1. A bedrock of principles.
      2. A moral compass.
      3. A vision for his country.
      4. The ability to achieve a consensus to accomplish that vision.
   B. Lincoln’s rise to the presidency was itself tribute to the freedom of opportunity made possible by American democracy.

IV. Lincoln and liberty.
   A. Lincoln grew to adulthood hating slavery. He viewed slavery as morally wrong and as utterly incompatible with liberty and democracy.
   B. He opposed the Mexican War, an unpopular stance at the time.
   C. From the time he reentered politics in 1856, Lincoln was convinced that slavery must be abolished throughout the United States.
   D. His goal as president was to abolish slavery. He believed absolutely in the Union and that its preservation was paramount.
   E. Lincoln grew in his moral understanding of the evil of slavery.
      1. His Address to the Cooper Institute in New York on February 27, 1860, made Lincoln a national political figure.
      2. In it, he takes the position of a lawyer, arguing the case that the Constitution permits the federal government to forbid slavery in new territories.
   F. However, the terrible cost of the war wrought a transformation in Lincoln’s understanding of slavery and liberty.
      1. He became convinced that the Civil War was God’s punishment on the nation for the original sin of slavery.
2. The sacrifice of so many lives must be in fulfillment of God’s will that the nation be born again, free of slavery. This was the message of the Gettysburg Address.

V. The meaning of the Gettysburg Address.
A. The Gettysburg Address is a masterpiece of rhetoric.
B. It is a deeply religious document. The religious meaning is invoked through biblical language: “Four score and seven years ago…”
C. In stirring language, Lincoln asserts that the true birth of the United States was the Declaration of Independence, not the Constitution.
D. The language of childbirth is a leitmotif of the speech: “gave birth, conceived, rebirth.” The Civil War is like childbirth, painful. The theme of birth identifies the nation with Christ, born of mortal woman to bring salvation to mankind. It begins and ends by invoking the theme of birth and declaring the principles of democracy.
E. The true principles of the United States are liberty and equality for all men. It is the dedication to these moral principles that makes the United States unique in history, the bearer of freedom to the world.
F. The Civil War is the test of whether a nation dedicated to liberty and equality can endure.
G. The men who have died and will die in the war laid down their lives in sacrifice so that this unique nation can survive. These men are like Christ. “Dedicate, consecrate, hallow”—these are religious words.
H. Our task is to follow their example and pay any price to preserve this nation.
I. We must resolve that this sacrifice is not in vain.
J. What more can anyone do than die for his country? Pericles had invoked this same theme.
K. As a Christian dies and is reborn free of sin, so the United States must be reborn. Its freedom must this time be pure, purged of the moral wrong of slavery.
L. This rebirth of the United States alone can ensure that democracy and liberty will not perish from the earth.

VI. Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address was utterly different in tone than his first.
A. Even more strongly than in the Gettysburg Address, he portrayed the war as the judgment of God on America for the evil of slavery.
B. Unlike what followed the aftermath of civil war in so many other nations, Lincoln set the country on the path of reconciliation.

VII. Lincoln was not an openly religious man. However, he was the most spiritual and the most moral of all our presidents. He united inextricably liberty, morality, and God as the only foundation for American democracy.

Essential Reading:
Lincoln, Address at Cooper Institute, First Inaugural Address, Gettysburg Address, and Second Inaugural Address (may be conveniently found in Lincoln, Speeches, pp. 111–130, 215–224, 536, 686–687).

Supplementary Reading:
Wills, Lincoln.

Questions to Consider:
1. In all the verbiage of the Vietnam War, did anyone come close to Lincoln in explaining the purpose of that war?
2. Would you call the Gettysburg Address “a Christian speech”?
The Great Depression was a testing ground as severe as the Civil War and Franklin Roosevelt a statesman whose contributions to the history of freedom are fully comparable to those of the Founders and Abraham Lincoln. Roosevelt’s program of social and economic reform sought to fulfill the Constitution’s goal of “providing for the general welfare” and was the consequence of Lincoln’s ideal of democracy and the progressive political values and policies of such presidential heirs to Lincoln as Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Franklin Roosevelt’s reforms may well have preserved constitutional government in America in a time when much of the world succumbed to dictatorship. The cost has been the growth of a centralized, bureaucratic federal government that Americans have come to accept as the price of individual security and prosperity.

Outline

I. Democracy equates liberty with equality, and the course of a democracy is toward ever-greater equality. This was the view of Aristotle, and this was the course of democracy in classical Athens. This has been the course of democracy in America.

II. The realization of equality is marked by our constitutional amendments.
   A. Since the Civil War, the franchise had been increasingly expanded, the direct role of the people in the government has been increased, and wealth has been redistributed to achieve greater equality.
   B. The federal government, rather than the states, has assumed the chief role in protecting individual civil liberties and in achieving equality.

III. Constitutional amendments.
   A. The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) abolished the great inequality of slavery.
   B. The Fourteenth Amendment (1868) achieved equality before the law by expanding the protection of the laws of the United States to all citizens: “no state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”
   C. The Fifteenth Amendment (1870) extended the right to vote to all males, regardless of race.
   D. The Sixteenth Amendment (1913) sought to equalize wealth by a progressive income tax.
   E. The Seventeenth Amendment (1913) increased the democratic element in the Constitution by providing for the direct election of senators.

IV. The first two decades of the new century were dominated by the progressive politics of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Though justly known as the Progressive Era, the age was marked by many unprogressive trends.
   A. While progressive legislation was moving through Congress, social segregation was confirmed by the Supreme Court.
   B. Wilson’s war powers during World War I exceeded anything Lincoln had known during the previous century.
   C. Finally, the war fought to make the world safe for democracy (World War I) only increased the colonial empires of several European powers.

V. The Great Depression was a test of American liberty almost as severe as the Civil War.
   A. In Europe, economic crisis led such nations as Germany to abandon freedom and take the catastrophic course of dictatorship.
   B. The United States did not follow this course. That we adhered to the path of freedom was due in no small measure to Franklin Roosevelt.
VI. Roosevelt the statesman.
   A. Background.
      1. He was born to wealth and privilege, like two other great democratic statesmen, Pericles and Churchill.
      2. He followed the liberal, progressive democratic ideal of his cousin, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson.
      3. He was a man of enormous personal courage. Like Pericles, Roosevelt believed that a democracy must defend freedom.
   B. As president, he wasted no time passing legislation to bring America back from the Depression. The CCC, TVA, WPA, and other programs offered aid and comfort to the destitute and unemployed.

VII. Roosevelt changed the character of the American democracy, and all his successors as president have, in fact, followed his path, despite rhetoric. In time, he would join Churchill to rise up and defeat the forces of the illiberal tradition led by Adolf Hitler.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
McJimsey, *Roosevelt*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Can you challenge Aristotle’s view that a republic defines freedom as “liberty under law,” while a democracy defines liberty as “equality”?
2. Do you believe that Ronald Reagan followed the path of Franklin Roosevelt?
Lecture Twenty-Nine
Why the French Revolution Failed

Scope: The American and French Revolutions were two seminal events in the history of freedom, coeval and interrelated, but divergent in outcome. The causes for this divergence lie in the history of ideas and institutions but also in the character and motives of the individuals who made the great events of these revolutions. The end product of the American Revolution was a Constitution that, after more than 200 years, continues to assure the blessings of liberty. The legacy of the French Revolution has been far more ambiguous. The ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity have been, at times, submerged by the forces of despotism and defeatism.

Outline

I. The legacy of Roosevelt: the price of American democracy.
   A. As the price of security and well being, Americans have come to rely on a large, powerful, bureaucratic, costly, intrusive federal government.
   B. To pay for this, Americans accept a rate of taxation unthinkable to the most despotic pharaoh of old.

II. The Baron de Montesquieu: the cycle of constitutions.
   A. According to the philosopher Montesquieu, the greatest political thinkers of classical antiquity, Plato, Aristotle, and Polybius, believed that political society progressed through a cycle of constitutions.
   B. This cycle was one of the invariable laws of history, he believed, a theory that deeply influenced the American Founders.

III. France and revolution.
   A. In 1789, France was the leading country of Europe. Populous and wealthy, it was the intellectual center of Europe.
   B. The political tradition of France, however, was one of royal absolutism.

IV. Rousseau and revolution.
   A. The American Revolution reflected the ideas of the Baron de Montesquieu. By contrast, the French Revolution embodied the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778).
      1. Rousseau was born in Geneva, Switzerland.
      2. He led an early life of poverty.
      3. He had a neurotic personality.
   B. Rousseau’s Social Contract (1762).
      1. The evil in humans is the result of the evils of society. Improve society and humans will improve. Human nature can be made better by political and social change.
      2. The true sovereign in the nation is the general will of the people. The freedom of the individual is subsumed into the general will. Kings and representative bodies are only the expression of the general will of the people, which is absolute and inviolable.
      3. For Rousseau, the national will of any people would find itself expressed in a single great leader.
      4. Rousseau’s true legacy was not American democracy. His ideas lent far more support to the ideologies of totalitarian regimes, such as that established by the Russian Revolution.

