



Literate Leaders:

*Opportunities to Improve Civic Literacy Curriculum
on Colorado's College Campuses*

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INTRODUCTION

The truth is undeniable. In the 21st Century, America's colleges and universities are graduating students who lack the basic knowledge essential to leadership in the global economy and political arena. Colorado is no exception.

A recent study conducted by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, a non-profit foundation dedicated to improving student civic literacy, and the University of Connecticut's Department of Public Policy, demonstrates that about half of all seniors attending the University of Colorado at Boulder and the Colorado State University in Fort Collins cannot pass a basic civics examination focusing on four key areas.¹ These areas include the American economy, America's government, international relations, and the market economy as a general concept.

Specific areas of concern, as articulated by the ISI-University of Connecticut findings, include:

1. The average American college senior knows very little about U.S. history, government, international relations, and market economy. The average student score out of 50 institutions surveyed nationally was 53.2 percent. Colorado's two surveyed universities—CU and CSU—performed slightly worse than this average, at 48.6 percent and 51.5 percent, respectively.²
2. Students learn what their professors teach—also meaning they don't learn what they aren't taught. An absence of required core courses in history, political science, philosophy and economics suggests a negative impact on civic literacy rates.
3. Prestige doesn't translate into higher civic literacy scores. While seniors at Ivy League institutions like Harvard and Yale pay more than double what CU and CSU students pay in tuition, this financial investment doesn't translate into acceptable civic literacy rates.
4. Engaging students in civic learning and related activities leads to greater rates of community

participation, including voting. As the ISI study notes, "higher civic learning and greater civic involvement are closely associated."³

The Independence Institute's Campus Accountability Project is producing this report for the purpose of identifying and helping to alleviate the gross civic ignorance so pervasive on Colorado's college campuses.

Our inquiry begins with two essential questions. First, why are Colorado's civic literacy rates so low; and second, what can be done to improve them?

This report takes a comprehensive approach at evaluating the problem and identifying possible solutions. We seek to achieve the following:

1. Provide a workable definition of civic literacy to aid readers in their understanding of its importance in the 21st Century.
2. Identify weaknesses within Colorado's current higher education system, including core curriculum requirements that have contributed to low civic literacy rates.
3. Identify and evaluate current efforts underway on Colorado's college campuses, and through outside organizations, to improve civic literacy rates.
4. Identify opportunities to efficiently integrate civic literacy curriculum into already existing academic and residential programming.
5. Provide a model examination for universities seeking to effectively test student knowledge relating to key political concepts, historical events, and government institutions.
6. Ultimately, based on all of the above objectives, our goal is to help university leaders create a strong civic literacy curriculum that will lead to greater student civic literacy rates.

METHODOLOGY

The information provided—and the positions advocated—in this report have been the result of an analysis of a multitude of sources and interviews, including those provided by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Independence Institute’s previous work, the Center for Western Civilization at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a multitude of education experts across the nation. We have attempted to minimize resource duplication by building on already existing efforts to improve student civic literacy rates.

The test questions we provide as models for Colorado’s colleges and universities were selected based on six key areas we have identified as key to ensuring civic literacy. These include: American Documents and Founding Principles; Structures of American Government; Western Political Philosophy; Economics; US History Before 1900; and 20th Century Political History.

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ISI describes civic literacy similarly, but with a greater focus on the academic foundation necessary to achieve such proficiency: “American civic literacy

is the knowledge of America’s history, its key texts, its founding principles, and its free institutions and the ability to provide fair reviews of these facts and concepts.”⁵

How we should define what knowledge constitutes as essential, is a frequently debated topic.

According to the Institute for the Study of Civic Values (ISCV), established in Philadelphia in 1973 to support a variety of programs, including voter education drives and “programs that enable welfare recipients to find meaningful work through subsidized community service,” America’s civic values should be defined as the “principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.”⁶

According to ISCV, the Left and Right in America are being forced to acknowledge “the steady erosion of civic values that we are supposed to share.” The two sides disagree, however, about how we should promote the values and knowledge each side espouses to lead America in the right direction.

The Right, according to ISCV, remains primarily committed to the notion that “any real authority is freedom,” defined as “an individual’s right to do more or less what she wants.” The Left, ISCV maintains, is so concerned about the damage to our civic ideals from the “legacy of slavery, the oppression of women, and corporate power,” that it struggles to promote the concept of civic literacy at all.

