

UMBC UGC New Course Request: HIST 423: Creating the Constitution

Date Submitted: 4/6/2016

Proposed Effective Date: Spring 2017

	Name	Email	Phone	Dept
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COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	HIST 423
Formal Title	Creating the Constitution
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Creating the Constitution
Recommended Course Preparation	HIST 101
Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	None
Credits	3
Repeatable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	3 This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (no longer than 75 words):

HIST 423 explores the creation of the federal Constitution of 1787 and the Bill of Rights. The course examines the many crises that the Constitution was designed to solve. We will investigate the politics that brought about the Constitutional Convention and the debates over the scope and structure of the new national government, the contest between "Federalists" and "Antifederalists" over ratification, and the Bill of Rights and its place in the Early Republic.

RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:

Rationale: Please explain the following:

a) Why is there a need for this course at this time?

This course falls squarely in Dr. Bouton's current research field so he would like to teach a course intended for history majors that goes into real depth about how the Constitution came about, what its provisions are, and what it was intended to do.

b) How often is the course likely to be taught?

The course is likely to be taught every other year.

c) How does this course fit into your department's curriculum?

We have two 300 level courses that deal with the revolutionary period:

[HIST 343 - Democratizing America, 1763-1850](#) and HIST 340 Atlantic Revolutions. We also have a 400 level course,

HIST 413, on the American Revolution, which focuses on the social history of the period. The new course will delve into the Constitution in much greater depth than any of these other courses can or do.

d) What primary student population will the course serve?

History majors, and interested third and fourth year students in related majors

e) Why is the course offered at the level (ie. 100, 200, 300, or 400 level) chosen?

We want to offer it at the 400 level b/c the course goes into great depth, while our broader courses are offered at the 300 level or below, see C) above.

f) Explain the appropriateness of the recommended course preparation(s) and prerequisite(s).

History courses do not, as a rule, have prerequisites. We do have recommended course preparations, in this case that will be HIST 101, which would familiarize students with the general period under discussion.

g) Explain the reasoning behind the P/F or regular grading method.

All our courses allow all grading methods.

h) Provide a justification for the repeatability of the course.

Not repeatable.

ATTACH COURSE OUTLINE (mandatory):

Attached.

HIST 423: Creating the Constitution

Professor Terry Bouton

Phone: 410-455-2056

Email: [bouton\[at\]umbc.edu](mailto:bouton[at]umbc.edu)

Office: 510 Fine Arts

Office Hours: Tu/Th 10:00am-11:30am and by appointment

NOTE: It is always best to email before you plan to come to office hours so that I can block out time for you. (I typically schedule meetings with students and advisees during office hours, so it's best to contact me before you plan to arrive to make certain I'm available).

Course Webpage:

Course Meeting Place:

Campus Map: http://www.umbc.edu/aboutumbc/campusmap/map_flash.html

Course Meeting Time: Tu/Th 2:30pm-3:45pm

Course Description:

HIST 423 explores the creation of the federal Constitution of 1787 and the Bill of Rights. It examines the context of the 1780s that gave rise to the Constitution, revealing the many crises that the Constitution was designed to solve. The course introduces students to the men who pushed for the Constitution and examines their different motivations (ideological, economic, etc) for wanting a stronger national government. Students will investigate the politics that brought about the Constitutional Convention and the debates over the scope and structure of the new national

government. They will explore the contest between “Federalists” and “Antifederalists” over ratification. The course will conclude by looking at how the Bill of Rights came to be and its place in the Early Republic.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop skills in critical analysis of historical ideas, arguments, and evidence
- Write cogent, coherent, well organized, and persuasive essays—and gain insights into how you can apply good writing techniques to other courses and projects
- Make strong, clear arguments and support those arguments with effective use of quotations and specific examples from primary and secondary historical sources
- Understand the context and processes that gave rise to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights
- Appreciate the distinct goals and beliefs that different groups of Americans brought to the debate of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and who won and lost when those goals came into conflict.
- Critically evaluate the possibilities, gains, and limitations of the social and political change brought about by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the Early Republic.
- Gain an informed and nuanced understanding of the meaning and practice of democracy in Revolutionary and Early National America

Books:

- Woody Holton, Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008)
- Jack Rakove, Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution (New York: Random House, 1996).
- Jackson Turner Main, The Anti Federalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781-1788 (1964, various editions)

All of these books are (or will be) available at the campus bookstore.

I have also put a copy of each book on 3-day reserve at the library.

