

SOC-957: America's Founding Documents

Independent Study Online Course Syllabus

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Number of Graduate Semester Units: 3 units
Target Audience: 5th - 12th grade teachers
Course Access: <https://connect.fresno.edu>

Course Description

This course will explore three key founding documents of American civilization and political culture: The Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution. The historical contexts, personalities, and debates surrounding the development of these documents will be studied, as well as the contents and implications of the documents themselves, their changing roles throughout American history, and their present impact on American life. Course requirements include practical application to classroom settings. Assignments have been developed to align with Common Core State Standards for Literacy and Writing in History/Social Science. Students taking this course will not only learn about the history of America's founding documents, but will also create lessons that are aligned to the state educational and Common Core Standards appropriate for student grade levels taught.

Note: Required books must be purchased separately.

Required Texts and Course Materials

Books:

- Maier, P. *American Scripture – Making the Declaration of Independence*. (1998). Vintage; 1st Vintage Books Ed. ISBN 13 - 978-0679779087. <https://www.amazon.com/American-Scripture-Making-Declaration-Independence/dp/0679779086>.
- Monk, L. (2015) *The Words We Live By – Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. ISBN: 0786867205 Hachette Books; 1 edition. <https://www.amazon.com/Words-Live-Annotated-Constitution-Stonesong-ebook/dp/B00QQQL826>.

Note: Students are responsible for purchasing their own textbook, analyzing the content, and applying what they learned to the course assignments. You are welcome to purchase used, ebook, or new versions to save money. You can also order the book from another source or one of several discount aggregators.

Online Resources: Relevant online resources that support the course content and encourage further investigation will be available throughout the course assignments. Active hyperlinks are utilized throughout the course and will link to the appropriate information when clicked. These include videos, podcasts, worksheets, online activities, journal articles and other resources.

Canvas: This course will be delivered totally online. Canvas is a web-based learning management system (LMS) that provides students access to online resources, documents, videos, assignments, quizzes, forums, etc. Canvas is easy to learn and has a user-friendly interface.

Course Dates

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year, from the date of registration, to complete assignments. Students may complete assignments in no less than three weeks for a 3-unit course (one week per unit).

National Standards Addressed in This Course

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

(<http://www.nbpts.org/standards-five-core-propositions/>)

First published in 1989 and updated in 2016, [*What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*](#) articulates the National Board's Five Core Propositions for teaching. The Five Core Propositions - comparable to medicine's Hippocratic Oath — set forth the profession's vision for accomplished teaching. Together, the propositions form the basis of all National Board Standards and the foundation for National Board Certification. Course assignments have been designed so students can demonstrate excellence against these professional teaching standards whenever possible.

- Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- Proposition 2: Teachers know the subject they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities

National Content / Common Core Standards

Based on curriculum standards for social studies as articulated by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS Bulletin 89), the course content is woven around six "social studies thematic strands" of **(1) culture; (2) time, continuity, and change; (3) individuals, groups, and institutions; (4) power, authority, and governance; (5) global connections; and (6) civic ideals and practices**. Through this course, students will experience the following:

Culture

- Identify the beliefs, values, and traditions of early American culture as articulated in the language of the founding documents.
- Analyze the ways our current political culture has been shaped by these documents.

Time, Continuity, and Change

- Describe the ways in which the founding documents have provided a traditional foundation for American political theory and practice, even while interpretations of their meaning and significance have changed over time.
- Analyze the transition from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution and the amendments to the Constitution in relation to the changing needs and desires of American society.

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

- Describe the role of the founding documents in creating a culture of human rights and a stable government.

- Describe the structure and function of American government as outlined in the founding documents.
- Identify the roles of key individuals and various groups in the creation of and debates over the founding documents.

Power, Authority, and Governance

- Analyze the distribution and use of power as outlined in the founding documents.
- Identify who benefited most and least from the system of power and authority established by the Constitution.
- Describe the essential structure and function of American government under the Constitution.

Global Connections

- Analyze the impact of America's founding documents on other parts of the world.

