

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Duquesne University

America & Antiquity
PHIL 257 / CLSX 257 / HIST 264 / POSC 257
Spring 2020, T&R 12:15–1:30

Professor

Texts

Dr. Miller.....	College 332	<i>Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts</i> , Carl J. Richard (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008)
Office Phone.....	412-396-1291	<i>The Essential Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers</i> , David Wooton (Hackett, 2003)
Office Hours.....	W 10–12pm	<i>Plutarch's Lives</i> , volumes 1 & 2 (Modern Library, 2001)
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Course Description

The United States is in the midst of a political crisis. At home, the identities of its major political parties are shifting. Abroad, its longstanding alliances are dissolving as new ones form. Things that seemed impossible just a few years ago are now happening regularly. Accordingly, routine policy debates have become struggles over fundamental principles. At stake is the nature of the country, what its major problems are, and what its leaders should (or should not) do about them. In these ways, our era resembles the period after the American Revolution, when our Constitution was first framed and the whole nation hotly debated its ratification.

“Federalists” defended the new document by explaining its wisdom, while “Anti-federalists” attacked it by exposing its folly. Despite their different conclusions, they arrived at them in the same way: they both produced philosophical arguments and historical examples from Greek and Roman antiquity. The Anti-federalists feared monarchy above all, observing that the Constitution gave great powers to the President. They therefore argued that the history of the wicked Roman emperors warned against establishing an American Caesar. The Federalists, for their part, feared democracy. The history of mob-rule in Athens warned against it, so they established many checks on its excesses (representation, the Electoral College, an aristocratic Senate, a remote judiciary).

This return to antiquity was easy for Americans of the 18th century, so thoroughly schooled were most of them in the Greek and Latin classics. In this course, we shall read some of their most important writings alongside a sample of the texts that were most influential on their political thinking. From the Americans, we shall read the Articles of the Confederation, the Virginia Plan, the articles of the US Constitution, the first ten amendments to it (the Bill of Rights), and selections from both *The Federalist Papers* and *The Anti-Federalist Papers* (Hamilton, Madison, Wilson, and Webster from the former; from the latter, Mason, Henry, the Minority of the Pennsylvania Convention, “Cato” and “Brutus”). From antiquity, we shall read excerpts from the following authors: Herodotus, Protagoras, Thucydides, Antiphon, Critias, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Polybius, Livy, Sallust, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, Tacitus, and Suetonius.