V. France on the eve of revolution.
   A. The three great parts of French society—clergy, nobility, and commoners—were represented by the Estates General, each estate with a single vote. In 1789, the Estates were newly designated as the National Assembly.
   B. The revolution that broke out in 1789 began with an effort to sweep away all existing institutions and to found a new order based on liberty, equality, and fraternity.
C. The French Revolution was founded on universal ideals.

D. The Declaration of the Rights of Man (August 26, 1789): Men are born free and equal in rights.
   1. The natural rights of all men were liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.
   2. The Declaration of the Rights of Man guaranteed such individual liberties as equality before the law, due process, and freedom of thought, speech, and religion.
   3. Liberty was defined as liberty under law: the freedom to do anything that was not injurious to another.

E. Thus far, the French Revolution seemed to follow the path and ideals of the American Revolution that had inspired it. But it degenerated into the excesses of mobocracy and, ultimately, tyranny.
   1. Wars of conquest were waged.
   2. Coups and countercoups followed.
   3. The French were ruled by organized terror. An estimated 40,000 people were executed, not for any crime, but simply for being who they were—aristocrats, for example.
   4. The rule of Napoleon Bonaparte, a man of genius but a tyrant, ensued. He saw himself as a new Julius Caesar.
   5. George Washington might well have been our Napoleon, but he refused the role of dictator.

F. Thus, instead of benefiting Europe, the French Revolution brought war and misery.

G. The French Revolution and Napoleon’s rule led to an ambiguous legacy: the idea that only within the state does the individual find true freedom.

H. Because of this legacy, the history of France in the 19th and 20th centuries was not a simple progression toward ever greater freedom. Reaction and illiberalism were embodied in key events and periods:
   1. The restoration of monarchy: 1815–1848, including the revolutions of 1830 and 1848.
   2. The dictatorship of Napoleon III: 1852–1870, a popular dictator who was the embodiment of the general will.
   3. The capitulation of 1940: yet another legacy of the revolution.

VI. 1848: reflections on the Communist Manifesto.

A. Following the revolutions of the nineteenth century, a terror far greater than anything the French could have imagined lay in wait.

B. However, it is individuals, not anonymous social and economic forces, that shape history.
   1. Almost all violent revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries ended in despotism.

Essential Reading:
Burke, in Williams, Enlightenment, pp. 508–521.

Supplementary Reading:
Rousseau, in Williams, Enlightenment, pp.105–142.
Declaration of the Rights of Man, Proclamation on Spreading the Revolution, and Napoleon’s Proclamation to his Troops after the Battle of Austerlitz (1805), in Viorst, Documents, pp. 189–192, 197–198, 204–206.
Washington’s Farewell Address, in Suriano, Speeches, pp. 16–21.

Questions to Consider:
2. Do you believe that character should be a factor in assessing historical figures? What about contemporary politicians?
Lecture Thirty
The Liberal Tradition

Scope: Napoleon and Churchill represent the contrasts between the ideals of liberty in the French Revolution and those embodied in the Anglo-American tradition of freedom. For Napoleon, liberty was but a means to achieve power for himself and the state. For Churchill, liberty was the end in itself. Churchill’s commitment was to the English tradition of liberty under law and representative government running back to Magna Carta and beyond. It is a tradition of liberty shaped by the great English tradition of liberalism and its ideals of individual freedom, economic freedom, and morality. This lecture surveys this tradition in the form of three of its preeminent representatives: Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Lord Acton.

Outline

I. Napoleon embodied continental liberalism, by which the state knows no real limits.
   A. This belief grows out of Rousseau’s idea of the general will. It is a secular concept of liberty.
   B. But the Anglo-American idea insists that liberty is an end in itself.

II. Churchill began his service in Parliament as a member of the Conservative Party. In 1904, he switched to the Liberal Party. In 1925, he rejoined the Conservative Party. He changed because the parties changed. Churchill never wavered in his principles. He was the embodiment of the principles of the liberal tradition:
   A. Political liberty
   B. Individual liberty
   C. Economic freedom.

III. Ideas make history. Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Lord Acton were three seminal thinkers in the liberal tradition.

IV. Adam Smith (1723–1790).
   A. The year 1776 was an *annus mirabilis* in the history of freedom; it saw the Declaration of Independence, Gibbon’s *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*.
   B. Smith was born and educated in Scotland and had taught moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow, where he was a popular and effective teacher. He was associated with leading figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, including the inventor of the steam engine, James Watt; the chemist Joseph Black; and the historian David Hume.
   C. *The Wealth of Nations* criticized policies of mercantilism, such as tariffs, which regulated the economy through government controls.
   D. Smith laid the foundations for classical economics, or laissez-faire economics. Self-interest was to be the key factor of the system.
   E. Dominant throughout the nineteenth century, Smith’s economic ideas have emerged again in the late twentieth century as the philosophical underpinnings of economic policies throughout the world.

V. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873).
   A. John was the son of James Mill, an influential intellectual figure who was closely associated with Jeremy Bentham. Bentham was the philosopher of utilitarianism, which believed in the greatest good for the greatest number. Bentham and James Mill were active in the movement to reform the political and social institutions of Britain and make them more liberal.
   B. John Stuart Mill was an intellectual prodigy—he learned Greek by the age of thirteen. By the time his book *On Liberty* was published in 1859, Mill was the most influential thinker in Britain. He wrote *On Liberty* in collaboration with his wife, Harriet.
   C. Mill’s definition of liberty insists that the individual should be left alone.
D. He points out that both Socrates and Jesus were considered blasphemers. For Mill, the majority opinion is a feeble standard for truth.

E. Mill was opposed to state-supported education.

F. Mill even argued that the state did not have any right to legislate against a social problem, such as alcohol.

VI. Lord Acton (1834–1902).

A. Acton was different in education and background from most of his fellow English liberals.
   1. His family was aristocratic, international, and Catholic. Acton was educated in Germany.
   2. A devout Catholic, Acton was actively involved from 1850 to 1870 in the liberal intellectual and political reform movements of Catholicism.

B. From 1895 to 1902, he was Regius professor of modern history at Cambridge.

C. Acton was a close associate of the Liberal Prime Minister Gladstone (1809–1898) and strongly supported his program of social reform.

D. He planned but never wrote a history of liberty.

E. For Acton, liberalism believes:
   1. In the idea of the infallible conscience. True liberty exists when every individual is free to follow his or her educated conscience.
   2. The individual is more important than the majority. The protection of minorities is the touchstone of a free nation.
   3. Morality is more important than politics. Absolute values exist, and the nation and its leaders must chart their course by the absolute values of morality.
   4. Government has the duty to encourage the social and economic means necessary to make liberty viable for the masses: education, social welfare, retirement benefits.
   5. Government must rest on the consent of the governed. Acton was a great admirer of the American Founders.
   6. Citizens have a duty to overthrow an immoral or unjust government.
   7. The great divide in the world is between the friends and enemies of liberty. Among the enemies were Darwinism and racism.
   8. Nationalism and socialism are the two greatest enemies of freedom. Acton foresaw a Europe in which ruin would descend on that continent in those very guises.

Essential Reading:
Acton, Selected Writings III, pp. 489–564.
Mill, Liberty.
Smith, in Williams, Enlightenment, pp. 421–435.

Supplementary Reading:
Heilbroner, Worldly Philosophers.
Questions to Consider:

1. How do we use the term *liberal* today?
2. Do you agree with John Stuart Mill that “a general state education is a mere contrivance for molding people to be exactly like one another”? 
Lecture Thirty-One
Churchill and the War for Freedom

Scope: The lecture opens by placing us in the British House of Parliament on June 4, 1940, as Prime Minister Churchill declares that the British “will defend our island whatever the cost may be…. We shall never surrender.” Churchill is proof that a great individual can change history, and he is the embodiment of the qualities by which we distinguish a true statesman from mere politicians: a bedrock of principles, a moral compass, vision, and the ability to build a consensus to achieve that vision. Churchill rightly saw World War II as a titanic conflict between the principles of good and evil and a climactic moment in the millennia-old struggle for freedom.