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WHAT IS CIVIC LITERACY?

Civic literacy is a term used frequently by ideological liberals and conservatives alike.

For an objective definition of civic literacy, at least on paper, look to the Youth Urban Agenda Civic Literacy Project, a non-profit effort aimed at educating students about responsible and active citizenship.

According to the group, “civic literacy is the knowledge of how to actively

To be specific, we believe that to be civically literate, students should, at minimum, be well versed in documents key to America’s founding, including the U.S. Constitution, as well as the founding principles and historic debates behind such documents.

Students should be aware of the basic structures of our federal and state governments, and how their origins were influenced by Western political philosophy.

Students should have a strong grasp of U.S. history prior to 1900, including key events like the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, the development and abolition of slavery, and the American economy’s early years.

Student economic knowledge should include basic concepts surrounding market-based and command economies. Students should have a strong grasp of U.S. history prior to 1900, including key events like the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, the development and abolition of slavery, and the American economy’s early years. And finally, they should have a good understanding of 20th Century economies, the century’s

most influential leaders and events, wars, and contemporary political conflicts.

Later in this issue paper, we have provided a sample examination, complete with questions that will help educators test such knowledge.

If Colorado’s colleges can adequately arm students with such knowledge, a competition of ideas will follow, with the best ideas rising to the top. Simply put, we need not focus now on the social or political value of the key civic and historic concepts laid out above. Part of the educational process will be to let students begin to make such determinations themselves.

Our fervent commitment to enabling a free marketplace of ideas is tied to a fundamental respect for our First Amendment protections of free speech. Sadly, this idealism is matched only in its tenacity by our concern over our society’s current failure to adequately educate students at a level where an enlightened discourse can legitimately take place.

Ultimately, civic literacy should encourage students to step away from the partisan and ideological rhetoric that permeates our campuses. In doing so, they will be enabled to freely evaluate, criticize, consume, and ultimately build on the key concepts and events that have defined our ethos and historical experience as a people and as a nation.

WEAKNESSES WITHIN COLORADO’S CURRENT HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO LOW CIVIC LITERACY RATES

1. Core Curriculum Lacks Focus on Civic Literacy

One of the major causes of low civic literacy rates at the University of Colorado and Colorado State University is a lack of focus on ensuring that core course requirements emphasize key constitutional and historic concepts.

According to the Intercollegiate Studies Institute’s analysis of civic literacy rates nationwide and in Colorado, knowledge gained between freshman and senior year is most attributable to a single variable—the number of legitimate history, government, and economics courses a student is required to take.⁷

Put simply, students will not learn civic values and concepts unless they are required to take more legitimate classes in such subjects. As ISI notes: “Schools where students took or were required to take more courses related to America’s history and institutions outperformed those schools where fewer courses were completed. The absence of required courses in American history, political science, philosophy, and economics suggests a

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negative impact on students' civic literacy.⁸

Students enrolled in CU's College of Arts & Sciences must take coursework fulfilling 11 different core areas, including foreign language; quantitative reasoning and mathematical skills; written communication; critical thinking; historical context; cultural and gender diversity; U.S. context; literature and the arts; natural science; contemporary societies; and ideals and values.⁹

Students are allowed to fulfill these requirements through a vast number of courses that too rarely focus on key government institutions and concepts.

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but with the exception of the math and science core requirements, the university's nine other requirements have listed purposes that all include the promotion and understanding of "diversity" and/or "culture."

To fulfill the university's "United States Context" core requirement, students are required to take a three-credit course that will serve the purpose of stimulating "critical thinking and an awareness of the place of the United States in the world by promoting an understanding of the particular world views which the diversity, environment, culture, history, values, and expression of the United States have fostered."¹⁰

With more than 50 different courses available to fulfill this requirement, however, key constitutional concepts are often abandoned by students favoring coursework with a more contemporary focus.¹¹ Specifically, while students have the option of taking constitutionally-focused coursework including "History of the United States to 1865" or "Economic History of the U.S.," other

course titles suggest a lesser focus on key civic concepts. Examples include "Music in American Culture" and "Self in Modern Society."¹²

While the current system perpetuates low civic literacy rates, a handful of campus leaders are gaining traction in voicing their concern about core curriculum deficiencies. According to CU Regent Tom Lucero, the university is currently debating whether to increase the number of core requirements for students. According to Lucero, increasing the number of course classes required would force students to take more history, government, and economics courses.¹³