Civic Ideals and Practices

- Analyze the fundamental ideals set forth in the founding documents relating to principles and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

In addition, this course will help California teachers prepare to cover **California State Standards for Grade 12** – “Principles of American Democracy” (Standard 12):

- 12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are . . . and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.
- 12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.
- 12.5 Students summarize landmark Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.
- 12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices [including the function of the Electoral College].
- 12.7 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.
- 12.9 Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.
- 12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analysis of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

National History Standards developed by NCHS (National Center for History in Schools at UCLA), this course will help prepare teachers to address the following:

- United States History – Era 3, Standard 3, Grades 5-12:
- The institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how they were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
- Standard 3A: The student understands the issues involved in the creation and ratification of the United States Constitution and the new government it established.
- Standard 3D: The student understands the development of the first American party system.
- American Democracy, Standard 12.4: Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution. Part 4: Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office

and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.

- American Democracy, Standard 12.6: Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices. Part 1: Analyze the origin, development, and role of political parties, noting those occasional periods in which there was only one major party or more than two major parties. Part 2: Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections. Part 3: Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding. Part 6: Analyze . . . the function of the Electoral College.

In addition, this course will address the following **California Department of Education standards for United States History and Government**:

- Grade 8: Students understand the foundation of the American political system and the ways in which citizens participate in it.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (www.corestandards.org)

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade span.

Common Core Language Arts Standards addressed in this course include:

- Reading for Literature (RL): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12
- Reading for Information (RI): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12
- Writing (W): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12
- Speaking and Listening (SL): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12
- English Language Arts Standards (L): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12

Continuing Education Program Student Learning Outcomes

CE 1	Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.
CE 2	Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
CE 3	Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.
CE 4	Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.
CE 5	Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.
CE 6	Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for This Course

Student Learning Outcomes for This Course By the end of this course student will be able to:	National Standards Addressed in This Course* (NCSS)	Continuing Education Program Student Learning Outcomes Addressed**
1. Demonstrate political literacy. (Assignments#2,4,6,7,8,9a)	1,3,6	CE 2, CE 6
2. Describe the role of the founding documents in creating a culture of human rights and a stable government. (Assignments#1,4,6,7,8,9a)	1,2,3,4	CE 4
3. Describe the structure and function of American government as outlined in the founding documents. (Assignments #1,2,4,6,7,8,9a)	3,4	CE 2, CE 6
4. Identify the roles of key individuals and various groups in the creation of and debates over the founding documents. Assignments #2,5,6,7,8,9)	3	CE 1, CE 2
5. Describe ways in which the founding documents have provided a traditional foundation for American political theory and practice, even while interpretations of their meaning and significance have changed over time. (Assignments #2,8)	2	CE 4, CE 5
6. Analyze the transition from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution and the amendments to the Constitution in relation to the changing needs and desires of American society. (Assignments #6,8)	2	CE 2, CE 4, CE 6
7. Identify who benefited most and least from the system of power and authority established by the Constitution. (Assignments #6,8)	4	CE 2, CE 4, CE 6
8. Describe the essential structure and function of American government under the Constitution. (Assignments #1,2,4-9)	2,3,4,6	CE 2
9. Analyze the impact of America's founding documents on other parts of the world. (Assignment #3)	5,6	CE 2, CE 4
10. Familiarize yourself with the level of knowledge students/the American public have about our national government. (assignment #10)	6	CE 2, CE 6
11. Demonstrate ability to take key ideas from the course and teach them to students. (Assignment #11)	4,6	CE 1, CE 2, CE 4, CE 6