Outline
I. The twentieth century presented the greatest challenge to liberty in modern history. Nazism in the Third Reich and communism in the Soviet Union represented evil governments, resting on the denial of liberty and morality.
   A. Adolf Hitler was nearly successful in his attempt to extinguish liberty all over the world.
   B. That he failed at a critical moment was because of one man, Winston Churchill.
II. Churchill addressed Parliament on June 4, 1940.
   A. He became Prime Minister on May 10, 1940, during the “sternest days in English history.”
      1. The German Army seemed invincible.
      2. The French and British Armies were trapped at Dunkirk.
      3. Leading figures in the British government believed that the only hope was a negotiated peace with Germany.
   B. To Parliament and the world, Churchill declared, “We shall never surrender.” With this speech, he rallied a nation to its finest hour.
III. Churchill the statesman.
   A. A bedrock of principles—truth, character, and integrity—and a devotion to democratic liberty marked every facet of Churchill’s life, both public and private.
   B. He had vision, a grand and noble vision of mankind moving toward ever-greater freedom.
   C. He had the ability to build a consensus, revealed in his mastery of the English language, in both speech and writing.
IV. Background.
   A. Churchill was born to wealth and privilege.
   B. His father, Lord Randolph, was a brilliant but failed politician.
   C. His mother, Lady Randolph, was American. Churchill was a lifelong admirer of the United States.
   D. He graduated from the military academy at Sandhurst and served in the army with distinction.
   E. His escape as a prisoner during the Boer War made him a national celebrity.
V. Political career until World War II.
   A. Elected to Parliament in 1900, Churchill rose rapidly. By 1911, he was in charge of the Navy as First Lord of the Admiralty.
   B. Churchill was an extremely capable administrator and a bold policy maker. He was not “Teflon,” however.
      1. He was blamed for failed policies during and after the world war.
      2. Churchill’s idea to outflank the enemy during the Gallipoli campaign failed—and he was held responsible.
   C. By 1929, he was regarded by the most influential politicians as a failure. He remained in Parliament but with little political influence (“into the wilderness”).

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D. Early on, Churchill recognized the great threat to liberty represented by Hitler. In articles and speeches, Churchill sought to awaken the British government and people to Nazi aggression.

VI. Prime Minister (May 10, 1940–July 26, 1945).
A. Churchill’s great courage, administrative ability, and strategic genius led to victory in the Battle of Britain, a turning point in the war.
B. After America’s entry into the war, Churchill formed the closest possible ties with Franklin Roosevelt in the crusade to liberate Europe.
C. Churchill’s devotion to liberty was shown when he called for elections after the defeat of Germany. On July 26, 1945, war with Japan still raging, the Conservative Party lost the election and Churchill had to step down as Prime Minister.
D. This was a grave personal blow, but an even graver blow to the hopes for freedom in the post-war world. Churchill understood the danger posed by Stalin and communism and possessed the ability to block Soviet expansion. In his speech at Fulton, Missouri, on March 5, 1946, he spoke of “an iron curtain” falling across Europe.
E. He returned as Prime Minister (1951–1955) and began working for closer ties between Britain and the United States, the two great bastions of freedom. For him, the British Empire was a force for spreading liberty—not suppressing it—and so he returned to protect its last vestiges.

VII. Churchill’s contribution to freedom.
A. After his death on January 24, 1965, Churchill was called “the greatest citizen of the world of our time.”
B. His daughter summarized his contribution to freedom, writing to him shortly before his death: “I owe you what every Englishman, woman, and child does: liberty itself.” We as Americans might say the same.

Essential Reading:
Manchester, Churchill.

Supplementary Reading:
Gilbert, Churchill.

Questions to Consider:
1. Churchill was a strong believer in the British Empire. Can this be reconciled with his love of liberty?
2. Do you believe that the post-war world would have been different if Churchill had been reelected Prime Minister in 1945?
Lecture Thirty-Two
The Illiberal Tradition

Scope: Churchill described Hitler as “this wicked man, this repository and embodiment of so many forms of soul-destroying hatreds.” This lecture examines the tradition that shaped Hitler and National Socialism by focusing upon three essential components: nationalism, Marxism, and crude forms of Darwinism. These ideas continue to be major forces in our own day and they continue to be regarded by their proponents as ideals of freedom. Lord Acton already recognized them for what they are, counterfeit forms of liberty, enemies of freedom.

Outline

I. The title of Hitler’s movement, National Socialism, and of his book, My Struggle, reflects three pillars of the illiberal tradition.

II. Nationalism.
   A. Nationalism is the belief that the supreme loyalty of the individual is to his nation and that the nation is ethnically determined, based on common race, language, culture, and heritage. Nationalism thus posits a unique national character for each ethnic group.
      1. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nationalism has been frequently linked with liberty.
      2. Nationalism is a form of self-determination, a fundamental right recognized in our Declaration of Independence. Both Pericles and Lincoln were advocates of nationalism; even the great Aristotle had argued that the Greeks were superior to everyone else.
      3. The ideas inherent in the French Revolution, meanwhile, had encouraged the nationalistic formation of Germany.
      4. Johann Herder posited the uniqueness of each national group; Johann Fichte described the German nation as uniquely gifted; finally, G.W.F. Hegel claimed that the great individual determined history—but that liberty received its embodiment in the state.
      5. The unification of Germany and Italy in the nineteenth century testified to the power of nationalism, the belief that all Germans or Italians must be united in one nation. These were viewed as movements of national liberation.
   B. Instead of founding a nation on principles, nationalism uses the most primitive criterion for a political society: tribalism.
      1. Nationalism is inherently aggressive and intolerant.
      2. Nationalism demands the expansion of the nation’s frontiers until kindred folk, all speaking the same language, are united. Nationalism is generally based on feelings of national and racial superiority. There must be a group that belongs to “the people”—and others that do not.
      3. Thus, the Germans could believe that they were a “master race.” Those not belonging to the ethnic group were suspect. The corollary of national unity is the removal of minorities to make the nation homogeneous, or “pure,” by ethnic cleansing.

III. Socialism.
   A. Plato’s Republic advanced an early form of socialism. In this work, the state is built on a collectivist philosophy and public propaganda.
   B. In the early nineteenth century, socialist philosophers, such as Robert Owen and the Comte de Saint-Simon, were fairly innocuous.
   C. Out of the Revolution of 1848, however, came the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
      1. Marxism was driven by the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and Hegel.
      2. Marx stressed that materialism was the cause of ideas. His became a “scientific” view of social change.
   D. Both in theory and as practiced in Stalin’s Soviet Union and other communist dictatorships, communism is the antithesis of liberty.
1. It is a form of economic and scientific determinism. Thus, it denies individual liberty and freedom of the will.
2. In communist countries, the party claims absolute sovereignty over the individual, his or her person and conscience.
3. Communism is the avowed enemy of religion and morality. The party can do no wrong.

E. National Socialism was the avowed enemy of communism.
1. Hitler’s rise to power was marked by bloody street battles with communists.
2. Industrialists, who viewed Hitler as a bulwark against communism, aided him.
3. One of his first acts as chancellor was to arrest communists. The war against Russia was portrayed as a crusade against Bolshevism.

F. In fact, significant similarities can be found between Hitler’s National Socialism and Stalin’s communism.
1. Hitler learned from and put into practice many of the lessons learned from Stalin’s totalitarian regime.
2. Hitler’s state was socialist in that economic production was totally geared to the demands of the state.
3. National Socialism and communism shared the demand for the complete control of the individual, his or her mind, conscience, and body.

IV. Darwinism and its legacy.
A. Charles Darwin described a system of evolutionary change. Nature, in his view, was all about conflict.
B. A vulgar form of Darwinism, popular in the late nineteenth century, shaped Hitler’s perverted view of the world.
C. Life was a constant struggle, in which the strong and fit survived and the weak and unfit perished. Hitler’s My Struggle (Mein Kampf) was a title not chosen by chance.
D. The war and the Holocaust were both portrayed in terms of the struggle to survive.
E. In this way, philosophers laid the foundation for the totalitarian state. The myth they established is perhaps best exemplified in George Orwell’s 1984, a novel (1948) that expresses the big lie of the monolithic state, resting upon collective oligarchy.

Essential Reading:
Barzun, Darwin.

Supplementary Reading:
Viereck, Metapolitics.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why do you think so many Germans not only accepted but also participated in the evils of the Third Reich?
2. Could a Hitler—even a far less malevolent version—have come to power as a dictator in the United States in 1933?
Lecture Thirty-Three
Hitler and the War Against Freedom

Scope: The lecture opens in the bunker of Adolf Hitler in Berlin on April 30, 1945. His country in ruins, Russian troops only yards from his bunker, Hitler has committed suicide. Hitler, too, is proof that individuals change history. He had a bedrock of principles, utterly evil principles. His vision was a nightmare for the world. He had an unfathomable ability to make an industrious and educated people accomplices in carrying out his vision to destroy the ideals and institutions of liberty. Hitler’s career represented the triumph of Machiavellian statecraft and a terrifying lesson in what happens when a nation and its leaders lose their moral compass.

Outline

I. The roots of tyranny.
   A. National Socialism and Darwinism derived from certain kinds of freedom. They became distorted only when they claimed to be beyond the bounds of morality.
   B. The word tyrant is originally from the ancient Lydian language and was borrowed by the Greeks.
   C. Plato equates his “tyrannical soul” with a rapacious werewolf. Such was the nature of the man who ascended to rule Germany in the early 1930s.