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In addition to increasing the number of required core courses, Lucero maintains that the key to teaching civic literacy is focusing existing core courses and requirements around fundamental disciplines. He believes students should not be able to choose between a U.S. history course and "Self in Modern Society" to fulfill a core requirement mandating knowledge relating to the U.S. Constitution. The former must be a core, the latter an elective, he notes, believing that teaching civic literacy is about "realigning priorities."¹⁴

At CSU, there is no centralized focus on improving civic literacy through redesigning core requirements. According to CSU Vice Provost Allen Lamborn, "civic literacy is important, but you need to do it outside the core curriculum."¹⁵

Lamborn argues that changing the core curriculum to focus around civic literacy would take too many resources, distort hiring practices, and violate the purpose of a university education. He believes that such a

focus “violates the purpose of the university because an education’s purpose is to liberate students to think analytically and neutrally.” He says “an education must emphasize analyzing relationships between key concepts (and) not forcing them to come to a particular conclusion.”¹⁶

As far as his specific concerns, he charges that refocusing core curriculum more on civic literacy would “distort hiring practices because it (would require) the university to hire a lot more professors with specialized knowledge in economics, American history and American government....(T)he university would inevitably be unable to hire as many professors in alternate disciplines or specialties.”¹⁷

As CU’s Center for Western Civilization proves, however, later in this paper, establishing such a focus can be done with a minimal financial commitment from a university’s administration.

Lamborn instead advocates a decentralized approach through university residential programs or voluntary seminars. Currently, at CSU there are residential communities called “Key Living-Learning Communities” that he says provide a focus on civic engagement, with a current ongoing dialogue concerning ways to create another residential, experiential-based learning community.¹⁸

2. Universities Rarely Engage Majority of Students in Civic Literacy Efforts Outside the Classroom

While CU-Boulder boasts one of the nation’s largest student governments, home to a budget of more than \$30 million annually, efforts to educate students about key civic concepts remain largely limited to the small

percentage that actively engage in on-campus leadership activities.¹⁹ Recent elections have shown student voter turnout in CSU elections at less than 10 percent.²⁰ Currently, at both CU and CSU, no system-wide or campus-wide graduation requirements or incentives exist to encourage students to participate in civic activities off-campus or outside of the classroom.

CURRENT EFFORTS UNDERWAY ON COLORADO’S COLLEGE CAMPUSES AND WITHIN OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS GEARED TOWARD IMPROVING CIVIC LITERACY RATES

3. Center for Western Civilization, CU-Boulder

The CU administration approved the Center for Western Civilization in 2004. Since then, the CWC has done a number of outreach activities focusing on improving civic literacy, with a specific focus on expanding knowledge relating to Western Civilization. CWC events thus far have been highlighted by an annual summer institute in Boulder for junior faculty from across the nation. Funding for the project has largely come from the Jack Miller Center for Teaching of America’s Founding Principles, with the university also contributing \$15,000 over the past three years.²¹

With the ultimate goal of becoming a degree-granting program, the CWC is now in the final approval stages of curriculum approval. According to E. Christian Kopff, CWC’s director, CU will begin administering a CWC-certificate program shortly.²² Kopff projects that students could begin signing up for CWC-approved coursework as early as January 2008.²³

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Approved courses pull from a variety of academic departments, including a history course focusing on the American Revolution, freshman-level Greek and Latin courses, and ancient/mid-evil philosophy courses.

In addition, the center will provide a new course, titled “The Western Tradition,” which will serve as an introduction to Western Civilization and a critical reflection on related issues.

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As ISI notes on its Web site: “These centers are making an impact, promoting on the campuses they serve the best scholarship and teaching on America’s intellectual heritage. . . All aim at engaging the wider campus community in programs designed to encourage the understanding of America’s history and traditions.”²⁴

Such centers, according to ISI, are being met with positive responses from the business community. “Employers today would like to see more of a liberal arts curriculum at the college level—not one so focused on vocational training. They want their employees to be able to read, write, speak, and think effectively,” Dr. Robert C. Koons, professor of philosophy and founder of UT-Austin’s center, told ISI. “The best way for them to acquire this skill set is to engage them with what has been written in the past. That’s what our program does.”²⁵

2. *New Student Orientation, CU-Colorado Springs*

Prior to stepping foot on the CU-Colorado Springs campus for the first time, incoming students received in the mail a small, yellow soft-bound book.

