

SOC-981: Branches of U.S. Government

Independent Study Online Course Syllabus

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Number of Graduate Semester Units: 3 units

Target Audience: 9th - 14th grade teachers

Course Access: ce-connect.fresno.edu

Course Description

Explore the structure and functions of the United State government's three policymaking institutions: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Focus is placed on the role of each branch in developing public policy and on exploring the checks and balances that are intended to limit each institution. Students will also develop skills to effectively teach this topic in the classroom and align lessons to teaching, Common Core, and content standards. This course addresses the Common Core Standards for Literacy and Writing in History/Social Studies, the NCSS College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, the CCE National Standards for Civics and Government, the NCHS U.S. History Standards, and the NCHS World History Standards.

Note: Required books must be acquired separately.

Required Texts and Course Materials

Textbooks:

- Kaiser, R. (2014). *Act of Congress: How America's Essential Institution Works, and How it Doesn't*, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0307744517 <https://www.amazon.com/Act-Congress-Americas-Essential-Institution/dp/0307744515>
- Schlesinger, A. (2004). *The Imperial Presidency*. ISBN-13: 978-0618420018 <https://www.amazon.com/Imperial-Presidency-Pa-04/dp/0618420010>
- Toobin, J. (2008). *The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court*. ISBN-13: 978-1400096794 <https://www.amazon.com/Nine-Inside-Secret-World-Supreme/dp/1400096790>

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, e-book, or new versions to save money. You can order the book directly from the publisher or from one of several discount aggregators (for example): <https://amazon.com>

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.

Moodle: Moodle is a web-based learning management system used to support flexible teaching and learning in both face-to-face and distance courses (e-learning).

<https://moodle.org> // <https://moodle.org/demo> // <https://docs.moodle.org>

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

NCHS U.S. History Standards

- Era 3 - Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)
 - Standard 3: 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.

NCHS World History Standards

- Era 7 - An Age of Revolutions (1750-1914)
 - Standard 1: The causes and consequences of political revolutions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

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

Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (grades 9-10, 11-12)

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Common Core Standards for Writing in History/Social Studies (grades 9-10, 11-12)

- Text Types and Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes (CE-SLO)

CE-SLO 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-SLO 2	Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
CE-SLO 3	Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.
CE-SLO 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-SLO 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-SLO 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.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (C-SLO)

Student Learning Outcomes for This Course By the end of this course student will be able to:	National Standards Addressed*	CE-SLO Addressed**
1. analyze the structure and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the U.S. federal government.		CE 2
2. analyze the positives and negatives of the branches of U.S. government in order to challenge mainstream assumptions about those institutions and better understand the American political system.	NBPTS 2	CE 4
3. exhibit proficient written communication through persuasive arguments about the branches of U.S. government and proficient research of primary and secondary sources to explore new ideas	NBPTS 2	CE 1,6

4. reflect on and apply their learning in the contexts of personal and professional life—both in terms of growth and values.	NBPTS 1-4	CE 3, 5
5. apply their new knowledge and skills through more effective lesson planning and alignment of the curriculum to the Common Core and content standards.	NBPTS 1-4	CE 1-5
6. develop the use of critical thinking and questioning skills to engage classroom students in discussions, projects, and/or classroom lessons and assignments.	NBPTS 1-4	CE 1-5

* 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 for Each Assignment
Welcome Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome video Course Syllabus Introduce Yourself Forum 	--
Module 1 – Introduction, Constitutional Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction Read The U.S. Constitution, Articles I, II, and III Read <i>The Federalist Papers</i>, No. 10 and No. 51. 1.1 Complete the “Vision of the Framers” Assignment 	10 pts
Module 2 – The Legislative Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Congress lectures and teaching methods checklist Read <i>The Federalist Papers</i>, No. 53 and No. 62 Read G. Will, “The Case for Congressional Term Limits” (NRO, 10/01/14) If chosen, read Kaiser, <i>Act of Congress</i> and complete a book review 2.1 Complete the “Representatives or Ruling Class” Essay 	10 pts
Module 3 – The Executive Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the President and Bureaucracy lectures and teaching methods checklist If chosen, read Schlesinger, <i>The Imperial Presidency</i> and complete a book review Read <i>The Federalist Papers</i>, No. 70 Read the decision in <i>Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States</i> Read P. Hamburger, “The History and Danger of Administrative Law” (Imprimis 9/2014) 3.1 Complete the “Evolving Presidency” Assignment 	10 pts