IMPORTANT: The campus bookstore usually only keeps books in stock for the first half of the semester.

Consequently, you need to purchase your books early in the semester and, preferably, at the start of the course. I will not accept “the bookstore ran out” as an excuse for missed reading assignments.

Requirements:

(I reserve the right to make changes to the requirements or to the schedule.)

Grading:

For undergraduates, the final grade breaks down as follows:

MIDTERM EXAM:	100 pts. (20% of your total grade)
FINAL EXAM:	100 pts. (20% of your total grade)
PAPER #1:	100 pts. (20% of your total grade)
PAPER #2:	100 pts. (20% of your total grade)
READING POSTINGS:	100 pts. (20% of your total grade)
TOTAL GRADE:	500 pts.

At the end of the semester:

450-500 points will be an A

400-449 points will be a B

350-399 points will be a C

300-349 points will be a D

Below 300 points will be an F

1) Examinations:

Both the midterm and the final exams will be composed of an essay section and a series of identifications (define and explain the significance of various names, events, places, ideas, etc., drawn from lectures and readings). For the final examination, the identification portion will NOT be cumulative; the essay portion will be somewhat

cumulative, but will emphasize material from the second half of the course. Both exams are closed books, closed notes.

The Midterm Examination will be held in class on:

The Final Examination will be held in class on:

2) Papers

Paper 1: Democracy and Rights at the Constitutional Convention

Paper #1 is a six-page paper where students will use the published records of the Constitutional Convention to make an argument about what the founding elite thought about the central issues of the role of “the people” in government and about the rights and powers that ordinary American citizens would hold. **Although I will leave the choice of specific topic up to you, you must get my approval for your topic BEFORE you start the paper.**

Your paper must be typed and double-spaced with normal margins and in a normal font. Students will be expected to consult secondary sources (academic sources: not encyclopedias or .com websites) to help put their arguments in historical perspective. You can find more detailed guidelines for the paper and a link to sources on Blackboard.

Paper 2: Ratification and The Bill of Rights

Paper # 2 is a six-page paper where students will use the published Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution series to make an argument about the creation of the Bill of Rights. The founding elite did not originally want a bill of rights in the Constitution. Some, like James Madison (the so-called “Father of the Bill of Rights”), thought it was unnecessary; others like Alexander Hamilton thought a bill of rights would place “dangerous” limits on the new government. The eventual Bill of Rights was created out of the ratification, where many opponents of the Constitution made their vote to ratify it contingent on there being amendments to it immediately after ratification. Your job is to investigate this process by picking a state and examining the ratification convention there to see what kinds of rights the Constitution’s opponents wanted to see added to the Constitution. **Although I will leave the choice of specific topic up to you, you must get my approval for your topic BEFORE you start the paper.** Your paper must be typed and double-spaced with normal margins and in a normal font. Students will be expected to consult secondary sources (academic sources: not encyclopedias or .com websites) to help put their arguments in historical perspective. You can find more detailed guidelines for the paper and a link to sources on Blackboard.

Submit Papers With SafeAssign:

Student will submit both papers to SafeAssign on Blackboard. SafeAssign checks papers against everything on the internet as well as published journal articles and the papers in the SafeAssign databanks. Unfortunately, every semester SafeAssign catches at least one student who plagiarized some or all of a paper they submitted to one of my courses. That said, I see SafeAssign less as a punitive device than as a measure to ensure that those who complete assignments honestly do not have their hard work debased by lowlife cheaters. If you plagiarize, you will fail the course. (See Academic Integrity Below).

3) Blackboard Reading Discussion:

The grade for reading discussion will depend on the quality of your posts to the Blackboard Discussion Board. There will be TWELVE posting assignments throughout the semester; at the end of the semester I will count your highest TEN postings (meaning I will drop the lowest two grades). Each posting will answer a specific question based on the material being read for that particular assignment. I have listed the questions below in the schedule and I will also post them on Blackboard. For each posting, students will make an argument that they will support using SPECIFIC EXAMPLES and QUOTATIONS from the reading. To receive a high grade, you must use quotations and direct citations from the book (when appropriate) AND include the page number where you got the example or quote (you can put the page numbers after the quote or citation). I will be looking to make sure that you use quotations and examples from THROUGHOUT the reading and not just from a few pages at the beginning or end of the book. Think of the postings as mini-papers of about a page of single-spaced text. Each posting will be worth ten points.

