



Foundations of the U.S. Founding

High School History Course (1 Social Studies Credit)

Course Description

Citizens of every country and leaders at any level of society in the modern world need to understand the important role of the United States in the economic, political, cultural, and even religious development of the modern world. In order to understand the United States, we must understand its historical foundations. The birth of the United States in 1776 and the writing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 did not just happen overnight and cannot be attributed to merely one or two simplistic causes. This course examines the historic foundations of the founding of the United States by examining the historical roots of American order and American liberty.

The first semester will examine the origins of American concepts and institutions of order using Russell Kirk's *The Roots of American Order*. The second semester will build upon this overview by specifically examining the roots of American liberty using three books. First, we will examine the effects of Christianity upon the world, paying close attention to ideas of human rights and liberty. Then, we will read two books in a point-counterpoint examination of whether the U.S. was founded as a Christian nation, and the class will relate this historic question directly to the American notion, experience, and legal concept of liberty.

Instructor

The Founder & Lead Teacher of the Wayside School, Andrew Brummett, will teach this course. He earned a B.A. in history and English honors from the University of Texas at Austin, graduating Phi Beta Kappa with an award of distinction. He earned an M.A. from Texas A&M University in history, serving as a teaching assistant for college history courses. He also earned a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary. Andrew served in the U.S. Army Reserve and lived overseas for three years in the United Arab Emirates. Prior to founding the Wayside School, Andrew served as a classroom teacher for every grade and subject from fifth through twelfth

grade and as the Middle School Headmaster of a classical parish microschool near Philadelphia, Christ Academy of Collingdale.

Weekly Rhythm of Learning

The Wayside School is dedicated to **restful learning**, creating rhythms that promote a higher quality of learning while allowing students plenty of time for outside activities by not overloading them with homework or with unproductive time in class.

Mondays and **Thursdays** will primarily be reading days, during which students will spend approximately 50 minutes each day on a reading assignment and brief writing assignment. Students will normally submit one thoughtful question from their reading, keep a personal reading journal, and submit an entry to a classwide glossary of difficult words. Students may choose to do these reading assignments on other days.

On **Tuesdays** students will attend class in a live, online classroom using a video conferencing platform. The class will take place from **1:15-2:00 pm Eastern Time**. The Tuesday lesson will primarily draw from and add to the readings done the prior week.

On **Wednesdays** students will complete a written assignment lasting approximately 50 minutes based on the readings and Tuesday lesson.

On **Fridays**, the weekly lesson, assignments, and readings will come together in an in-class discussion where every student is expected to participate. The Friday class will also occur from **1:15-2:00 pm Eastern Time**.

Required Texts

1st Semester:

The Roots of American Order, Russel Kirk (4th Edition, 2003; originally published in 1974)

2nd Semester (in order read):

Unimaginable: What Our World Would Be Like Without Christianity, Jeremiah Johnston (2019)

The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism Is Un-American, Andrew Seidel (2019)

Did America Have a Christian Founding?: Separating Modern Myth from Historical Truth, Mark David Hall (2019)

Course Policies

Registration - This course is for students registered as home education students. It is up to the parent(s) to comply with all applicable local and state requirements. Students and parents will be provided with documentation of course completion, including a portfolio of work, grade report, and report on their attendance.

Tardies - Students are expected to sign in five minutes before the start of class, so that class can begin on time. If a student is not present and prepared to learn at the time appointed for class to begin, then the student will be counted tardy. Three tardies will be treated as the equivalent of one absence.

Absences - Three absences will be allowed each semester, for any parent-documented reason. Beyond that, absences will negatively affect the student's grade.

Grading - Qualitative, letter grades will be used with the following meanings with regard to meeting course objectives: A is Mastery; B is Proficiency; C is Sufficiency. It is much more important to make consistent, apparent progress than to begin or end the semester at a certain level of technical mastery. A student who shows consistent effort and makes substantial progress can make an A- as a final grade, even if they still have not quite mastered every skill required. Each semester will be graded separately.

Course Objectives - Students are expected to make progress in reading, writing, thinking, and discussion skills in the course. Students are expected to learn certain factual knowledge of history and be able to express solid historical thought in writing.

Late Work - Late work for weekly assignments will not be accepted, except for excused absences. Normally work is due by midnight on the due day assigned. The second semester paper (see below) will be accepted if late, resulting in a deduction of one letter grade each day late up to three days maximum.

Weekly Assignments - For all reading assignments, students will make a personal reading journal entry, contribute one entry to a group glossary, and submit one short but pithy question related to the text. Each writing assignment will typically be a 1-2 page short essay in response to one or more questions. The writing and reading assignments will prepare the students for in-class discussions. Students will be required occasionally to lead these discussions and must always be ready to be called upon to read their written work to the class or to answer factual questions about the readings and weekly lesson. Quality of in-class discussion and written work, and the ability to answer factual questions, with consideration of depth of thoughtful engagement with the historical ideas, will factor into the final semester grade.

Assessments - 60% of the final semester grade will be based on weekly assignments, the number completed and the quality of work submitted. 20% will be based on the semester exam, and another 20% on the semester paper. The semester exams will cover the factual information learned during the course of the semester. A study guide with specific historical facts will be provided prior to the semester exams, which will occur the last Thursday of each semester. The

first semester paper will be a timed 1-2 page essay on a topic based on previous questions and ideas studied over the course of the first semester. The topic will not be given prior to the day of this written assessment, which is the last Friday of the semester. The second semester paper will be a 4-5 page essay due by midnight on the last Friday of the semester. The topic will be given midway through the semester, and students will have the opportunity to turn in drafts prior to the final due date.

Appearance & Conduct - Students will be expected to dress appropriately and modestly for class meetings and to behave respectfully towards one another and the teacher. Infractions will be addressed first with the student and then with the parents if the student fails to meet these expectations.

Cost & Refund Policy - The course tuition cost is \$280 for the year, including texts. Up to \$180 is refundable on a prorated basis with each full or partial month costing \$20 from September through May. Required course texts will be mailed to students.

Course Schedule - The 34-week course begins on Tuesday, September 15th, 2020, and ends on Friday, June 4th, 2021. The first semester ends on Friday, January 29th, 2021. Holidays include Thanksgiving Week (November 23-27), Christmas/Winter Break (December 21 - January 1), and Easter/Spring Break (April 1-11). The following holidays will be observed by students and staff, so no work will be assigned on these days and there will be no class meeting: Columbus Day (October 12); Veteran's Day (November 11); Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 18); Presidents' Day (February 15); and Memorial Day (May 31).

Course Assignments will be published separately and provided in early September for those who have enrolled in the course. It will follow the basic structure described in this syllabus.

Technology - Students will need a laptop and headset that are compatible with Zoom and Canvas. More information will be provided for those who enroll about setting up Zoom and Canvas.

Enrollment - To inquire about the course or enroll, email andrew@thewaysideschool.com, and you will be provided with a short application and further instructions. Information about the school can be found on our website at thewaysideschool.com and our Facebook page, linked from the website.

Future Opportunities - For the spring semester 2021, the Wayside School will offer up to five courses. First priority to enroll in these courses will be given to students in the history course during the fall semester. For the 2021-2022 school year, the entire curriculum will be offered.