II. Adolf Hitler’s background.
   A. He was born on April 20, 1889, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of lower-middle-class parents.
   B. He had an unexceptional childhood.
   C. He failed in his attempt to study art and had a contempt for education.
   D. He became a vagabond, first in Vienna, then in Munich.
   E. He dabbled in contemporary pseudo-scientific ideas that were anti-Semitic.

III. World War I and Hitler’s deliverance.
   A. Hitler was delighted when the war broke out.
   B. He served with bravery in the war.
   C. His experience convinced him that war is the embodiment of the great principles: life is struggle; will is power; only the strong are worthy to survive.
   D. He believed that Germany had been betrayed by Jews and socialists, and he was bent on restoring the honor of Germany.
   E. Just as Churchill spoke to one side of human nature, so did Hitler speak to another. Churchill addressed all that was best in human nature, Hitler all that was evil.

IV. Germany’s defeat and the aftermath of World War I were crucial to Hitler’s success.
   A. Germans refused to accept that their defeat was due to military failure.
   B. Economic chaos exacerbated the feelings of national humiliation.

V. Hitler’s rise to power.
   A. He was a master of Machiavellian statecraft. He exploited the political establishment’s own lack of principles and obtained power by legitimate means, becoming Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933.
   B. From 1919 to 1933, Hitler transformed the National Socialist Party into the strongest political force in Germany.
   C. After the Reichstag fire of 1933, civil liberties were repressed—in a legal fashion.
VI. The Third Reich.
   A. Hitler established a totalitarian regime.
   B. The Third Reich openly rejected the values of democracy and liberty.
   C. Fundamental to this rejection of liberty and democracy was the persecution of the Jews.
      1. Hitler drew on a deep German tradition of anti-Semitism, bolstered by crackpot, pseudo-scientific racial theories. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws stripped German Jews of all rights.
      2. The destruction of the Jews was Hitler’s primary goal; everything else was subordinated to that aim.
   D. As soon as he came to power, Hitler began a program of rearmament. By 1936, he began his policy of foreign conquest.
      1. 1936: remilitarization of the Rhineland
      2. 1938: annexation of Austria
      3. 1939: destruction of Czechoslovakia
      4. September 1, 1939: invasion of Poland and the beginning of World War II
      5. 1941: hybris struck, and the Germans invaded the Soviet Union.

VII. The accomplices.
   A. Hitler did not do this alone.
      1. The German people were his willing accomplices in the elimination of freedom in Germany, in the Holocaust, and in the war.
      2. The best-educated German soldiers, though they may have read Antigone, refused to disobey the state.
   B. The Germans eventually were defeated. Hitler sat in his bunker and ordered a scorched-earth policy to be carried out against his own people—truly an embodiment of Plato’s werewolf tyrant.

Essential Reading:
Bullock, Hitler.

Questions to Consider:
1. Would Machiavelli have approved of Hitler?
2. If you had been a German, with the opportunity, would you have assassinated Hitler in 1933? What about 1944?
Lecture Thirty-Four
The Cold War

Scope: The end of World War II by no means guaranteed the triumph of liberty. Writing three years after the end of the war, George Orwell portrayed the vision of the future as “a boot trampling on a human face.” The aftermath of the war left large portions of Eastern Europe and Asia in the grip of a tyranny no less despotic than that of the Nazis: Josef Stalin and the Communism of the Soviet Union. The growth of science and technology provided despotism with ever more efficient tools to establish complete totalitarianism. This lecture portrays American presidents like Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Reagan as leaders who resisted and ultimately overcame the forces of totalitarianism. These presidents represent one of the great ideals of the liberal tradition: those with power have the moral obligation to use that power to defend the weak.

Outline

I. In classical political thought and in the view of the Founders, tyranny is the evil mirror image of liberty. To protect freedom, we must learn to recognize and resist tyrants. Joseph Stalin is the embodiment of Plato’s tyrannical man.

II. Joseph Stalin.
   A. He was born Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili on December 21, 1879, in Georgia, the son of a cobbler and a doting mother. Ethnically, Stalin was Georgian but became a fervid Russian nationalist.
   B. He studied to be a priest. Stalin was thrown out of the seminary, but the concept of doctrinal uniformity played an important role in his approach to Marxism.
   C. By 1900, Stalin was a convinced Marxist and Communist Party activist.
   D. Stalin became the protégé of Nikolai Lenin and played an important role in the Russian Revolution and Civil War.
   E. Marxism has many of the trappings of some religions.
      1. It has its prophets, Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and its bible—*Das Kapital*.
      2. It provides the believer with an all-encompassing worldview and demands from the believer absolute acceptance of the orthodox view.
   F. After Lenin’s death in 1924, Stalin engaged in a brutal struggle for power. By 1929, he was absolute master of the Soviet Union.
   G. Like Lenin and other revolutionaries, he took a new name to mark his break with the past and conversion to the truth path of Marxism: Stalin—the man of steel.

III. Stalin’s method.
   A. Stalin imposed on his own nation an organized terror of a scale and brutality unprecedented in history.
      1. In the name of Marxist orthodoxy and state security, individuals and entire national groups were arrested, sent to die in slave labor camps, or simply murdered.
      2. Much of this terror was carried out through the legal system and had the support of most of the Soviet people who were not victims. An estimated twenty million people died in the slave labor camps. In addition, seven million Ukrainians died in a famine engineered by Stalin in 1932–1933.
   B. When war with Germany came, Stalin proved to be an outstanding wartime leader and a master at winning the peace, as well as the war.
   C. By his own standards, Stalin was one of the most successful leaders in world history.
      1. A Russian nationalist, he led his country to complete victory in its greatest war.
      2. A convinced Marxist, he was responsible for the spread of communism over a good portion of the earth, including Eastern Europe and China.
IV. The Cold War.

A. That Orwell’s vision did not come true was due largely to the commitment to freedom and the policies of a series of American presidents and their advisers:
   1. Harry Truman
   2. Dwight Eisenhower
   3. John Kennedy
   4. Lyndon Johnson
   5. Richard Nixon

B. These presidents walked a tightrope between containing an expansionistic Soviet Union and plunging the world into nuclear war.
   1. The development and use of the atomic bomb at the end of World War II was a first step in this policy of containment. Other events and critical periods also played a role.
   2. Under Truman, the Marshall Plan of aid to Europe turned a continent suffering from virtual starvation into a great economic power.
   3. The wars in Korea and Vietnam were outbreaks of this global tension.
   4. The Cuban Missile Crisis was yet another confrontation.
   5. Ronald Reagan finally restored economic prosperity and a guiding moral sense to a country gone astray.

Essential Reading:
Conquest, Stalin.

Questions to Consider:
1. What do we learn about human nature from the fact that most Soviet citizens and Germans supported Stalin and Hitler in the policies of terror?
2. Do you agree that the Korean War was essential to the containment of communism? What about Vietnam?
Lecture Thirty-Five

Civil Disobedience and Social Change

Scope: Civil disobedience is the ultimate statement of the ideal of individual freedom, which is at the core of the liberal tradition. It is a controversial idea that raises fundamental issues of individual rights and duties versus those of a free society as a whole. This lecture focuses on three of the most influential proponents of civil disobedience: Thoreau, Gandhi, and King. Very different in background and character, all three made significant contributions to the ideals of freedom. In the case of Gandhi and King, these ideals were translated into political actions that brought about profound political changes.

Outline

I. The liberal tradition.
   A. The freedom of the individual is preeminent.
   B. The duty of the state is to protect the freedom of the individual.

II. The illiberal tradition.
   A. The individual exists to serve the state.
   B. The individual finds true freedom in subordination to the state.

III. This lecture examines the ultimate expression of individual freedom, civil disobedience, and its role in the history of freedom.

IV. The 1960s were a period of social unrest in the United States.
   A. Like the Athenian democracy, the United States in the 1960s viewed itself as the great champion of freedom, exporting democracy to the world.
   B. In fact, the United States had failed to resolve its own questions of freedom, especially the contrast between liberty and segregation.
   C. In this atmosphere, civil disobedience became an important current in American political life, and renewed attention was drawn to the writings of Henry David Thoreau.

V. Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862).
   A. Background.
      1. Thoreau was a son of New England.
      2. He attended Harvard and was influenced by study of the classics, especially Socrates and Sophocles’s Antigone.
      3. On July 4, 1845, he declared his “independence” by living in simplicity at Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts.
   B. Ideas.
      1. His hatred of slavery and imperialism was profound.
      2. He regarded the Mexican War as a war of imperialism and in support of slavery.
      3. He believed Jefferson was right: that government is best that governs least. We should carry this idea to its logical conclusion: that government is best that governs not at all.
      4. He believed that majority rule does not create a legitimate government.
      5. Only moral right is legitimate. Hence, a minority of one is legitimate if that one man is right. Our conscience tells us if we are right. Better to be in jail than to support a majority government that is wrong or immoral.
      6. If the government is wrong, it is wrong to support that government in any way. Do not vote; do not pay taxes.
   C. Thoreau lived his principles.
      1. He argued that simplicity brings us freedom.
2. However, civil obedience is not passivity to wrong. Thoreau was an admirer of John Brown and his
violent attempt to free the slaves.