Module 4 – The Judicial Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Judiciary lectures and teaching methods checklist If chosen, read Toobin, <i>The Nine</i>, and complete a book review Read the decision from <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> (1803) Read <i>The Federalist Papers</i>, No. 78 Read Liptak, A., “How Activist is the Supreme Court?” (NYT 10/12/13) 4.1 Complete the “Judicial Review” Essay 4.2 Book Review #1 4.3 Book Review #2 	10 pts 5 pts 5 pts
Module 5 – Reflecting on the Profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Complete the “Government Reform” Assignment 5.2 Complete the Multimedia Presentation 	10 pts 10 pts
Module 6 – Lesson Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Common Core Primers 6.1 Lesson Plan on the Branches of U.S. Government 	30 pts
Course Wrap-up – Grading and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Reflection Forum Course Evaluation Course Completion Checklist Grade Request / Transcript Request 	
	TOTAL POINTS	100 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	Percent	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. Includes 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. Includes 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 organizational 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.

Instructor/Student Contact Information

Throughout the course participants will be communicating with the instructor and their classmates on a regular basis using asynchronous posting forums. 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.

Forums

Participation is an important expectation of this course and all online courses. Online forums promote reflection and analysis while allowing students to appreciate and evaluate positions that others express. Forum postings are open to be viewed by all students in the course, so do not post sensitive or personal information about your students. 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 forum questions whenever possible. The faculty role in the forums 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 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). Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Support Center to discuss academic and other needs as soon as they are diagnosed with a disability. 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/students/academic-support/services-students-disabilities>.

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 and Handbook - <https://handbook.fresno.edu/graduate/academic-policies>

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.

Moodle: This course will be delivered totally online at <https://ce-connect.fresno.edu>. Moodle is a learning management system that provides students access to online resources, documents, assignments, knowledge checks, forums, etc. Moodle is easy to learn and has a friendly user interface. There are also some student tutorials on the Center for Online Learning website at Fresno Pacific University - <https://col.fresno.edu/student>.

Moodle Login and Passwords: Students will need to have internet access to log onto <https://ce-connect.fresno.edu>. The username and password for Moodle access will be sent to you by the university using the email address you submitted at the time of registration. The instructor will then contact you with a welcome communication. If you need help with your username and password recovery, please contact the Continuing Education office at (800) 372-5505 or (559) 453-2000 during regular office hours - Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (pacific) or email them at prof.dev@fresno.edu.

Getting Help with Moodle: If you need help with Moodle, please contact the Center for Online Learning (COL), by telephone or the website. Help by phone (559) 453-3460 is available Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (pacific) or by filling out a "Request Services" form at <https://col.fresno.edu/contact/request-services>. If asked, please identify that you are with the "School = Continuing Education".

Final Course Grade and Transcripts

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to logon to the Continuing Education website (<https://ce.fresno.edu/my-account>) and “Request Final Grade”. Once the instructor receives the requests and submits the grade online, students may log back in to view their Final Grade Report or order transcripts online. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted. For more information, see the Continuing Education Policies and Procedures at <https://ce.fresno.edu/ce-policies-and-procedures>.

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/students/registrars-office/academic-catalogs>.

Fresno Pacific University Student Learning Outcomes (FPU-SLO)

FPU-SLO 1	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.
FPU-SLO 2	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.
FPU-SLO 3	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.
FPU-SLO 4	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.
FPU-SLO 5	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.
FPU-SLO 6	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 worldview.
FPU-SLO 7	Service: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
FPU-SLO 8	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.
FPU-SLO 9	Quantitative Reasoning: Students will accurately <i>compute</i> calculations and symbolic operations and <i>explain</i> their use in a field of study.
FPU-SLO 10	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.