* Please refer to the section on **National Standards Addressed in This Course**

** Please refer to the section on **Continuing Education Program Student Learning Outcomes**

Topics, Assignments, and Activities

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
Home Page	- Welcome Video - Course Syllabus - Policies and Procedures - Introduce Yourself Forum	
Module 1: Introduction and Overview	- Assignment 1.1 Introductory Essay - Assignment 1.2 International Impact of Declaration of Independence and Constitution - Assignment 1.3 Discussion Forum: Reading reflections	10 pts 20 pts 5 pts
Module 2: The Declaration of Independence	- Assignment 2.1 Read and respond to <i>American Scripture</i> - Assignment 2.2 Discussion Forum:	25 pts 5 pts
Module 3: The Articles of Confederation and the Constitutional Convention	- Assignment 3.1 Report on the Articles of Confederation - Assignment 3.2 Report on the Constitutional Convention - Assignment 3.3 Discussion Forum	15 pts 20 pts 5 pts
Module 4: The Constitution and the Struggle for Ratification	- Assignment 4.1 Read <i>The Words We Live By</i> and journal your thoughts - Assignment 4.2 Essay on the Anti-Federalists - Assignment 4.3 Discussion Forum:	25 pts 15 pts 5 pts
Module 5: Amending the Constitution: The Bill of Rights	- Assignment 5.1 Essay on the Bill of Rights - Assignment 5.2 Watch and respond to the film <i>National Treasure</i> Note: No Discussion Forum required in this module	25 pts 20 pts
Module 6: Develop and Teach a Lesson	- Assignment 6.1 - Option A: Develop a lesson plan to teach to classroom students; OR - Option B: (for those who find it difficult or impossible to teach a lesson at this time on these topics.) Develop two lesson plans related to two different aspects of American slavery. Describe the objectives and standards you would hope to meet through these lessons. - Assignment 6.2 Discussion Forum: Lesson impact.	20 pts 5 pts
Module 7: Wrap-Up and Evaluation	- Assignment 7.1: Application - Assignment 7.2 Evaluation	5 pts 5 pts
Course Wrap-up – Grading and Evaluation	- Final Reflection Forum - Course Evaluation - Course Completion Checklist - Grade Request / Transcript Request	
TOTAL POINTS		230 points

Grading Policies, Rubrics, and Requirements for Assignments

Grading Policies

- Assignments will be graded per criteria presented in the course rubrics.
- A = 90-100% and B = 80-89%, (anything below 80% will not receive credit.)
- The discernment between an A or a B letter grade is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see course rubrics).
- Coursework falling below a B grade will be returned with further instructions.
- All assignments must be completed to receive a grade and are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

Grading Rubrics

Grade	Percentage	Description	Rubric
A	90-100%	Excellent	Meets all course / assignment requirements with significant evidence of subject mastery and demonstration of excellent graduate level professional development scholarship.
B	80-89%	Very Good	Adequately meets criteria for all course/assignment requirements - demonstrates subject competency with very good graduate level professional development scholarship.
NC	Below 80%	Unacceptable	Does not meet the minimum criteria for all course/assignment requirements and demonstrated little, if any, evidence of acceptable graduate level professional development scholarship.

Writing Requirements

- **Superior:** Writing is clear, succinct, and reflects graduate level expectations. Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. Maintains a consistent point of view and organizational structure. Include relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Standard:** Writing is acceptable with very few mistakes in grammar and spelling. Addresses most parts of the writing task. Maintains a mostly consistent point of view and organizational structure. Include mostly relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Sub-standard:** Writing contains noticeable mistakes in grammar and spelling. Does not address all parts of the writing task. Lacks a consistent point of view and organization structure. May include marginally relevant facts, details, and explanations.

Lesson Plan Requirements

- **Superior:** Instructional goals and objectives clearly stated. Instructional strategies appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is clearly delineated and authentic. All materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson clearly listed.
- **Standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are stated but are not easy to understand. Some instructional strategies are appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is present. Most materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are listed.
- **Sub-standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are not stated. Learners cannot tell what is expected of them. Instructional strategies are missing or strategies used are inappropriate.

Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is missing. Materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are missing.

Discussion Forum Requirements

- **Superior:** Response was at least 1 page (3 fully developed paragraphs) in length. Thoroughly answered all the posed questions, followed all the assignment directions, proper grammar and no spelling errors. Language is clear, concise, and easy to understand. Uses terminology appropriately and is logically organized.
- **Standard:** Response was ½ to 1 page in length (2-3 fully developed paragraphs). Answered all the questions but did not provide an in-depth analysis, followed most of the assignment directions, proper grammar and no spelling errors. Language is comprehensible, but there are a few passages that are difficult to understand. The organization is generally good.
- **Sub-standard:** Response was less than ½ page in length (1 paragraph). Did not answer all the required questions and/or statements or responses were superficial, vague, or unclear, did not follow the assignment directions, many grammar and spelling errors. Is adequately written, but may use some terms incorrectly; may need to be read two or more times to be understood.