D. Thoreau’s view is the exact opposite of the illiberal tradition. Nazis at the Nuremberg Trials (1945–1946)
invoked the tradition of following orders and doing one’s duty to the state expounded by St. Paul and
Martin Luther.

VI. Gandhi (Mohandas Karamchand “Mahatma” Gandhi).

A. Background and life.
1. Gandhi was born to a modestly well off Indian family.
2. He was educated as a lawyer in England.
3. He sought to assimilate himself to English customs and to belief that British rule in India represented
the principles of liberal democracy.
4. He was awakened to the hypocrisy of British rule by his experiences in South Africa.
5. From 1893 to 1913, he developed his own concepts of civil disobedience and led the struggle to gain
rights for Indians in British South Africa.
6. He continued his mission of public service by returning to India in 1913. This one small man led a
movement against the most powerful empire in the world. His goal was to make India free. He
underwent privation, jail, and personal loss, but he brought the British Empire to its knees.
7. In 1947, India was free, but Gandhi was bitterly disappointed by division into Hindu India and Muslim
Pakistan.
8. He worked to end brutal violence and ethnic hatred between Muslims and Hindus.
9. He was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic on January 30, 1948.

B. Ideas.
1. Gandhi was a profoundly religious Hindu, but his ideas on civil disobedience were strongly influenced
by Thoreau. His ideas of religion were influenced by Leo Tolstoy (The Kingdom of God Is within
You). His ideas on simplicity as the key to freedom were shaped by John Ruskin (Unto This Last).
2. He believed in the supreme importance of truth. Truth is God.
3. He practiced vegetarianism and extreme simplicity of life: to conquer untruth you must first conquer
yourself. Technology is useful, but we must not become its slaves.
4. Gandhi believed in the unity of all life.
5. He believed in the ultimate unity of all true religion.
6. He embraced the Indian way of life, rejected the corrupting influence of Europe, and sought to educate
the youth of India in their own heritage.
7. He practiced the doctrine of Ahimsa, or Satyagraha. “Passive resistance” is the most common
translation. Gandhi preferred “steadfastness in truth.”
8. Like Lord Acton, Gandhi equated liberty with truth. Gandhi’s words offer one of the most enduring
statements of the ideal of freedom as truth and of our duty to struggle for both:
   “God is, even though the world deny him. Truth stands, even though there be no public support.
   Truth is self-sustained. Truth is, perhaps, the most important name of God. It is more important to
   say that truth is God than to say that God is truth. I shall not fear anyone on earth. I shall not bear
   ill will towards anyone. I shall not submit to injustice from anyone. I shall conquer untruth by
   truth, and in resisting untruth I shall put up with all suffering.”

VII. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A. Both Thoreau and Gandhi were strong influences on King. Like Gandhi, King was a deeply religious man.
Like Gandhi, King saw his calling as one of public service in its deepest sense. But King was unique, an
American original.

B. Background and life.
1. He was born January 15, 1929, the son of a Baptist minister with the powerfully symbolic name of the
great reformer.
2. He attended Morehouse College in Atlanta and Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester,
Pennsylvania. He took his Ph.D. from Boston University. Among the intellectual influences on him
were Gandhi, Thoreau, Reinhold Niebuhr, Nietzsche, Paul Tillich, and Hegel.
3. In 1954, he began his calling as a minister at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.
4. In December 1955, Rosa Parks started the Montgomery bus boycott.
5. From 1955 to 1968, King led the struggle for civil rights.
6. His “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (1963) is one of the seminal documents in civil disobedience and in the history of freedom.
7. On August 28, 1963, King led the March on Washington, a landmark in civil rights and in civil disobedience to achieve social change.
8. In 1964, he received the Nobel Peace Prize.
9. From 1964 to 1968, King became increasingly involved in the movement to end the war in Vietnam and to achieve economic opportunity and freedom for all Americans.
10. He was on that mission when he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, April 4, 1968.

C. Ideas.
1. A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. We must not obey an unjust law.
2. Just as slavery is a moral wrong, so, too, is segregation. Both are utterly incompatible with liberty.
3. “I will not stand by idly when I see an unjust war [Vietnam] taking place and fail to take a stand against it.”
4. With faith, we will be able to achieve this new day, when all God’s children—black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics—will be able to join hands and sing “free at last.”

Essential Reading:
Thoreau, *Walden* and *Civil Disobedience*.

Speeches of Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Chief Seattle, Lucy Stone, Martin Luther King, Bella Abzug, and Jesse Jackson, in Suriano, *Speeches*, pp. 55–68.

Supplementary Reading:
Brown, *Gandhi*.
King, *Gandhi and King*.
Oates, *Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Questions to Consider:
1. What differences do you see between the beliefs of Martin Luther King, Jr. and those of his namesake?
2. Would Gandhi and Churchill have agreed about the role of the British Empire in fostering freedom?
Lecture Thirty-Six
Freedom and the Lessons of History

Scope: Our lectures on the history of freedom conclude with a summary and a look into the future. Americans enter the twenty-first century convinced that we are the only superpower and that the innovations of science, technology, and industry have opened a new era of peace and individual liberty and prosperity. Our course has subjected this view to the lessons of history. We have identified and analyzed five major components of freedom. Each represents both an opportunity and a potential threat to the growth of liberty. The key to finding the proper balance lies in the ability of our democracies to produce leaders equal to the challenge, twenty-first century equivalents to Pericles, Lincoln, and Churchill.

Outline

I. Our course concludes by looking back at the lessons of history and into the future, using history as our guide.
   A. The Founders of our country believed that history was the most useful single discipline for the citizens of a free republic.
   B. The study of history was the best preparation for the awesome responsibilities of self-government.
      1. The lessons of the past were the best guide to decisions in the present and to charting a course for the future.
      2. We can learn from history because human nature does not change.

II. Our course has distinguished and discussed five aspects of freedom:
    A. National freedom
    B. Individual freedom
    C. Economic freedom
    D. Scientific freedom
    E. Spiritual freedom.

III. Our course focused on leadership and great leaders as the wellsprings and guarantors of these freedoms.

IV. National freedom.
    A. The autonomy and self-determination of a people is critical.
    B. In classical Greece and the Roman Republic, national freedom was the most significant aspect of liberty.
       1. The Battle of Marathon: the defense of national autonomy and the birth of the idea of freedom.
       2. The Battle of Cannae: the defense of national freedom and the rise of the Roman Empire, the first world-state.
    C. In the Roman Empire, national independence was subordinate to the ideals of world empire. Note the exception of the Jewish people and their brave struggle for liberty.
    D. The ideal of national independence was not significant in the Middle Ages or early modern period.
    E. Beginning with the American and French Revolutions, national freedom became the most dynamic force in politics.
    F. Our own day sees the continuing importance of national freedom and the ideal of self-determination.
    G. Such nationalism is not always the friend of liberty. Great crimes, such as ethnic cleansing, have been and continue to be committed in the name of national freedom.

V. Individual freedom.
    A. Individual freedom was the most important aspect of freedom for the Founders of the United States.
    B. They believed in the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; they believed in freedom to live as you choose as long as you harm no one else.
C. The ideal of individual freedom was already well defined in the Athenian democracy and Roman Republic.

D. Christianity made a fundamental contribution to individual freedom.

E. Freedom to live as you choose and equality are both basic to the democratic ideal of freedom.

F. The course of democracy is toward ever-greater equality.

G. The women’s movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reflects the course of democracy toward ever-greater equality.

H. The Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote, was ratified in close conjunction with the Eighteenth Amendment, prohibiting alcohol. This is characteristic of a tension in democracies between individual freedom and the desire to control all aspects of the citizens’ lives.
   1. The case of Socrates testifies to this tension in democratic Athens.
   2. The tolerant democracy made Socrates’s mission possible but ultimately put him to death for challenging its basic assumptions.

I. Abortion is a moral issue as profound for us today as slavery was for nineteenth-century America. It poses most dramatically the tensions inherent in the ideals of individual freedom.

VI. Economic freedom.

A. The free market economy and freedom of economic opportunity were fundamental to the idea of liberty in the Athenian democracy and the Roman Empire.

B. Economic freedom was closely linked to issues of spiritual freedom in the Protestant Reformation.

C. The Founders were deeply concerned with the importance of economic freedom and opportunity to the ideal of liberty. But they understood that liberty depended on more than free markets and prosperity.

D. Prosperity is not the end of liberty. Free market economics can become another form of determinism, one of the great enemies of liberty.

E. The liberal tradition, exemplified by Pericles, Lincoln, Churchill, and Roosevelt, insists that it is the obligation of freedom to promote the general welfare by a certain redistribution of wealth and by government policies to aid the poor.

F. The notion of new economic models and an end to economic cycles, so fashionable at the very end of the twentieth century, was merely a modern form of *hybris*.