Remember to ANSWER the QUESTION rather than just reporting what the reading said. These are analytical essays designed to prove an argument; they are NOT “book reports.” If you simply recount what the chapters of the book said or summarize the book’s narrative, you will not get a good grade. You need to make an argument that answers the question. I do not care what argument you make. There are numerous ways to answer the questions and many different arguments that will earn you an A essay. But to earn that A (or even a B), you’ll need to MAKE AN ARGUMENT that ANSWERS THE QUESTION.

I grade these postings based on the quality of your reading (as evidenced by the examples and quotes you use) and your writing. One of my main goals in these assignments is to improve your skill in writing analytical essays. I take the postings VERY seriously, as should you. The best answers will be clearly written and logically structured. They will begin with a brief introductory paragraph that briefly reveals your answer to the question (i.e. spells out your thesis) and lets me know what to expect from the subsequent paragraphs. I will grade your essay based on the how well it succeeds in the elements of writing: making a clear thesis statement; organizing ideas into coherent paragraphs that each make a SINGLE argument; stating each paragraph’s argument in a STRONG TOPIC SENTENCE that BEGINS the paragraph; developing the paragraph’s argument with explanation and evidence; making effective use of evidence by ensuring that specific examples and quotations work to prove the argument the paragraph is trying to make—and, when the evidence is not entirely clear, explaining how the quotes and examples make your point.

NOTE: To receive full credit, you must make your posting by 12:00pm on the days listed below (class begins at 1:00pm). If you do not finish your posting by class time, do not cut class to submit a posting; simply submit it after class. I will deduct DOUBLE the number of late points for any posting submitted during the time that the class meets (all your submissions to Blackboard are date and time stamped, so I will know when you wrote and submitted them).

IMPORTANT: I require everyone to save a personal copy of all of their discussion postings (as well as the papers) on their home computer, thumb drive, cd, or whatever storage device they choose.

IMPORTANT: Blackboard is occasionally buggy. I HIGHLY suggest that you type out your response with a word processing program and then cut and paste it into Blackboard rather than the other way around. If you have a problem with Blackboard, it is your responsibility to ensure that I receive a copy of your posting by the deadline. DO NOT automatically email me a copy of every posting. ONLY email postings in the event of a Blackboard emergency.

Students enrolled in this course must have an active email account and access to the internet. HIST 413 uses Blackboard online software. This means that you will have online access to course materials 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Most assignments will be submitted online at the Blackboard course website. As a UMBC student, you have a personal email account and access to the internet and through the many on-campus computer labs (locations, hours, etc.). You can also access Blackboard off campus through a personal account or from the UMBC dial-up. Getting started on Blackboard: Your registration with the UMBC Registrar for HIST 413 will make you eligible to enroll in Blackboard. To gain entrance to discussion boards and course material, you MUST enroll in the online version of HIST 413 on the course Blackboard site in order to have full access. BEFORE you do anything else, enroll in the course online at: <http://blackboard.umbc.edu>.

Academic Integrity:

I expect students enrolled in this course to abide by the UMBC Code of Student Conduct for Academic Integrity (<http://www.umbc.edu/sjp/articles/code.html>). If you are unclear about what plagiarism is, take a look at the Indiana University website: Plagiarism: What It Is and How to Recognize and Avoid It (<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>).

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC’s scholarly community in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory.

I show no mercy toward cheaters. If you are caught cheating on any test or assignment, you will receive a zero for that grade and I will submit your name to the proper disciplinary authority. Rest assured that I will do all I can to see that those disciplinary bodies take the strongest possible action against anyone who cheats. At the very least, you will probably fail the course. Egregious cases of plagiarism will result in dismissal from the University. Potential cheaters: you have been warned.

Administrative Issues:

Email:

I will send all email messages to your UMBC email account (yourusername@umbc.edu). If you do not usually check this account, have messages forwarded to your preferred email address (such as aol, hotmail, etc.). There are several ways to have your email forwarded. The best way is to use the forwarding function in myUMBC, this will ensure that users receive ALL UMBC related email—not just email sent from within Blackboard. Here's how to do it: After logging into myUMBC, move the cursor over your name and, when the drop down menu appears, click on "Profile." When you do, one of the options will be "Create a Mail Forwarding Address." For help with this procedure, or if you have other questions about email, contact UMBC's Office of Information Technology services or visit the OIT helpsite at <http://www.umbc.edu/oit/>. Helpdesk personnel in the on-campus computer labs can usually answer most questions. The helpdesk phone number is 410-455-3838.