Instructor/Student Contact Information

Throughout the course participants will be communicating with the instructor and their classmates on a regular basis using asynchronous discussion forums. A virtual office is utilized for class questions and students are provided with instructor contact information in the event they want to make email or phone contact. In addition, students are encouraged to email or phone the instructor at any time. Students will also receive feedback on the required assignments as they are submitted.

Discussion Forums

Participation is an important expectation of this course and all online courses. Online discussions promote reflection and analysis while allowing students to appreciate and evaluate positions that others express. While students may not be engaging with the same students throughout this course they will be expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question whenever possible. The faculty role in the discussion forum is that of an observer and facilitator.

Coursework Hours

Based on the Carnegie Unit standard, a unit of graduate credit measures academic credit based on the number of hours the student is engaged in learning. This includes all time spent on the course: reading the textbook, watching videos, listening to audio lessons, researching topics, writing papers, creating projects, developing lesson plans, posting to discussion boards, etc. Coursework offered for FPU Continuing Education graduate credit adheres to 45 hours per semester unit for the 900-level courses. Therefore, a student will spend approximately 90 hours on a typical 2-unit course or 135 hours on a typical 3-unit course.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are eligible for reasonable accommodations in their academic work in all classes. In order to receive assistance, the student with a disability must provide the

Academic Support Center with documentation, which describes the specific disability. The documentation must be from a qualified professional in the area of the disability (i.e. psychologist, physician or educational diagnostician). Once documentation is on file, arrangements for reasonable accommodations can be made. For more information and for downloadable forms, please go to <https://www.fresno.edu/departments/disability-access-education>.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled per the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue - <https://www.fresno.edu/students/registrars-office/academic-catalogs>

Technology Requirements

To successfully complete the course requirements, course participants will need Internet access, can send and receive email, know how to manage simple files in a word processing program, and have a basic understanding of the Internet. Please remember that the instructor is not able to offer technical support. If you need technical support, please contact your Internet Service Provider.

Getting Help with Canvas: If you need help with Canvas, please contact the FPU Help Desk by phone: (559) 453-3410 or email: helpdesk@fresno.edu. Help is available Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Final Course Grade and Transcripts

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to request their final grade by accessing the form at ce.fresno.edu/grade-request. Once the instructor receives the request and posts their final grade, students will receive an email communication from the University. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted before you order your transcripts online.

University Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the information presented in the Academic Catalog and for knowing and observing all policies and procedures related to their participation in the university community. A summary of university policies may be found on the university website at <https://www.fresno.edu/departments/registrars-office/academic-catalogs>.

Fresno Pacific University Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes Oral Communication: Students will <i>exhibit</i> clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically <i>evaluate</i> content and delivery components.
Written Communication: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> proficient written communication by <i>articulating</i> a clear focus, <i>synthesizing</i> arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to <i>inform</i> and <i>persuade</i> others.
Content Knowledge: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> comprehension of content-specific knowledge

and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
Reflection: Students will <i>reflect</i> on their personal and professional growth and <i>provide evidence</i> of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement.
Critical Thinking: Students will <i>apply</i> critical thinking competencies by <i>generating</i> probing questions, <i>recognizing</i> underlying assumptions, <i>interpreting</i> and <i>evaluating</i> relevant information, and <i>applying</i> their understandings to new situations.
Moral Reasoning: Students will <i>identify</i> and <i>apply</i> moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and <i>articulate</i> the norms and principles underlying a Christian world-view.
Service: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
Cultural and Global Perspective: Students will <i>identify</i> personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to <i>evaluate</i> complex systems.
Quantitative Reasoning: Students will accurately <i>compute</i> calculations and symbolic operations and <i>explain</i> their use in a field of study.
Information Literacy: Students will <i>identify</i> information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, <i>explain</i> how that information is organized, <i>identify</i> the best sources of information for a given enquiry, <i>locate</i> and critically <i>evaluate</i> sources, and accurately and effectively <i>share</i> that information.