The book, titled “A Free Society and Its Challenges: A Selection of Readings for University of Colorado Undergraduates,” included an introductory letter appearing on the book’s first page written by CU President Hank Brown. According to Brown, the purpose of providing the book was to “introduce (students) to the great questions that free peoples and free nations constantly confront.”²⁶

On the pages that followed, students could find excerpts from some of history’s greatest documents, including Plato’s *Republic*, the U.S. Constitution, the *Federalist Papers*, Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *Letter from Birmingham Jail*.

Production of the book came at no cost to taxpayers or to the university, and was covered by the Veritas Fund of the Center for the American University, a program dedicated to “promoting intellectual pluralism and the appreciation of free institutions in the American academy.”²⁷

This private funding, coupled with a strong volunteer commitment by the university community and the expectation that all students would read the text prior to their August orientation, ensured the lively debates that followed when students first met in small groups to discuss the meaning and significance of the selected documents.

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Unfortunately, undergraduates at CU's Boulder and Denver campuses were not exposed to the materials. According to Lucero, the Denver campus did not adopt the curriculum because it was not conducive to the university's more informal orientation geared toward a more non-traditional student body, but campus leaders were responsive to desires to address civic illiteracy and planned to do so on the Campus' Fall "Constitution Day."²⁸

In Boulder, where new students undergo a multi-day orientation session, Lucero says administrators also declined to provide the materials to incoming students. According to a 2005 university press release, a redesigned Boulder orientation is focused on a variety of topics, including "diversity," "wellness" and an "interactive theater workshop."²⁹ Western

Civilization and civic literacy are not listed anywhere on orientation materials as priorities for student discussion.

3. CU Awards College Credit For Independence Institute's "Free Market" Five-Week Course

Acknowledging a lack of foundational understanding about America's key government structures and ideologies, the Independence Institute currently runs a five-session course each semester titled "Free People, Free Markets: The Foundations of Liberty."

Currently, the course is open to the public and can be taken for two elective credits in political science, with academic credit available through

any one of the University of Colorado's three main campuses.

The course focuses heavily on property rights as a key concept underlying Western Civilization, as well as on principles behind wealth-creation

and the founding ideas of the "American experiment." Course leaders emphasize that the course is open to all ideologies, with a course advertisement stating, "Come if you love liberty. Come if you love collectivism, but need to understand the libertarian position. Come if you want to receive an inexpensive, thorough, and energetic exposure to the founding principles of economic and political liberty."

The current course price is \$75. A syllabus is available at www.freepeoplemarkets.org/files/iisyllabus.pdf.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO INTEGRATE CIVIC LITERACY CURRICULUM INTO EXISTING ACADEMIC AND RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMMING

1. Residential Academic Programs at CU-Boulder

In August 2007, nearly 400 CU freshmen enrolled in the university's "CU 101" residential academic course. According to an October 4, 2007, report in the university-run Silver & Gold newspaper, the course, formally titled "The Contemporary Research University and Student-Citizens," was launched as an elective to "address concerns about racist and other bias-motivated incidents, alcohol abuse and expectations of students."³⁰

According to the article, 17 faculty members participated in teaching the course during the Fall 2007 semester. A course description carried in the newspaper states that the course "focuses on the academic and intellectual campus life; the roles and responsibilities of the research university to the local, state and international communities; the human diversity represented within the campus community -- from the entering freshman to the distinguished faculty."³¹

Students living in Cheyenne Arapaho, a on-campus residence hall, are required to enroll

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in the 30-session course and can only miss class twice to receive credit. Participants are assigned readings used for class discussions. A midterm and final research paper are also required. An excerpt from the article states:

According to the syllabus, the primary course goals are ‘to advance entering first-year students’ knowledge of the university community as a site for intellectual and ethical development’ and to ‘develop multifaceted understanding of human differences as experienced in and around the university context.’ Instructor notes state that the course will aim to ‘strengthen students’ skills in cognitive complexity and critical thinking; enhance students’ ability to understand multiple contexts and perspectives, especially those at variance with their own experiences; and learn better how to formulate alternative strategies and reactions to circumstances not previously experienced.³²

While the syllabus indicates that the semester begins with an historical evaluation of the role of universities, there is no clear or continuous focus on constitutional concepts.³³ Given this established venue, CU has a viable opportunity to integrate such theories into the “CU 101” course curriculum. It could do so easily by adopting the “A Free Society and its Challenges” book and supplement provided for CU-Colorado Springs students during their freshman orientation.

