

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR CC.111

Week IX TOCQUEVILLE: Liberty and Equality in America

Readings: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*: Volume I: Author's Introduction; Part II, chapters 3, 6-9 (parts), conclusion; of Volume II: Part I, chapters 1-2, 20 Part II, chapters 1-2, 8-9; Part III chapter 9; Part IV, chapters 6-8

Why does Tocqueville entitle his work *Democracy in America* rather than *American Democracy*?

Why does Tocqueville maintain that a new political science is needed for our democratic age?

What does Tocqueville mean by tyranny of the majority?

To what extent is such tyranny the product of laws, on the one hand, or mores, on the other?

How effective at tempering such tyranny are the conditions and resources Tocqueville identifies within American democracy apt to be?

How prominent a danger is such a tyranny today?

Why did Tocqueville (famously) say that religion should be considered the first of our political institutions? Does the work bear out this contention?

How do democratic historians differ from aristocratic ones? Does Tocqueville himself have more in common with the former or the latter?

Why does Tocqueville say that Americans are far more attached to equality than liberty? Is this the case today?

What is the doctrine of self-interest rightly understood and what role does it play in American democratic life?

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