

Politics and the American Language

Week One Handout

Prof. James Kohn

Week One: (Sept.11) American exceptionalism: “to form a more perfect union”

The Colonial period: Pre-Revolutionary pamphlets and speeches: Tom Paine, Declaration of Independence, Preamble to Constitution, Bill of Rights.

Week Two: (Sept. 18) Theme: Resisting foreign powers: The War of 1812

The early presidencies: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, the Whigs, the Tories, The War of 1812 and after.

Week Three: (Sept. 25) Civil Rights and Civil War Slavery and civil rights: Lincoln and the conditions leading to the Civil war

Week Four: (Oct. 2) Representation and voter suppression: The Electoral College; Women’s suffrage

Week Five: (Oct. 9) The rights of the privileged vs. the workers.

“The Gilded Age: Garfield, Reconstruction, muck-raking, robber barons, McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt

Week Six: (Oct. 16) Foreign entanglements: The First World War and its aftermath: Wilson, Harding Coolidge, Hoover, Roosevelt

Week Seven: (Oct. 23) National health care; abortion rights

Week Eight: (Oct. 30) Immigration; Accountability of the executive to the people; **Your choice!**

The current era: Bush I, Clinton, Bush 2, Obama, Trump