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2. Residential Academic Programs at CSU

As previously referenced in this paper, CSU provides several “learning living communities,” some of which provide a viable opportunity to similarly integrate civic education into their curriculum. In addition, according to

Lamborn, the university has already begun discussing ways to create a new residential community that focuses on service-learning.³⁴

3. Government or Public Interest internships and Civic Service

Currently, at CU and CSU, there are no system-wide mandates requiring students to partake in internships, civic service, or public interest programming. By implementing a core requirement that all students engage in such activities for a specified number of hours, the institutions would help provide students a grounded and hands-on understanding of their role in helping build society through public service.

Currently, at CU and CSU, there are no system-wide mandates requiring students to partake in internships, civic service, or public interest programming.

Other institutions in Colorado and across the nation have successfully implemented such requirements. At the University of Denver’s College of Law, all students complete 50 hours of “supervised, uncompensated, law-related public service work as a prerequisite to graduation.”³⁵ At Gonzaga University’s School of Law in Spokane, Washington, students are required to complete 30 hours prior to graduation.³⁶ At Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, all undergraduates must meet rigorous civic engagement requirements prior to graduation that include aggressive community service, maintaining a portfolio documenting their experiences, progress, and reflections as part of such service; they must also complete a course in service learning and a university-approved service learning internship, thesis project, or capstone project focusing on public service.³⁷

CONCLUSION

While civic literacy rates at today’s universities are

dismally low, there exist sources for cautious optimism. By building on programming already in existence, including CU-Boulder's Center for Western Civilization, the Independence Institute's five-week course, and CU-Colorado

The future of America depends on building leaders that understand its past.

Spring's Fall orientation program, Colorado's institutions promise to improve student knowledge in key areas relating to government, economics, and public policy. In addition, civic literacy education can be further integrated into every aspect of campus life, ranging from residential academic communities to public service requirements. The future of America depends on building leaders that understand its past. Civic literacy should—and can be—at the core of every university's mission.

OUR MODEL CIVIC LITERACY EXAMINATION

The test below is divided into six different sections, with ten questions in each section. Test takers should allow for at least one hour to ensure completion. Answer key follows. For more on methodology, please see introduction to this paper.

American Documents and Founding Principles

1. Which documents collectively argued for the ratification of the US Constitution?

- A. the Emancipation Proclamation
- B. the Federalist Papers
- C. Cato's Letters
- D. the Articles of Confederation

2. Who wrote the Emancipation Proclamation that freed slaves in the United States?

- A. Thomas Jefferson
- B. Benjamin Franklin
- C. Abraham Lincoln
- D. George Washington

3. The pursuit of happiness is listed among the

rights guaranteed by the First Amendment?

True or False?

4. What are the first three words of the Constitution?

- A. We the Representatives...
- B. We the Delegates...
- C. We the Government...
- D. We the People...

5. The three branches of government exemplify the separation of powers.

True or False?

6. What was the purpose of the Declaration of Independence?

- A. a warning to the French that the continent belonged to the colonists
- B. to declare that the U.S. colonies were free from British tyranny
- C. to declare that the British were independent from Europe
- D. to ensure the independence of Native Americans

7. The 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law means that no matter one's race he/she is equally protected as everyone else by the law.

True or False?

8. Why were the Articles of Confederation replaced by the US Constitution?

- A. the Articles did not give the states enough authority
- B. the British had written the Articles and the Founders wanted to replace them with an American document
- C. the Articles did not give the federal government enough authority
- D. the Declaration of Independence specifically mandated a new constitution.

9. The 10th Amendment declares that powers not delegated to the federal government in the Constitution are reserved for:

- A. the States

- B. the Supreme Court
- C. Congress
- D. regional authority

10. James Madison's statement, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary," in Federalist No. 51 reflects:

- A. the Founders' understanding of the corrupting nature of power
- B. the Founders' belief that religion corrupts
- C. the Founders' belief that human nature is essentially good
- D. the reason the founders believed that an authoritarian government was needed to govern citizens

Structures of American Government

1. What government entity has the sole power to declare war?

- A. the Secretary of Defense
- B. the States
- C. the President
- D. Congress

2. If a legislature has two houses, (in the case of the U.S. government, the Senate and the House of Representatives) it is known as "unicameral".

