Orestes Brownson’s *The American Republic*

**COURSE INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>CODE &amp; SECTION</th>
<th>LENGTH OF COURSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brownson’s <em>The American Republic</em></td>
<td>BASC 80011 22U1</td>
<td>3 WEEKS</td>
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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

- DAYS: Tuesday
- TIMES: 9:30 AM – 11:00 PM

**CLASS LOCATION**

- online

**INSTRUCTOR**

- Austin Walker
- EMAIL: agwalker@uchicago.edu

**PREREQUISITES**

Open to all

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students should register before the course begins.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Orestes Brownson's *The American Republic* is an incredible post-Civil War Tocquevillian take on the founding and destiny of these United States. In a style that blends history, theology, philosophy, and journalism, Brownson contends that the Founders "built better than they knew." Not John Locke but medieval natural law lay at the deepest foundations of the country (and Brownson attempts to read Locke out of Madison and Jefferson's writings). Central to the argument is Brownson's famous distinction between a written and a providential constitution.

Reading prompts and guides will be distributed before each session to help direct students’ study.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

You can use any edition of *The American Republic* you can get your hands on. It’s not the easiest text to find in print. The book is in the common domain, so you can find it online for free. For instance, here: [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2053/2053-h/2053-h.htm](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2053/2053-h/2053-h.htm)


There’s a good edition with a fine introduction by Peter Augustine Lawler and published by ISI Press, but it is out of print.
## WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>TEXT/READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>Brownson</td>
<td><em>The American Republic</em>, Preface &amp; Ch’s I – VI</td>
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<td>(Introduction through “Origin of Government – Concluded”)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>Brownson</td>
<td><em>The American Republic</em>, Ch’s VII – XI</td>
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<td>(“Constitution of Government” through “The Constitution – Continued”)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>Brownson</td>
<td><em>The American Republic</em>, Ch’s XII – XV</td>
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<td>(“Secession” through “Destiny – Political and Religious”)</td>
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This syllabus is a summary of course objectives and content, not a contract. All information in this syllabus is subject to change, with sufficient advance notice provided by the instructor.

### CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE
As we may be addressing controversial topics in our class discussions, we expect students to be respectful and considerate of others.

### DISABILITY INFORMATION
Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class meeting at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.