



SILSA Course Syllabus

Course Name: Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy
Teacher(s): Chad Anderson

Course Overview

Students will examine the various aspects of U.S. citizenship, including citizenship requirements, citizens' rights and responsibilities, and immigration and naturalization. The essential standards focus on civics and government at the following scales; city, county, state, and federal - framed to develop students' increased understanding of the institutions necessary to constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, the required skills to participate as effective and responsible citizens of a nation-state, and the knowledge of how democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict are utilized all around them every day. The NC standards and course content are available in the CANVAS course About Civic Literacy Module.

Honors Civic Literacy is distinguished by a difference in the quality and nature of the work expected, not merely an increase in quantity or pace. Honors students should learn to express and defend their ideas while attaining the distance necessary to accept constructive criticism and reflect on limitations and bias. They will develop their civil discourse skills and achieve unit standard objectives through independent investigations/ inquiry, individual and group projects, guided dialogue, and communication, demonstrating the depth and complexity of relevant concepts. To explicitly identify critical thinking skills, we will practice reflecting on our thinking and inquiry process by learning Universal Intellectual Standards and practice deploying them with purpose. The Universal Intellectual Standards are available in the CANVAS course Curated Digital Resources module.

Essential Questions to Spark Student Inquiry

Essential questions frame our unit objectives and inspire purpose. Essential questions are written in the room and provided in the CANVAS announcements and weekly previews.

Unit 1: Introduction to Civics & Citizenship

- To what extent is civic literacy necessary in my daily life?
- How should humans organize themselves to govern a society?

Unit 2: American Foundations & The Constitution

- To what extent did colonial English heritage influence American democratic principles? What is significant about heritage?
- How did geography and climate shape the Southern, Middle, and New England colonies?
- When is revolt and revolution justified?
- What events are responsible for the Colonists' gradual transformation from loyalists to revolutionaries?
- To what extent are we upholding the ideals of The Declaration of Independence today? What evidence do you have to support your claim?

Unit 3: The Bill of Rights & Other Amendments

- How do the Bill of Rights amendments (1-10) protect civil liberties (personal freedoms from government overreach) and civil rights (protections from discrimination and guaranteed equal treatment under the law)?
- To what extent does the 4th Amendment protect the rights of the accused?

Unit 4: The Legislative Branch

- How are the American people represented in Congress?
- How is the Census essential in representing the American people?
- How does Gerrymandering undermine the ideals of popular sovereignty?
- When does the weight of evidence, even imperfect, become sufficient to justify legislative action?

Unit 5: The Executive Branch

- What is "Unitary Executive Power?"
- Why do we have rules and other parts of government that can limit or question what the President can do?
- To what extent should these limits and challenges exist, and what might happen if there were too few or too many ways to keep the President's power in check in today's world?

Unit 6: The Judicial Branch

- The Phrase Equal Justice Under Law is carved on the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. To what extent is "equal justice under the law" achievable without Habeas Corpus?
- Does our federal judicial system accomplish the goal of securing "equal justice under the law" for all people?

Unit 7: Politics & Elections

- To what extent is the electorate polarized?
- To what extent is political polarization inevitable?
- Does how we vote influence polarization?

Assessment

Formative

Students will complete notes, quizzes, and classroom activities that provide me with formative feedback. Students reflect on their formative assessments by using exemplars for corrections. Formative assessment grades are entered after students have revised or improved their work.

Summative

Students will complete projects and unit tests to demonstrate their acquired proficiencies with the state standards and objectives. Multiple choice tests, short answer, and short essay assessment questions may be reviewed and improved for credit recovery. Generally, projects have opportunities built into their process that afford students revision opportunities before the established due date. This will be true of the Community Action Project (CAP) taught in coordination with Literature II research. Regarding the course final exam, there is no opportunity for students to correct their submitted answers. However, the final exam is a cumulative assessment composed of previous test questions from throughout the units of the course.

Grading

In alignment with [Board of Education Policy 3400 Evaluation of Student Progress](#), describe the grading scale/weight and how the five principles of grading will be integrated (i.e. accurate; reflects proficiency of academic standards; supports a culture of revision; provides timely and actionable feedback; and distinguishes means of learning (habits of scholarship) from the ends (academic success). Clearly describe your policy around homework, retakes, and revisions.

A basic point system is applied to calculate grades. Your grade is a percentage of the available points that you have earned. For example, if you earned 186 points out of 200 possible points, your grade is 93. ($186 / 200 = 0.93$...To find your grade percentage (%): $0.93 * 100 = 93\%$) Infinite Campus is the application students and parents should regularly access to discuss grades and reflect on current progress.

Approximate Point Distributions

~50%+ is formative, including notes, reading responses, quizzes, and classroom activities. Point values will range from 5 to 20 points.

~30% of the coursework consists of summative projects and unit assessments, offering opportunities for revision and demonstrating growth. Point values will range from 30 to 100 points.

20% is a final exam with no revision or retake opportunities.

Grading Scale:

A = 90–100 | B = 80–89 | C = 70–79 | D = 60–69 | F = below 60

Attendance

Per [Board of Education Procedure 3420-P](#): Students who exceed the number of absences to earn course credit must attend attendance recovery within two weeks of their last absence.

Per [Board of Education Procedure 4400-P](#): To receive credit for a course, a student must not have more than five (5) unlawful class absences.

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian must be presented to the student's teacher on the day the student returns after an absence. Absences due to extended illnesses may also require a statement from a health care practitioner.

If absent from class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed. First, check Canvas for presentations, materials, and directions. Then, ask at least two students to clarify and explain what you missed. If your questions or confusion persist, you should request specific support from me after school. You are in control of the when and how. As a learning community, our collective success greatly depends on your individual "good faith" effort. A positive, open attitude is a character asset. Please let me know if you become sick, and we will develop a plan together to promote your success.

Additional/Supplemental Information

Due to the nature of this class, much is expected of us all. Each of us is the cornerstone of our learning. You are preparing for a lifetime of complex decision-making in an increasingly complex and integrated world. What you learn in this class, not only in content but also in research and interpersonal skills, productive struggles, and even initial failures, will last you a lifetime and be carried into future endeavors. Make this year count for you and your classmates. Acknowledge and accept the role that you have in your success. It is in your hands. I am here to encourage and support your efforts and welcome those opportunities. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via Gmail. I always strive to respond to your question(s) within 24 hours. Thank you for your curiosity, time, and commitment.

I look forward to a great year together.