


Fall 2004

American Constitutional Development Syllabus

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Recommended Citation

Samson, Steven Alan, "American Constitutional Development Syllabus" (2004). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 373.
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**Syllabus for
American Constitutional Development
GOVT 421 – Autumn 2004
Dr. Steven Alan Samson
Liberty University
School of Business and Government**

- I. **Course Description** A survey of American constitutional development from British and colonial origins to the present, emphasizing the history of the Supreme Court and the development of the constitutional framework.
- II. **Rationale** This course directly supports Aims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the Liberty University Statement of Purpose.
- III. **Prerequisite** GOVT 200 or GOVT 220, six hours of American history
- IV. **Materials List**
American Constitutional Development: Outline and Readings
Evans, M. Stanton. The Theme Is Freedom [E]
McDonald, Forrest. A Constitutional History of the United States [M]
Websites:
<http://www.wesriddle.com/>
- IV. **Course Objectives/Requirements**
- 1 To provide an overview of the key ideas and purposes that have shaped the American political experiment and introduce the major sources of American constitutional development from the colonial period to the present.
 - 2 To better equip students to understand, participate in, and evaluate American political processes.
- VI. **Graded Requirements**
1. Each student is responsible for completing reading assignments prior to class and should keep a loose-leaf notebook of class materials. It is suggested that readings and study aids be brought to class.
 2. Participation is an essential part of class. Students should be prepared to discuss textbook readings and current events.
 3. Students will be tested on the lecture and reading material through a series of seven tests. (100% of the grade)
 4. Tests **must** be taken at the scheduled date and time. The lowest test score will be dropped **if** the student visits and writes a 2-3 page report on Monticello, Montpelier, or Red Hill; **or** participates in one of three panel discussions to be held late in the semester. Topics might cover a wide range of issues, such as the Pledge of Allegiance and other expressions of faith, marriage and families, environmental regulation, women in the military, the war on terrorism, illegal immigration, or the judicial usurpation of politics.
 5. **Honors:** Each student is encouraged to read one of the books listed below and write a brief 5-7 page abstract. Some of the shorter works by Alvarado, Amos, Bradford, Burgess, Carey, Kendall, Kirk, Lutz, Maier, McIlwain, Morley, Norton, Rushdoony, or Storing are especially recommended. The abstract should summarize the author's thesis (argument) and major points, then give a critical evaluation. The books may be chosen

on a first come, first served basis. The lowest test score will be dropped upon satisfactory completion of this assignment.

6. The grading scale is 100-90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59 and below=F.

VII. Attendance Students are required to arrive **on time** for every class meeting. Students who are absent due to illness or emergency should notify the professor prior to class or soon afterward. Excused absences include participation in university-sponsored events, serious illness (if accompanied by a physician's note), or a family emergency. Eight absences **will** result in a failing grade. Persistent tardiness will also have a detrimental effect on grades.

VIII. Dress Code Observe the Liberty Way. Food is not permitted. Students who are not in appropriate campus attire will **not** be admitted to class.

IX. Office Location, Phone, E-Mail, Hours

School of Business and Government, DH 1031

Phone: 582-2640

E-Mail: ssamson@liberty.edu

Hours: MWF 1:20-2:10, 3:20-4:10; TR 8:00-10:40; by appointment

CLASS SCHEDULE

August

Wed. 25 Introduction; Federalist 10: www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm

Fri. 27 Federalist 10; Federalist 39: www.constitution.org/fed/federa39.htm

Mon. 30 Federalist 51: www.constitution.org/fed/federa51.htm; Antifederalist

September

Wed. 1 Francis Lieber [Convocation]

Fri. 3 Lieber; Wesley Allen Riddle

Mon. 6 Riddle; E. Introduction

Wed. 8 E. 1

Fri. 10 E. 2

Mon. 13 E. 3

Wed. 15 E. 4; FIRST QUIZ: Evans, 1-3; Riddle; Lieber; Federalist and Anti-Federalist