VII. Spiritual freedom.

A. Socrates and democratic Athens gave us the idea of inner freedom, freedom to follow your own conscience.

B. The Roman Empire and Christianity gave us the idea of freedom as liberation from sin and death.

C. Greece, Rome, Christianity, and the Founders of the United States believed in an intimate nexus between liberty and morality.

D. The first great historian, Herodotus, began his history with the story of Candaules and the lesson that there can be no separation between public and private morality.
   1. By contrast, we think today that we can reject the lessons of history.
   2. We believe that a politician’s private morality has nothing to do with his or her ability to lead the nation.

E. From Socrates and Cicero to Lord Acton and Gandhi, the most intimate nexus has also been drawn between truth and liberty.
   1. The ideal of absolute truth is fundamental to the concept of natural law.
   2. We, as a society, no longer believe that truth is an absolute value, and with the rejection of absolute truth, we have also rejected natural law as the basis of our liberty.

VIII. Scientific freedom.

A. If we no longer believe in the truth of God, we as a society believe implicitly in the truth of science.

B. Freedom of inquiry was born in democratic Athens. Oedipus was the prototype of the man who would set no limits to his quest for knowledge and, in the process, brought utter ruin upon himself.
C. The Founders of our country, men like Jefferson and Franklin, believed that science and progress were invaluable supports to freedom.

D. Our democratic freedom has brought about an age of scientific and technological creativity that dwarfs anything imagined by the Founders and has raised issues beyond their comprehension:
   1. Abortion
   2. Euthanasia
   3. Cloning
   4. Atomic energy.

E. Science claims to be value-free. Science, thus, seeks to absolve itself of the moral responsibilities inherent in liberty and the right of freedom of inquiry.

IX. The most fundamental lesson of our course is the importance of leadership.
   A. The qualities of great and good leaders from Pericles to Lincoln and Churchill, from Socrates and Jesus to Gandhi and King.
   B. Evil leaders, such as Hitler and Stalin, are the mirror images of truly great statesmen.
   C. The triumph of liberty will be secured only if we produce leaders who are worthy of the challenge and worthy of the great legacy of freedom.

Essential Reading:
Patterson, Freedom, Vol. II.
Powell, Liberty, pp. 148–156.

Supplementary Reading:
Barzun, Dawn, pp. 683–802.
Kammen, Spheres of Liberty, pp. 129–180.

Questions to Consider:
1. Do you believe that science can be value-free?
2. Do you believe that liberty has finally triumphed?
Timeline

B.C.
3000................................. Birth of civilization in Egypt and Mesopotamia
550–529............................. Rise of Persian Empire
490................................. Battle of Marathon
479–404............................. Golden Age of Athens
336–323............................. Alexander the Great
218–146............................. Rise of Roman Empire
48–31............................... Julius Caesar and Augustus establish monarchy at Rome

A.D.
31 B.C.–180 A.D...................... Golden Age of Roman Empire
6........................................ Birth of Jesus
64................................. Martyrdom of Peter and Paul
306–337............................. Constantine the Great
330–1453............................. Byzantine Empire
476................................. Fall of Roman Empire in the West
527–565............................. Justinian, Emperor of Byzantine Empire, codifies Roman law
800.................................... Charlemagne crowned Roman Emperor
1073–1085............................ Pope Gregory VII and height of the power of the papacy in the Middle Ages
1154–1189............................ Reign of Henry II and formative period of English common law
1215................................. Magna Carta
1295.................................... Model Parliament in England
1304–1527............................ Renaissance
1474–1603............................ Theory of divine right of kings bolstered absolute monarchy in Spain, France, and England
1492................................. Columbus’s voyage to America
1517–1648............................. Protestant Reformation
1642–1658............................. English Civil War and Puritan Revolution under Oliver Cromwell
1643–1715............................. King Louis XIV of France
1775–1783............................. American Revolution
1787................................. Constitutional Convention
1789–1805............................. French Revolution and Napoleon
1861–1865............................. American Civil War
1914–1918............................. World War I
1929–1940............................. Great Depression
1939–1945...................................... World War II
1945–1990...................................... Cold War
1945– ............................................. Scientific and technological revolution
Glossary

Acropolis: A hill in Athens that was the sacred center of the city and lavishly adorned with temples and other shrines.

Asia Minor: Classical term to describe the area now known as Turkey.

Assembly: A modern term to translate Greek *Ekklesia* and Latin *Comitia*; these were the legislative bodies of the Athenian democracy and Roman Republic, which were composed of all citizens and were the sovereign body.

Birth of civilization: Rise of complex political structures, writing, monumental architecture, and use of metal. These advancements occurred simultaneously in Egypt and Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C.


Chaeronea: Town in Greece, site of a battle in 338 B.C. between King Philip of Macedonia and the Athenians and their allies; the victory of Philip effectively ended the history of the Athenian democracy.

Classical antiquity: Greece and the Roman world roughly in the period 800 B.C. (Homer) to 476 A.D. (fall of Roman Empire in Western Europe).

Classics: The writings of classical antiquity.

Communism: An ideology maintaining that society should be organized so that the means of production and subsistence should be held in common and that labor should be organized for the common benefit of all. As a political system, communism has been marked by the creation of the totalitarian state and party apparatus to subordinate all facets of society and the economy to control of the state.

Constantinople: Modern Istanbul; founded by Constantine in 330, it was the capital of the Byzantine Empire and, later, the Ottoman Empire.

Constitution: The fundamental laws of a country or other organization. A constitution can be a single document, such as the Constitution of the United States, or a collection of written and unwritten laws, customs, and practices, such as the Athenian, Roman, or English constitutions.

Consul: Chief magistrate of the Roman Republic and commander-in-chief of Roman armies; two elected annually.

Darwinism: Ideology based on the teaching of English biologist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and holding to a theory of biological evolution; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has been applied to support social, political, and racial theories based on “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest.”

Determinism: The antithesis of free will, determinism argues that humans have no control over decisions, actions, and events, which are the inevitable consequence of forces independent of the human will.

Dunkirk: Town on the coast of northern France; site of evacuation of British and French armies under German attack, May 27–June 3, 1940.

Founders (Founding Fathers): A collective designation for the statesmen who signed the Declaration of Independence, waged the Revolutionary War, and framed the Constitution.

Free will: The idea that humans make their own choices, unconstrained by necessity or external circumstances.

Freedom: See Lecture One.

Gentile: A non-Jew.

Ideology: A complex set of ideas and values that unifies a community, directs its actions, and validates its decision making. Democracy, for example, is the ideology of the United States.

Law (Jewish): The complex code of laws and regulations, based on interpretation of the Ten Commandments, that in the time of Jesus and later, governed every aspect of a pious Jew’s life. The Pharisees were the chief interpreters of the Law.
Liberty: See Lecture One.

Macedonia: In classical antiquity, a nation in northeastern Greece. Although related to the Greeks, the Macedonians were a distinct people. King Philip and his son, Alexander the Great, were the two most famous Macedonians.


Marxism: An ideology based on the ideas of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) and the intellectual foundation of communism.

Mesopotamia: “Land between the rivers”; a geographical term used historically to identify the region, now largely in Iraq, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Location of early civilizations of Sumer, Akkad, and Babylonia.

Middle Ages (medieval period): The period between the fall of the Roman Empire in the West (476 A.D.) and the Renaissance (fourteenth century).


Pharisee: Member of influential Jewish group in Judaea at the time of Jesus; Pharisees insisted on the strict interpretation of Jewish Law. Their role in society might be compared to that of professors in our own day.

Renaissance: The beginning of the modern age, marked by the Renaissance (rebirth) of interest in classical antiquity. As is true of most chronological designations, such as the Middle Ages, precisely defining the chronological limits of the Renaissance is difficult. It began in Italy, then spread to northern Europe. Defensible dates are from the Italian poet Petrarch (1304–1374) to the sack of Rome in 1527.

Roman Empire: Rome from 44 B.C.–476 A.D. Used in this way, the term Roman Empire describes the political system of monarchy established by Julius Caesar and his successors. However, starting in 246 B.C., long before Caesar, the Roman Republic began to conquer and rule a vast overseas area that the Romans called an empire (imperium). Thus, historians commonly, if confusingly, speak of the Roman Republic governing the Roman Empire. Caesar and his successors transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy but continued to rule the overseas empire.

Roman Republic: Rome from 509–48 B.C.

Sadducees: Members of an influential group in Judaea in the time of Jesus. Sadducees tended to be wealthy and insisted on the Temple as the focus of the Jewish religion.

Samaritan: A religious sect closely related to Judaism.

Senate: Chief deliberative body of the Roman Republic; it was composed of three hundred men who had held high office. It could not pass laws, but its recommendations were usually determinative for the Roman Assembly.

Socialism: A term that first appeared in English in 1832 to describe an ideology opposing laissez-faire economics in favor of some form of communal ownership of productive assets.