Random Rules:

- 1) TURN OFF CELL PHONES, BEEPERS, WATCH ALARMS, or any other device that might disturb the class. I will make examples of those who violate this rule (for example, if your phone rings, I will take the call).
- 2) On test days, students will not wear hats of any kind. If you come to class wearing a hat, you will be asked to remove it.
- 3) On test days, if you leave the room for any reason, I will consider your test to be completed. In other words, make your trip to the restroom before the test begins. If you need a drink, bring one; if you have a cold, bring Kleenex.
- 4) Laptops in the Classroom: I'm fine with people using their laptops to take notes in class. But it is both rude and disruptive for you to be emailing, instant messaging friends, surfing the web, playing World of Warcraft, visiting your Second Life, watching SNL clips on Youtube, or updating your Facebook profile while you're sitting in my class. If you don't think I can tell, you're wrong. (Hint: you staring at your laptop screen, smiling and laughing when we're talking about, oh say, slaves being tortured is something of a giveaway). If I have to speak to you about this, you're not going to be happy. So try to curb your net addiction for the 75 minutes we're in class. Thanks!
- 5) Coming to class late. Everyone is occasionally late for reasons beyond their control. I understand that. But when you start making a habit of coming to class late, you're disrupting me and your fellow students who have their acts together and can actually get to class on time. If you're perpetually late, I will stop lecture and yell at you. In class. In front of everyone. And then I will talk to you after class and yell at you some more. So don't do it. Thanks!

Schedule of Lectures, Exams, and Assignments

(You will be informed of changes to lecture topics, assignments, and due dates)

Part I: The Road to the Constitution

Week 1:

Tues., Jan. 26:

Introduction

ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Take the University of Indiana "How to Recognize Plagiarism" tutorial. After you have reviewed the material and taken the quizzes, take the final ten-question test until you obtain a perfect score. Print out your confirmation certificate for passing the tutorial, sign it, and submit it to me in class.

<https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>

Thurs., Jan. 28:

Democracy in America, 1776: What did American government look like in 1776 at the state and national levels? How democratic was it? What rights did the new governments protect?

ASSIGNMENTS:

Posting 1: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for DOCUMENTS on Democracy and Rights in 1776 (click here for documents)

Question: What do these documents reveal about the level of democracy and the rights protected by the new government?

Week 2:

Tues., Feb. 2:

End of the War, Start of the Debate: How did wartime experiences start of new debate over the state and national governments?

Thurs. Feb. 4:

Founding Flip-Flop: Why did so much of the founding elite change their minds about democracy at the end of the war? After working to spread out political and economic power, why did so much of the American gentry now want to concentrate both again?

ASSIGNMENT:

Reading: Unruly Americans, Part 1

Week 3:

Tues., Feb 9:

George Washington's Bad Decisions: How did George Washington's personal postwar financial problems go from bad to worse? How did he think a stronger national government would save him from ruin?

Thurs., Feb. 11:

"The Land of Speculation": How did speculation in land, the war debt, and various business ventures deepen the crisis faced by much of the nation's elite?

ASSIGNMENT:

Reading: Unruly Americans, Part 2

Posting 2: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for Unruly Americans, Parts 1 and 2.

Question: What were the main differences in how elite and ordinary Americans viewed the problems of the 1780s?

Week 4:

Tues., Feb. 16:

Gospel of Moneyed Men: How did the founding elite attempt to consolidate political and economic power after the war?

Thurs., Feb. 18:

The First Great Depression: How did different Americans experience one of the worst economic downturns in American history? Who did they hold responsible for the hardship?

ASSIGNMENT:

Reading: Unruly Americans, Part 3

Week 5:

Tues., Feb 23:

Popular Politics: What did ordinary Americans think their governments should do to address the problems created by the First Great Depression? How successful were their efforts?

Thurs., Feb. 25:

Popular Protest: When governments failed to deliver on political reforms, how effective were the popular protests in securing change?

ASSIGNMENT:

Reading: Unruly Americans, Part 4

Posting 3: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for Unruly Americans, Parts 3 and 4

Question: Compare and Contrast the solutions that elite and ordinary Americans offered to get out of the economic crisis of the 1780s

Week 6:

Tues., Mar. 1:

Popular Threat: How did popular reform efforts and protests threaten the ideals and interests of the founding elite?

Thurs., Mar. 3:

Foreign Founders: How did European financiers end up playing a big role in the story of the Constitution's creation?

