

**A More Perfect Union:
The Origins and Development of the U.S. Constitution
Seminar on Teaching American History
Northshore Education Consortium
Syllabus**

Year One: 2010

Please note that the syllabus, while essentially outlined below, may be subject to some shifts to accommodate educational opportunities that may arise during seminar.

Wednesday, January 20 Orientation, Book Distribution, Welcoming Dinner

4:00-7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 28 Breakout sessions on reading materials and papers on “Slavery and the Constitution”

4:00-7:30 p.m.

Summer Session: Week One

Preparation for Monday, July 19:

Paper due on “Private Correspondence of the Founders”

Read: *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. ix to p. 54

Read on the web: James Madison, “Vices of the Political System”; and John Adams, “Thoughts on Government.” Googling these titles will bring them up.

Read from *Fame and the Founding Fathers*, Chapters 6.

Monday, July 19 The Anchoring of American Law, R. B. Bernstein

8:00 a.m.

Coffee

8:30-9:30

Evaluation Solutions, Matthew Peterson

9:30-10:30

Part One: Becoming Independent

The first part will examine how a family quarrel within the British Empire spiraled out of control until it led to the first successful colonial revolution against a mother country. It will stress, among other things, the need to understand that the American Revolution had its roots in Anglo-American constitutional history, with colonists and mother country's polemicists disputing the meaning of the unwritten British constitution as applied to America.

10:30-11:00 a.m.

Break

11:00-12:00

Part Two: An Age of Experiments in Government

The second part will focus on the Americans' efforts to restore legitimate government in a form that recognized their rejection of monarchism. It will consider the development of written constitutions and declarations of rights, the constitutional convention and the proper means of exercising the constituent power, and the quandary of relations between church and state.

12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-2:30	Breakout Sessions Breakout sessions: Discussion of papers on the Private Correspondence of the Founders. At the conclusion of this session, please hand your papers into the session leader.
2:30-2:45	Break
2:45-3:30	Reports from Breakout Sessions

Preparation for Tuesday, July 20

R. B. Bernstein,

In Book of Readings: R. B. Bernstein, "Prologue"; "The Confederation in Quandary"; "The American Revolution as a Constitutional Crisis"; "History Quotations."

In Kammen, *The Origins of the American Constitution*: pp. 38-50 (The Constitution); pp. 10-18, (The Articles of Confederation).

Tuesday, July 20 The Anchoring of American Law, R.B. Bernstein

8:00 a.m.	Coffee
8:30-9:00	Review
9:00-10:30	Part Three: The Making of the Constitution This part will examine the Americans' hesitant experiments with government for the thirteen United States. First, it will consider the ramshackle Articles of Confederation, assessing the Confederation's achievements as well as its drawbacks. Second, it will explore how Americans who thought in national terms began to recognize the Confederation's weaknesses and to begin to design solutions for them.
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	The Making of the Constitution, continued
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-1:45	Douglas Adair's Vision of James Madison
1:45-2:00	Break
2:00-3:30	Breakout Session, Quotations on History from the Book of Readings: #6, 8, 11, 17, 20.

Preparation for Wednesday, July 21

R.B. Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 55-134; *Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, pp. 3-38 and pp.

115-180.

Wednesday, July 21 The Founding Fathers Reconsidered, R.B. Bernstein

8:00 a.m.	Coffee
8:30-9:00	Review
9:00-10:30	Peter Gibbon, Jefferson as Leader R. B. Bernstein, Jefferson as Politician
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00-12:00	R. B. Bernstein, <i>The Founding Fathers Reconsidered</i>
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-2:00 p.m.	Documentary, Selections from HBO <i>John Adams</i>
2:00-2:15 p.m.	Break
2:15-3:30	Selections from dvd <i>1776</i>

Preparation for Thursday, July 22

In *Book of Readings*: article on John Adams by Bernard Bailyn.

Thursday, July 22 Adams National Historic Park

Summer Session: Week Two

Preparation for Monday, July 26

In Carol Berkin's *Revolutionary Mothers*, Chapters One and Ten. In *Book of Readings*, primary sources on women's role in Revolution.

Monday, July 26 Confederation and Constitution, Part One, Carol Berkin

8:00 a.m.	Coffee
8:30-9:00	Review
9:00-10:30	Women in the Revolution
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	Articles of Confederation, Carol Berkin
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-1:45	Carol Berkin, Open
1:45-2:00	Break

2:00-2:45	Documentary <i>Liberty, Are We To Be A Nation?</i> PBS
2:45-3:30	Discussion of Documentary

Preparation for Tuesday, July 27

Review *A Brilliant Solution* (participants read book in advance of the seminar).

Tuesday, July 27 **Constitution and Confederation, Part Two, Carol Berkin**

8:00 a.m.	Coffee
8:30-9:00	Review
9:00-10:30	Constitutional Convention, Carol Berkin
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	Carol Berkin, on Patrick Henry
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Web Resources relating to the Constitution
2:00-2:15	Break
2:15-3:30	Open

Preparation for Wednesday, July 28

In *Book of Readings*: “First Report on the Public Credit”; Federalist Papers, nos. 12, 13, 30, 31.

Review pp. 3-131 of Darren Staloff’s *Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding*.

Wednesday, July 28 **Hamilton and the New Nation, Darren Staloff**

8:00 a.m.	Coffee
8:30-9:00	Review
9:00-10:30	The American Enlightenment, Darren Staloff
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	Hamilton and Politics
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-2:00	<i>Alexander Hamilton</i> Documentary, Part I

2:00-2:15	Break
2:15-3:30	Breakout discussion of Documentary

Preparation for Thursday, July 29

Staloff, *The Politics of Enlightenment*, pp. 234-361;

From *Book of Readings*:

Selections from *Notes from Virginia*.

Thursday, July 29

8:00 a. m.	Coffee
8:30-9:00	Review
9:00-10:30	Thomas Jefferson: Romantic American, Darren Staloff
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-12:00	Election of 1800, Darren Staloff
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-1:45	Thomas Jefferson's Vision of Education
1:45-2:00	Break
2:00-3:00	Evaluations Solutions, Matthew Peterson
3:00-3:30	Preparation for fall meetings.

Preparation for Wednesday, September 22:

Read Gordon Wood's *Ben Franklin*

Projects due.

Wednesday, September 22 Projects Due

4:00-7:30

Preparation for Wednesday, October 20:

Read John Kaminski's *The Founders on the Founders*

Wednesday, October 20 Farewell Dinner

4:00-7:30 **Guest Speaker: John Kaminski**

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