Soviet Union (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics): The political entity that in 1922 replaced the Russian Empire. In 1991, it fragmented into numerous nations, including the Russian Federation.

Sparta: Greek city-state and chief rival of Athens.

Stoicism (Stoics): Leading intellectual current in Greco-Roman world from the third century B.C. until the third century A.D.

Sumer: A nation of Mesopotamia that developed one of the earliest historical civilizations. The Sumerian language seems to be unrelated to any other known language.

Tory: In English politics, the party and traditions supportive of monarchy, with the connotation of conservative. Hence, during the Revolution, American loyalists were called “Tories.” For more, see Whig.
**Treaty of Paris (1783):** Treaty between Great Britain and the United States, ending the Revolutionary War and recognizing the independence of the United States.

**Whig:** In English politics, the party and tradition supportive of parliamentary government, with the connotation of liberal. The terms Whigs and Tories were first introduced in 1679 in the debates over excluding James from the royal succession because of his Catholic sympathies. *Whig* was a term applied in Scotland to cattle and horse thieves. The connotation, used by Whig opponents, was one of Scottish Presbyterianism and rebellion. *Tory* was a term used in Ireland of Catholic outlaws. Its connotation used by the enemies of Tories was one of Catholicism and subservience to monarchy.
Biographical Notes

Aquinas, Saint Thomas: Philosopher (1215–1274). One of the most influential philosophers in history, Thomas’s work Summa Theologica (1266–1273) represents the apex of medieval Catholic thought. Thomas was deeply indebted to Aristotle. His political theory argued that the earthly governments are subordinate to the power of the Church and that a limited monarchy is the best form of government. Lord Acton called Thomas “the first Whig.”

Aristotle: Greek philosopher (386–322 B.C.). Not an Athenian by birth, Aristotle spent much of his life teaching in Athens. He was the pupil of Plato. Plato was the greatest philosopher in history, but his political thought contributed more to the history of authoritarian rule than to liberty. Aristotle was perhaps the most profound mind Greece produced. His empirical and historical studies and his life made three important contributions to the history of freedom. His Athenian Constitution is the best source for the workings of the radical democracy at Athens. His Politics is a careful analysis of the faults and merits of democracy. He was the teacher of Alexander the Great, who ushered in a new era in freedom.

Augustus: Roman statesman (63 BC–14 A.D.). Born Gaius Octavius, he was the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Modern historians generally refer to him as Octavian during his early political career (44–27 B.C.), from his adopted name Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Building on his relationship with the martyred Caesar, Octavian, at the age of nineteen, raised an army on his own initiative. With astounding political skills, he achieved absolute mastery over the Roman world, winning decisive victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C. He then carried out a series of political, military, economic, and social reforms that successfully transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy. He brought peace and prosperity to the Roman Empire that endured for two centuries. In 27 B.C., to mark the inauguration of his new order, he took a new name: Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus. The names emphasized (1) that the gods made him all victorious (Imperator); (2) his relationship to Julius Caesar (Caesar, Divi Filius—the son of the god Caesar); and (3) his own unique relationship to the gods (Augustus—the one sent by the gods). Augustus is rightly regarded as one of the greatest statesmen in history. He redefined the concept of liberty at Rome.

Blackstone, Sir William: English jurist (1723–1780). In terms of the development of the concept and institutions of liberty in America, Blackstone and Coke were the two most influential English jurists. Judge, Member of Parliament, and Professor of Law at Oxford, Blackstone is best known for his Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765). Even more influential in America than in England, Blackstone enshrined the principle that the common law derived its validity from natural law. This idea was instrumental in the Founders’ view that they were defending both their rights as Englishmen and the natural rights of all mankind.

Burke, Edmund: British statesman and political thinker (1729–1797). In his parliamentary career and writings, Burke made fundamental contributions to the history of liberty. He defended the cause of freedom in America and sought to ensure justice and humanity in British imperial rule in India. To that end, he tried to impeach Warren Hastings and conducted a bitter, fourteen-year campaign to achieve that goal. His Reflections on the Revolution in France did not contradict, but rather complemented, his lifelong commitment to the cause of liberty under law.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius: Roman statesman (106–43 B.C.). Much admired by the Founders of the United States. Cicero was born of a wealthy, but not aristocratic, family in the Italian town of Arpinum. His abilities as a lawyer and orator enabled him to break into the aristocratically dominated world of Roman politics. Consul in 63 B.C., Cicero believed in liberty under the constitution. He sought to steer Rome on a middle course between domination by a corrupt Senate and the dictatorship of Caesar. Cicero believed that political principles must be built on intellectual principles. He sought to adapt the most profound intellectual currents of Greece to Roman life. He wrote books on religion, philosophy, and oratory. His orations were models of political and legal persuasion, carefully studied by the Founders. His book De Officiis (On Moral Duties) was one of the most influential works ever written on ethics and their practical application. After the assassination of Caesar, Cicero fought with great personal courage for a return to republican liberty. He was brutally murdered on the order of Mark Antony.

Coke, Sir Edward: English jurist (1552–1634). Edward Coke was a fundamental figure in the development of the common law and its role as a bastion of English liberty. Unsurpassed in his time for his knowledge of the common law, he defended it against the claim of royal prerogatives and the challenges of other courts of law. In 1610, Coke ruled that the king has no power to change the common law. He also argued that the common law was above Parliament. Coke held a series of judicial appointments, including Lord Chief Justice of England. He served as a
Member of Parliament and was instrumental in the formulation of the 1628 Petition of Right. He engaged in a bitter personal and professional rivalry with Francis Bacon, frequently to his own disadvantage.

**Cromwell, Oliver**: English soldier and statesman (1599–1658). A country squire and man of deep religious faith, Cromwell took a leading role in Parliament’s growing opposition after 1637 to King Charles I. When civil war came, Cromwell proved to be a military genius, organizing the parliamentary army and leading it to victory. He secured the execution of King Charles in 1649. The monarchy dissolved, Cromwell was led by the need for stability and efficient government to assume what was, in fact, a dictatorship under the title of Lord Protector. He conducted brutal campaigns of pacification in Scotland and Ireland. His government of England was marked by enforced codes of public morality. His son Richard failed in his efforts to continue the Protectorate, and in 1660—to general relief—the monarchy was restored under Charles II. Cromwell contributed to the history of liberty by establishing two precedents, both influential on the Founders. He set a precedent for the overthrow of a tyrannical king in the name of liberty. He also demonstrated that such revolutions more often end in tyranny than in liberty.

**Darius and Xerxes**: Kings of the Persian Empire. Darius ruled from 518–486 B.C. He restored order to the empire and established excellent administrative and financial systems. The revolt of the Greek cities of Asia Minor under his rule and Athenian support of the revolt led Darius to attempt to conquer Athens and to the Battle of Marathon. Xerxes was the son of Darius and ruled from 486–465. He took over his father’s plan to conquer Greece. Persian defeats at the Battles of Salamis (480), Plataea (479), and Mycale (479) and Xerxes’s ignominious retreat from Greece in 480 marked the beginning of the decline of the Persian Empire. The threat of conquest by Darius and Xerxes played a fundamental role in the development of the idea of freedom in Greece. It coalesced in the Greek mind inchoate ideas of freedom and led the Athenians to develop true democracy.

**Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand**: Indian political leader and philosopher (1869–1948). From a prominent and wealthy Indian family, Gandhi studied in England and became an attorney. In South Africa and in India, he fought to achieve political rights for those dispossessed of them. He took on the most formidable empire in the world, Britain, and led India to independence. His achievements came through a philosophy of nonviolence. Gandhi contributed to the history of liberty by his seminal role in ending colonialism. The India he led to independence became a functioning democracy. Even more important, in his actions and teachings, Gandhi demonstrated the universal relationship among religion, morality, and freedom. He was assassinated in 1948. Gandhi stands as a representative of those leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, who have striven to bring independence, liberty, and dignity to their fellow countrymen.

**Gregory VII**: Pope (1073–1085). Gregory sought to reform the papacy and the Catholic Church. He expressed the view of the absolute supremacy of the Roman pontiff. His determination to enforce this supremacy in the matter of the nomination and investiture of bishops led to a bitter and violent struggle with the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV (Investiture Controversy). Himself an absolutist, Pope Gregory nonetheless contributed to the history of freedom by his insistence that there are limits to the power of the secular state and that the state is subordinate to the law—the laws of God.

**Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich**: German philosopher (1770–1831). Hegel has been called the most influential philosopher of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His philosophy was determinative for the thought of Karl Marx. Hegel’s own contribution to the history of liberty is ambiguous. Hegel celebrated liberty. He saw the process of history as the unfolding of liberty. But in Hegel and his followers, the state becomes the instrument by which liberty is realized. Individual liberty is less important than national liberty. History is a deterministic force, and morality must not stand in the way of the achievement of the historical destiny of the state. “The might force of the state must trample many an innocent flower.”

