

# Foundations of American Government

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## Course Description

This course examines the “why” and the “how” of American government through in-depth discussion of its history and workings. Professor Denver Brunsman begins with the early trial and error of American government, detailing the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence, the flawed initial attempt at governance in the Articles of Confederation, and the debates over the US Constitution. It continues with a practical examination of the three branches of government, focusing not only on the work that each branch does but the interaction between the branches. Finally, the course focuses on linkage institutions, including interest groups, political parties, and the media, that connect Americans with their government and influence their votes.

## Lecture Videos

This course consists of approximately 12 hours of instruction presented by Professor Denver Brunsman, split into 24 lecture videos ranging from 20 to 25 minutes long. The videos provide the content needed to answer the course quizzes.

1. Declaration of Independence (2 videos)
2. Articles of Confederation (2 videos)
3. The Constitutional Convention (2 videos)
4. The Bill of Rights (2 videos)
5. Congress (2 videos)
6. The Presidency (2 videos)

7. The Supreme Court and the Federal Judiciary (2 videos)
8. State and Local Government (2 videos)
9. Political Parties (2 videos)
10. Interest Groups (2 videos)
11. Media (2 videos)
12. Elections and Campaigning (2 videos)

Note: Course lectures were originally recorded for the Gilder Lehrman Institute's History Essentials series. You can disregard references to assignments, other coursework, and the use of content in classrooms discussed in the videos. They are not part of the History U program.

### Resources

Select the Resources link for information about the primary and secondary resources, videos, and websites referred to in the course. Please note: History U participants are not required to read or purchase print materials. All quiz questions are drawn from the lectures.

### Quizzes

The purpose of the 12 short quizzes is to review your knowledge of the material covered in the lectures. No outside reading is required to answer the questions successfully. After watching each video in the course, select and complete the corresponding quiz to test your knowledge and qualify for the Certificate of Completion.

### Certificate of Completion

After you finish watching all of the lectures, score an 80% or higher on each quiz, and complete the feedback survey, you will be able to download your certificate.

Please email [historyschool@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:historyschool@gilderlehrman.org) with any questions.