True or False?

3. How many Representatives are there in the House of Representatives?

- A. 100
- B. 200
- C. 435
- D. 255

4. What are state executive leaders called?

- A. Governors
- B. State Presidents
- C. Justices
- D. State Senators

5. The Founders established the U.S. government so it would function as a Republic, complete with representative government, and NOT a democracy.

True or False?

6. What is the highest court in the United States?

- A. the U.S. Superior Court
- B. the International Court of Justice
- C. the U.S. Supreme Court
- D. the U.S. Court of Justice

7. The general course for bills to become law is to originate in one house of Congress, then be passed in the same form by the other house, and then finally head to the President for his signature.

True or False?

8. What is the process to appoint Supreme Court justices?

- A. Congress nominates and the President confirms
- B. each state holds a general election to appoint its Supreme Court justice
- C. the President nominates and the sitting Supreme Court justices vote to confirm
- D. the President nominates and the Senate confirms

9. What is Judicial Review?

- A. the judicial branch's power to consider the constitutionality of acts of government
- B. when the President overturns a court ruling
- C. the Senate's power to overturn a law passed by the House of Representatives
- D. when Congress reviews the merit of an executive order

10. How long are the terms for US senators and representatives, respectively?

- A. 6 years; 2 years
- B. 2 years; 6 years
- C. 4 years; 2 years
- D. 2 years; 4 years

Western Political Philosophy

1. The roots of Western philosophy are traced back to whom?

- A. the Romans and the Byzantine Empire
- B. the British and the French

- C. the Greeks and the Romans
- D. the Arabs and the Chinese

2. Who wrote The Republic?

- A. Plato
- B. Thomas Jefferson
- C. Thomas Paine
- D. Confucius

3. What was the Enlightenment?

- A. The period when the Greek civilization stretched from modern-day Europe to Iran
- B. The age in which the Catholic Church was at the height of its power in Europe
- C. An age in Western history that emphasized reason and rationality
- D. An age in Western history when Chinese philosophies were adopted by the West

4. John Locke, largely influential in the modern libertarian movement, believed that property was a natural right derived from one's own labor.

True or False?

5. What was Rene Descartes establishing when he said, "I think, therefore I am."

- A. that he could not doubt anything
- B. that he could not doubt his own existence
- C. that he doubted his own existence
- D. that his existence was futile

6. In contrast to other cultures, the West generally emphasizes individual goals over societal goals.

This is called:

- A. collectivism
- B. individualism
- C. communism
- D. fascism

7. Natural rights are defined as universal rights individuals possess that cannot be denied by any government.

True or False?

8. What does social contract theory postulate?

- A. that humans living in anarchy must give up

certain rights when they establish government if they want to establish social order

B. that in a democracy politicians form a contract "with the people"

C. that socialism creates a bond or contract between government and society

D. that there is no need for authority or government in a state of nature

9. The term Machiavellian refers to Niccolo Machiavelli's The Prince, which argued that honesty and integrity should trump considerations of power in politics.

True or False?

10. What did Immanuel Kant believe unfolded and advanced throughout history?

- A. Reason
- B. Unfounded Reality
- C. the Bible
- D. the depravity of human nature

Economics

1. Adam Smith authored the *Wealth of Nations* and is generally considered the father of free market economics.

True or False?

2. What is the difference between Socialism and Communism?

- A. Socialism is a political system and Communism is an economic system
- B. Socialism is an economic system and Communism is a political system
- C. Socialism preserves every individual's economic freedom through voluntary taxation, while Communism depends on individuals giving up this freedom.
- D. there is no difference

3. What is the difference between a command and a free market economy?

- A. in a command economy individuals decide what is produced and in a free market economy the government decides

- B. in a command economy the central bank controls the money supply and in a free market economy individuals control the money supply
- C. in a command economy individuals control the money supply and in a free market economy there money supply is fixed
- D. in a command economy a government decides what is produced but in a free market economy individuals decide

4. Classical economists generally assume that individuals are rational.

True or False?