Fri. 17 E. 5

Mon. 20 E. 6

Wed. 22 E. 7

Fri. 24 E. 8

Mon. 27 E. 9; **Collateral**: Helen Silving [see Blackboard]

Wed. 29 E. 10; SECOND QUIZ: Evans, 4-8 [may be given on Friday]

October

Fri. 1 E. 11

Mon. 4 E. 12

Wed. 6 E. 13; **Collateral**: David Hall:
www.caledonianfire.org/caledonianfire/docs/declarationhall.htm

Fri. 8 E. 14

Mon. 11 E. 15

Wed. 13 E. 16; THIRD QUIZ: Evans, 9-12

Fri. 15 E. 17

Mon. 18 Preliminary Panel Discussion Meeting

Wed. 20 Ellis Sandoz: www.townhall.com/phillysoc/sandozrule.htm

Fri.	22	Sandoz; M. Preface
Mon.	25	M. 1; FOURTH QUIZ: Evans, 13-17
Wed.	27	M. 1
Fri.	29	M. 2
November		
Mon.	1	M. 2
Wed.	3	M. 3
Fri.	5	M. 3; FIFTH QUIZ: Samson, McDonald, Preface, 1-2
Mon.	8	M. 4; Collateral : David Crockett: www.constitution.org/con/crockett.txt
Wed.	10	M. 4
Fri.	12	M. 5
Mon.	15	M. 5
Wed.	17	M. 6
Fri.	19	M. 6
Mon.	22	THANKSGIVING BREAK
Wed.	24	THANKSGIVING BREAK
Fri.	26	THANKSGIVING BREAK
Mon.	29	M. 7
December		
Wed.	1	M. 7; SIXTH QUIZ: McDonald, 3-6
Fri.	3	M. 8
Mon.	5	M. 8
Wed.	8	M. 9
Fri.	10	M. 9; SEVENTH QUIZ: McDonald, 7-9

SELECTED WEBSITES

Historical and Educational

American Christian Heritage Week: www.achw.org
 American Christian History Institute: www.achipa.com
 American Reformation Project: www.americanreformation.org
 American Vision: www.americanvision.org
 Center for Christian Statesmanship: www.statesmanship.org
 Constitution Society: www.constitution.org
 Foundation for American Christian Education: www.face.net
 Freedoms Foundation: www.ffvf.org
 Mayflower Institute: www.mayflowerinstitute.org
 Pilgrim Institute: www.pilgriminstitute.org
 Plymouth Rock Foundation: www.plymrock.org
 Providence Foundation: www.providencefoundation.org
 Russell Kirk Center: www.kirkcenter.org
 WallBuilders: www.wallbuilders.com
 Williamsburg Charter: www.religioustolerance.org/wil_burg.htm

Legal

Alliance Defense Fund: www.alliancedefensefund.org
 American Center for Law and Justice: www.aclj.org
 American Family Association Center for Law and Policy: www.afa.net/clp
 Christian Law Association: www.christianlaw.org
 Christian Legal Society: www.christianlegalsociety.org
 Federalist Society: www.fed-soc.org
 Home School Legal Defense Association: www.hslda.org
 Liberty Counsel: www.lc.org

Rutherford Institute: www.rutherford.org
Thomas More Law Center: www.thomasmore.org

Political

Future of Freedom Foundation: www.fff.org
Heritage Foundation: www.heritage.org
Independent Institute: www.independent.org
Young America's Foundation: www.yaf.org

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography in the Evans book is a good source of supporting material. Donald Lutz has written and edited several books that trace the political and documentary development of our constitutional tradition. The University of Szeged in Hungary has been sponsoring research on American historical documents. Recent bibliographies citing foundation documents and secondary literature may be found at <http://www.jate.u-szeged.hu/~gnovak/s99foundationdocs.htm> and, more comprehensively, <http://www.jate.u-szeged.hu/~gnovak/crsdocuments.htm#fed>.

The Federalist Papers may be accessed at <http://memory.loc.gov/const/fed/fedpapers.html>
Anti-Federalist writings and other early documents are available at <http://www.constitution.org/afp/afp.htm>

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