

AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS

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BAI Breadth American Institutions

3 credits

Asks students to acquire and demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States.

Objectives:

- To meet the American Institutions requirement mandated by the state legislature:
"A student shall demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States prior to receiving a bachelor's degree or teaching credential."
- To provide a multi-disciplinary introduction to the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States.

Content:

All American citizens should understand the history, principles, forms of government, and economic systems of the United States. In this course students will learn how historical forces, political structures, economic institutions, and conflicting beliefs have shaped the American experience.

The course should utilize a coherent theme or themes to provide continuity. The theme of tensions in the American experience, especially the tensions between conflicting values, is a possible way to integrate the course. Examples of these tensions include protection and freedom, freedom and equality, individual rights and the common good.

Pedagogy:

1. Students will be required to complete writing assignments.
2. Students will be required to participate in collaborative activities.
3. Students will develop their information literacy skills, including an understanding of the nature, organization, and methods of access and evaluation of both electronic and traditional resources in the subject area.
4. Opportunities will be provided for discussion.
5. The course proposal will include ways to assess achievement of the objectives for this course.

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CRITERIA	THE STUDENT WHO ATTAINS PROFICIENCY	THE STUDENT WHO APPROACHES PROFICIENCY	THE STUDENT WHO LACKS PROFICIENCY
KNOWLEDGE OF KEY HISTORICAL ISSUES	provides a clear chronological understanding of events; expresses a complex grasp of causation; recognizes a wide range of factors shaping the sequence and outcome of events; situates issues within larger political / social / economic / racial / gender contexts; reflects on larger themes that inform specific events	provides arguments weakened by some chronological confusion; expresses a limited grasp of causation; offers partial comprehension of key informing factors; provides satisfactory contextualization of issues; expresses limited grasp of broader themes	states many chronological errors; explores material in a historical vacuum; holds minimal grasp of factors grounded in considerations of race, class, gender, ethnicity, region, ideology; offers simplistic analysis of causation, context, informing themes
KNOWLEDGE OF KEY POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES	provides a substantive understanding of the institutions and processes central to the American political system; identifies major domestic and international policy issues facing the U.S & the world; constructs arguments built on a comprehensive analysis of political processes	provides a basic comprehension of the outlines of U.S. political institutions and processes; expresses a basic comprehension of critical international debates; constructs arguments built on a limited analysis of political processes	remains largely unaware of key factors in structure and operation of political system; fails to grasp current political issues and debates; offers simplistic analysis of political processes
KNOWLEDGE OF KEY ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICES	clearly grasps and explores standard terms and basic concepts in both micro- and macro-economics; recognizes how economic agents make decisions and choices; draws on economic reasoning to identify and evaluate policy displays effective use of relevant data	comprehends core terminology and concepts of the discipline; provides rudimentary analysis of decision-making; draws on limited application of economic reasoning in evaluative arguments; displays adequate use of relevant data	exhibits little familiarity with underlying language and categories of economic analysis; examines decision-making processes apart from economic factors; offers simplistic evaluation of policy and behaviors; provides little or no evidence to support claims; remains unfamiliar with core economic data
SCHOLARLY ANALYSIS	addresses clearly-stated questions; clarifies significance of issues defines key terms; focuses on critical analysis rather than mere description; presents a logical formulation of arguments; acknowledges a range of scholarly interpretations on controversial issues; summarizes main ideas clearly and accurately; raises valid critiques of different studies and interpretations	addresses questions that can be identified with a degree of difficulty; does not fully clarify the significance of questions addressed; leaves some key terms undefined; focuses on descriptive arguments; limited critical analysis; presents arguments marked by logical errors; recognizes a limited range of interpretive analyses; presents critiques that are simplistic, unfair, or inappropriate	fails to clarify or demonstrate significance of questions posed; does not define key terms; provides commentary that is largely descriptive rather than analytical; presents arguments marked by inappropriate scope or illogical presentation; remains unfamiliar with scholarly debates on controversial issues presents critiques that are misinformed, invalid, or largely incomprehensible
CLARITY OF COMMUNICATION	offers complex arguments with nuanced explanations, critical analysis, and strong supporting evidence;	offers coherent explanations, reasonable arguments, and supporting evidence; displays errors in spelling,	offers incoherent, flawed, unsupported arguments; exhibits problems in spelling, grammar, punctuation,

	formulates arguments using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar; proper sentence and paragraph construction	grammar, punctuation, sentence and paragraph construction (though not severe enough to hinder an understanding of key points)	sentence & paragraph construction so severe as to make parts of the student's work unintelligible
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