5. The intersection of supply and demand indicates what?

- A. the time of day
- B. the price of goods sold in the economy
- C. the number of goods produced
- D. the number of goods produced AND the price of those goods

6. What does the concept of Comparative Advantage refer to?

- A. the benefits of international trade
- B. the harm done to national sovereignty by international trade agreements
- C. the advantage of the ruling class over the working class
- D. the advantages realized when comparing democratic governments to authoritarian regimes.

7. What is usually the cause of hyperinflation?

- A. a contraction in the money supply
- B. when governments control spending to balance the budget
- C. when governments stop printing new money
- D. governments printing money to fund budget deficits

8. What is the difference between micro and macroeconomics?

- A. microeconomic analysis includes unemployment, gross domestic product, and inflation while macroeconomics does not address these
- B. macroeconomics focuses on decision-making

within large multinational corporations

C. microeconomics focuses on individuals and firms in the economy while macroeconomics focuses on the economy as a whole

D. microeconomics focuses on the economy as a whole while macroeconomics focuses on individuals and firms in the economy

9. Two of the benefits of monopoly are lower prices and more competition.

True or False?

10. What is an example of outsourcing?

A. a U.S. firm discovers a large new domestic oil source

B. the U.S. government establishes a new military base in Brazil

C. a U.S. firm moves its call centers to Bangalore to improve efficiency and lower labor costs

D. a U.S. labor union prevents Mexican truckers from entering the country

US History Before 1900

1. The first North American settlement was established at Plymouth Rock.

True or False?

2. Who were the Pilgrims?

A. A Christian separatist group pursuing religious freedom from the Church of England

B. The first group of European settlers in North America; they came to escape religious persecution in France

C. The group of people that discovered the United States

D. A Christian group that declared war on Europe after asserting independence

3. The first Great Awakening was a time of increased religious fervor in the American colonies during the mid 1700s.

True or False?

4. What two groups did the American colonists fight multiple times before the Revolution?

- A. The Spanish and the Portuguese
- B. The French and the British
- C. The French and the Indians
- D. The Romans and the Greeks

5. The Boston Tea Party was the Pilgrims' first Thanksgiving with the Native Americans.

True or False?

6. Who was the second President of the United States?

- A. George Washington
- B. Abraham Lincoln
- C. John Adams
- D. Theodore Roosevelt

7. What was Thomas Jefferson's acquisition of land that nearly doubled the size of the United States called?

- A. the Missouri Purchase
- B. the Louisiana Purchase
- C. the Alien and Sedition Acts
- D. the Northwest Ordinance

8. What power did the U.S. Supreme Court carve out for itself in *Marbury v. Madison*?

- A. checks and balances
- B. the power to create lower federal courts
- C. the power to appoint executive cabinet members
- D. judicial review

9. What was the Monroe Doctrine?

- A. James Monroe's philosophy that became the building blocks of the Constitution
- B. a warning that the US would not tolerate any further colonization in the western hemisphere
- C. another name for Manifest Destiny
- D. a treaty with European powers to reestablish diplomatic cooperation

10. What ill-fated doctrine did the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* establish which was later overturned in the case *Brown v. Board of Education*?

- A. due process
- B. freedom of expression

- C. separate but equal
- D. stare decisis

20th Century Political History

1. Which President created the National Park system?

- A. Franklin D. Roosevelt
- B. Teddy Roosevelt
- C. Jimmy Carter
- D. Abraham Lincoln

2. The sinking of the Lusitania was pivotal in convincing the US to join WWI.

True or False?

3. What was the League of Nations?

- A. another name for the Axis Powers during WWII
- B. an international organization formed after WWI to prevent war
- C. another name for the Central Powers during WWI
- D. the name for what later became NATO

4. Which economic program did Franklin D. Roosevelt implement in the US?

- A. the New Deal
- B. the Great Society
- C. the Social Compact
- D. the Great Depression

5. The attack on Pearl Harbor that pulled the US into WWII was perpetrated by Germany.

True or False?

6. Why was Rosa Parks arrested?

- A. She was behind the Oklahoma City bombing
- B. She refused to give up her seat on the bus for a white man
- C. She was the wife of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and both were arrested
- D. She led a protest condemning the exploitation of Chinese railroad workers

7. What U.S. Supreme Court Case declared laws restricting abortion unconstitutional?

- A. *Brown v. Board of Education*
- B. *Marbury v. Madison*
- C. *Griswold v. Connecticut*
- D. *Roe v. Wade*

8. In the 2005 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Kelo v. City of New London*, the Court's decision caused a national uproar because it allowed government to pursue condemnation of private property solely for private economic interests.

