

# FREEDOM, PROGRESS, AND TRADITION

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The United States has always understood itself as defined by a commitment to human liberty and equality, motivated by a commitment to progress. On the surface of things, an intense emphasis of freedom and progress might seem to be in tension with a willingness to value tradition. And yet, for Americans these commitments are a tradition, and point toward even older traditions of thought in the West. Is there a tension between freedom, progress, and tradition at the heart of the American political project? Why would such a tension arise? And how might it be overcome? This one-week course will take up these questions through an engagement with some crucial primary texts.

## Syllabus:

### **Monday, June 15: Is modernity a break from tradition?**

- Pgs. 1 – 3: *The Declaration of Independence*
- Pg. 4: Abraham Lincoln, *The Gettysburg Address*
- Pgs. 5 – 11: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II, Part 8
- Pgs. 12 – 21: Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, Book I, parts LXXI, LXXVII, and LXXXIV

### **Tuesday, June 16: Liberalism, conservatism, and tradition**

- Pgs. 22 – 38: Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
- Pgs. 39 – 53: Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*

### **Wednesday, June 17: Tradition, creativity, and authenticity**

- Pgs. 54 – 61: T.S. Eliot, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*
- Pgs. 62 – 81: J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 3

### **Thursday, June 18: History and progress**

- Pgs. 82 – 142: F.A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, Chapters 2, 3, and 4
- Pgs. 143 – 165: Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition*, Chapter 3

### **Friday, June 19: Liberty, tradition, and the American experience**

- Pgs. 166 – 185: C.E. Scott, *The Five Conceptions of American Liberty*
- Pgs. 186 – 215: Leo Strauss, *Progress or Return?*