**Herodotus**: Greek historian (484?—425? B.C.). Probably in 445 B.C., Herodotus recited his Histories to the Athenian people. His account of the Persian Wars and their background was the first true work of history ever written. Herodotus fled from tyranny in his native Greek city of Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. The prize money he received from Athens made him wealthy, and he spent his later years in the Greek city of Thurii in south Italy. Herodotus’s Histories contributed to the history of freedom by portraying the war against Persia as a struggle of liberty against despotism and by drawing a close relationship among freedom, morality, and religion.

**Jefferson, Thomas**: American president (1843–1826; president, 1801–1809). The author of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was one of the most gifted of the Founding Fathers. He embodied their belief in liberty. Perhaps the only American president to deserve the title genius, Jefferson made significant contributions to
agriculture and education. As president, he established precedents that considerably enhanced the power of the executive branch. For example, he used his authority as commander-in-chief to conduct military operations against the Barbary pirates without a congressional declaration of war. His purchase of the Louisiana Territory (1803) was a milestone in the history of liberty, ensuring the economic viability and territorial expansion of liberty in the United States.

**John**: King of England (1199–1216). The brother of King Richard the Lion-Hearted, John utterly lacked the military and personal qualities of Richard. He was immoral, cowardly, lazy, dishonest, and ungrateful. His military and political ineptitude alienated almost every element in his realm. The Pope excommunicated him. Faced with revolt, not only of his barons but also by most of England, he was forced to sign the Magna Carta. This document is the foundation of liberty in England and, ultimately, the United States. Historians are not entirely certain that the Magna Carta would ever have come into being if John had been a brave, capable, and efficient king.

**John Paul II**: Pope, 1978– (born Karol Wojtyla, 1920). John Paul II may well be remembered as one of the most important figures of the late twentieth century. This Polish-born pope, the first non-Italian pontiff in over four centuries, recalls the great reforming popes of the Middle Ages. He is a man of tireless energy and remarkable personal courage, an intellectual and linguist. He overcame an assassination attempt that was almost certainly instigated by the Soviet Union. A strict conservative in matters of doctrine, he has a profound commitment to individual liberty. His moral authority played a significant role in the growing resistance of Poland to communism in the late 1970s and to the ultimate collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.

**King, Martin Luther, Jr.**: American civil rights leader (1929–1968). A minister and son of a minister, King was a man of profound faith and courage. He stood up against a corrupt social and political system in the American South, which denied to American citizens their constitutional rights on the basis of race. Like apartheid in South Africa, segregation in the South was based on racial theories that are antithetical to liberty. Influenced by Gandhi, King led nonviolent resistance to segregation that resulted in major legislation and the collapse of segregation. In 1964, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. His view of freedom led him into increasing opposition to the policies of the American government in Vietnam. His assassination in 1968 remains a mystery.

**Madison, James**: American president (1751–1836; president, 1809–1817). A graduate of Princeton, Madison took a significant part in the Revolution, first in the Virginia legislature, then in the Continental Congress. His patriotism, energy, and historical knowledge were instrumental in the success of the Constitutional Convention. His essays in *The Federalist* represent major contributions to the political philosophy of liberty and constitutional government. After the Constitution was adopted, Madison was instrumental in drafting the Bill of Rights. His two terms as president were marked by the difficult War of 1812 with Britain and his increasing unpopularity, but the “Father of the Constitution and Bill of Rights” has a secure place in the history of liberty.

**Marsilius of Padua**: Medieval political thinker (1270–1342). Medical doctor, scholar, and man of affairs, Marsilius attacked the political power of the papacy in his book *Defensor Pacis* (1324). He argued that government should rest on the consent of the governed. For Marsilius, the sovereign body in the state was the general assembly of all citizens, who should elect the executive power. The executive power was accountable to the citizens and could be punished by it. Like Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius represents important steps in the development of the liberal tradition of limited government.

**Polybius**: Greek historian (205?–125? B.C.). The son of a distinguished Greek political figure, Polybius was brought to Rome as a political hostage in 167 B.C. Talented and well educated, he became closely associated with the rising generation of Roman statesmen, especially Publius Cornelius Scipio, the grandson of the conqueror of Hannibal. Polybius wrote his *Histories* to explain to both Greeks and Romans how Rome rose to be ruler of the world. Along with Herodotus and Thucydides, Polybius ranks as one of the three greatest Greek historians. His careful analysis of the Roman constitution and the political and moral values of the Romans greatly influenced the Founders, particularly in framing the Constitution.

**Reagan, Ronald**: American president (1911–; president, 1981–1989). Ronald Reagan was a movie actor turned politician who grew to be one of the leading statesmen of the twentieth century. When he became president, America’s role as leader of the free world was seriously imperiled. Foreign policy was a shambles; the economy, in chaos; and national confidence, at its nadir. Reagan’s policies restored the economy and national confidence and led directly to the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Reagan represented the successful
culmination of the policies of a series of American presidents aimed at the expansion of freedom by the containment of communism, including Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.

**Sophocles**: Athenian writer of tragedy (496–406 B.C.). Along with Aeschylus and Euripides, Sophocles was one of the three most important writers of tragedy. In his plays, including *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Antigone*, and others, Sophocles probed some of the deepest questions of freedom: the limits of human knowledge, free will versus fate, liberation from sin, the duties of a citizen to country and to the gods, and the relationship among liberty, religion, and morality.

**Thucydides**: Athenian historian (died c. 400 B.C.). Thucydides wrote the monumental *History of the Peloponnesian War* (431–404 B.C.). His failure as a general in 424 B.C. led to his exile by the Athenian democracy. Thucydides was a profound admirer of Pericles but believed the Athenian democracy to be a failed form of government. His history is one of the most influential books ever written. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarded it as “the eternal manual of statesmen.” Thucydides contributed in three important ways to the history of freedom through his insistence that human nature never changes and, hence, the past is the best guide to the present; his analysis of the corrupting influence of power; and his examination of the strength and weakness of democracy in action.

**Tiberius**: Roman emperor (14–37 A.D.). The adopted son of Augustus, Tiberius was a capable soldier and administrator who did an excellent job of governing the Roman Empire. He was, however, a paranoid personality who sought to maintain power by exercising a policy of systematic terror over the Roman Senate. In particular, allegations of treason were used to destroy any apparent threat to his power. Modern historians have been too kind to a man who, of all the Roman emperors, most resembled Joseph Stalin. The Roman historian Tacitus knew better. Tiberius was succeeded by his grandnephew Gaius (Caligula), who as emperor (37–41 A.D.), raised the family predilection toward insanity to new heights.

**Washington, George**: American soldier and statesman (1732–1799; president, 1789–1797). Washington proved his bravery and capability as a soldier during the French and Indian War (1756–1763). His ability as a surveyor and farmer, as well as his marriage, made Washington, at the outbreak of the Revolution, one of the wealthiest men in America. Like other wealthy patriots, Washington had far more to lose than to gain materially by the Revolution. He chose, however, to follow his honor, conscience, and love of liberty. His skills as a general have been much underrated. His ability in tactics, strategy, logistics, and battlefield command led the American army to victory. His sense of public duty guided him to assume a critical role in framing the Constitution and to serve as the first president. As president, he established precedents that set a course of liberty under law for the new republic.
Annotated Bibliography

Note: The Essential Readings focus largely on primary sources. I have recommend as Supplementary Reading books that expand on the material covered in the lectures and textbooks and other secondary works that place the history of liberty into the broader political and cultural framework.

I. Essential Reading


Aristotle. Trans. P. J. Rhodes. The Athenian Constitution. New York: Penguin, 1984. Despite the reservations of some scholars, this work was actually written by Aristotle. In it, the most profound mind of classical Greecce describes the constitution of history’s first democracy.

———. Trans. M. Heath. Poetics, New York: Penguin, 1997. This classic has been called, rightly, “the one indispensable work of literary theory.” Fundamental for understanding how the Greeks responded to tragedy.


Machiavelli, Niccolo. The Prince. New York: Penguin, 1999. One of the most influential and controversial books ever written; basic to an understanding of the moral dimension of freedom.


———. *Freedom in the Modern World*. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. This two-volume history of freedom represents a very different approach than that of our lectures. Our lectures insist that ideas make history. Patterson presents essentially a Marxist construct, in which social and economic conditions make ideas. In particular, he insists that the Greek idea of freedom arose out of the social institution of slavery. Paraphrasing Epictetus and Lord Acton, the ignorant person recommends books with which that person agrees. The person who has made some progress in wisdom does just the opposite. In that spirit, I recommend Patterson.


Powell, Jim. *The Triumph of Liberty*. New York: The Free Press, 2000. An attempt to tell the history of liberty through the biographies of important figures. Very different in approach and presuppositions from our course. Powell ignores Greece, and a pantheon of the heroes of liberty could be established from the individuals he leaves out: Socrates, Jesus and Paul, Pericles, Lincoln, Churchill, Susan B. Anthony, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and many others.


II. Supplementary Reading