ASSIGNMENT:

Posting 4: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for DOCUMENTS on Foreign Founders

Question: What role did foreign elites play in the creation of the Constitution? Use the documents for "Foreign Founders" on Blackboard to answer the question.

Week 7:

Tues., Mar. 8:

Governing Ideology: In what ways was the call for a new stronger national government an ideological response to this historical problems faced by past republics?

Thurs., Mar. 10:

Practical Problem Solving: To what extent was the call for a new stronger national government a genuine attempt to solve real and difficult problems facing the new nation?

ASSIGNMENT:

Posting 5: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for DOCUMENTS on Practical Problem Solving

Question: What problems did the founding elite think a stronger national government would solve?

Week 8:

Tues., Mar. 15:

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

Thurs., Mar. 17:

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

Week 9:

Tues., Mar. 22:

The Massachusetts Regulation: What's the relationship between a mass uprising in Massachusetts in 1786 and the Constitution?

Thurs., Mar. 24:
MIDTERM EXAM
Click here for HIST 423: MIDTERM EXAM STUDY GUIDE

Part II: The Constitution, Ratification, And the Bill of Rights

Week 10:

Tues., Mar. 29:

Organizing a Counter Revolution: Who led the movement to revise the Articles of Confederation? How did movement leaders try to mobilize change?

Thurs., Mar. 31:

The Eve of the Convention: How did the meeting in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 happen? What were the goals of the main players in the Constitutional Convention before they arrived in Philadelphia?

ASSIGNMENT:

Posting 6: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for DOCUMENTS on the Eve of the Convention

Question: What do these documents reveal about mindset of the founding elite in the spring of 1787?

Week 11:

Tues., Apr. 5:

Democracy and the Convention: How did the delegates at the Constitutional Convention view democracy? How did they intend for the new national government to form a “stronger barrier against democracy”?

Thurs., Apr. 7:

Debates and Compromises: What were the primary differences and central debates at the Constitutional Convention? How did the delegates solve those differences?

ASSIGNMENT:

Posting 7: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for DOCUMENTS on Democracy and Rights at the Constitutional Convention

Question: What do these documents reveal about how the founding elite thought about democracy and rights for ordinary Americans (white and black alike)?

Week 12:

Tues., Apr. 12

Slavery and the Convention: How did the delegates address questions of slavery at the Constitutional Convention? Could the Constitution realistically have ended slavery?

Thurs., Apr. 14:

The Ratification Plan: What was the Federalist strategy for getting the Constitution ratified?

Posting 8: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm: Antifederalists, p. 1-118.

Question: Who were the Antifederalists?

Week 13:

Tues., Apr. 19:

Antifederalists: Who were the so-called “Antifederalists”? And why did they have such a hard time organizing an opposition to ratification?

Thurs., Apr. 21:

Ratification: How and why did the ratification plan succeed?

ASSIGNMENT:

Posting 9: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for Antifederalists, p. 119-255

Question: What were the main Antifederalist arguments against the Constitution? What factors account for their failure?

Week 14:

Tues., Apr. 26:

Ratification and the Call for Bill of Rights: How did the ratification process start the process that led to the Bill of Rights?

Thurs., Apr. 28:

Rights Before the Bill of Rights: What were the historical inspirations for the Bill of Rights?

ASSIGNMENT:

Posting 10: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm DOCUMENTS on the Inspiration for Bill of Rights

Question: How novel were the rights covered by the Bill of Rights?

Week 15:

Tues., May 3:

The Movement for a Bill of Rights: Who supported adding a bill of rights to the Constitution and how did they organize to make it a reality?

Thurs., May 5:

Madison's Reversal: How did James Madison go from thinking a bill of rights was unnecessary to becoming the so-called "Father of the Bill of Rights"?

ASSIGNMENT:

Posting 11: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm for DOCUMENTS on Madison's Reversal.

Question: Did James Madison change his mind because of his ideals or his political ambitions?

Week 16:

Tues., May 10:

The Constitution and Bill of Rights in Context: What did the Constitution and Bill of Rights mean in the new Republic? How did their meaning change over time?

ASSIGNMENT:

Posting 12: Post to Blackboard by 12:00pm: Examine at least three websites that deal in some way with the creation of the Federal Constitution.

Question: How do the sites portray the factors leading to the Constitutional Convention in 1787? According to the sites, what were the founders' motivations in creating a new form of government? Do the sites address the question of democracy? If so, how do they handle it?