True or False?

9. What was the Cuban Missile Crisis?

- A. an accidental explosion at Cuba's nuclear weapons facility named Chernobyl
- B. a confrontation between Cuba and the Soviet Union in the 1940s
- C. a Cold War confrontation between John F. Kennedy's administration and the Cuban government
- D. when the CIA uncovered that the Chinese were selling ballistic missiles to Cuba

10. Who said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"?

- A. Ronald Reagan
- B. John F. Kennedy
- C. Franklin D. Roosevelt
- D. Richard Nixon

ANSWER KEY

American Documents and Founding Principles

- 1. B
- 2. C
- 3. F
- 4. D
- 5. T
- 6. B
- 7. T
- 8. C
- 9. A
- 10. A

Structures of American Government

- 1. D
- 2. F
- 3. C
- 4. A
- 5. T
- 6. C
- 7. T
- 8. D
- 9. A
- 10. A

Western Political Philosophy

- 1. C
- 2. A
- 3. C
- 4. T
- 5. B
- 6. B
- 7. T
- 8. A
- 9. F
- 10. A

Economics

- 1. T
- 2. B
- 3. D
- 4. T
- 5. D
- 6. A
- 7. D
- 8. C
- 9. F
- 10. C

US History Before 1900

- 1. F
- 2. A
- 3. T
- 4. C
- 5. F

6. C
7. B
8. D
9. B
10. C

20th Century Political History

1. B
2. T
3. B
4. A
5. F
6. B
7. D
8. T
9. C
10. A

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- To view the Intercollegiate Studies Institute’s national survey on student civic literacy, titled “The Coming Crisis in Citizenship: Higher Education’s Failure to Teach America’s History and Institutions,” visit www.AmericanCivicLiteracy.org.
- To learn more about the University of Colorado’s Center for Western Civilization, contact Dr. E. Christian Kopff by telephone at 303-492-6617 or by mail at University of Colorado Honors Program, Norlin Library M400L, 184 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-0184.
- To view this report online, see www.IndependenceInstitute.org. For more information about the Independence Institute, call 303-279-6536.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The Intercollegiate Studies Institute is a non-profit foundation dedicated to improving student knowledge relating to key constitutional and historical concepts. Its 2006 study, "The Coming Crisis in Citizenship," can be found at <http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/report/old/2006/summary.html>

² Ibid. Note that ISI results concerning CU and CSU come from the foundation's 2006 study. Neither institution was surveyed in 2007.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Youth Urban Agenda Civic Literacy Project Web site: <http://www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu/whatiscl.htm>

⁵ Intercollegiate Studies Institute Web site: <http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/resources/faqs.html#q1-1>

⁶ Institute for the Study of Civic Values Web site: <http://www.iscv.org/index.html>

⁷ Intercollegiate Studies Institute Web site: <http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/report/old/2006/summary.html>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ University of Colorado Core Undergraduate Requirements: <http://www.colorado.edu/artssciences/students/undergraduate/core.html>

¹⁰ University of Colorado "US Context" Core Requirement Specifics: http://www.colorado.edu/artssciences/students/undergraduate/as_core.uscontext.html

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ CU Regent Tom Lucero, telephone interview with the author, September 19, 2007.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dr. Alan C. Lamborn (CSU Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs), in discussion with the author, October 15, 2007.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ CSU's "Learning Living Communities" Web site: http://www.housing.colostate.edu/halls/living_learning_communities.htm

¹⁹ University of Colorado Student Union Web site: www.ucsu.colorado.edu/

²⁰ Julia Yugel, "An Apathetic Audience—What UCSU is doing to make you care," *CU Campus Press*, 12 April 2007.

²¹ CU Professor E. Christian Kopff, telephone interview with the author, September 28, 2007.

²² At CU-Boulder, a certificate program mirrors a traditional academic minor, requiring the same number of academic credit hours for completion.

²³ Kopff interview, September 28, 2007.

²⁴ http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/report/academic_centers.html

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ "A Free Society and Its Challenges: A Selection of Readings for University of Colorado Undergraduates," produced in 2007 by the University of Colorado for the purpose of CU new student orientation. Publication funded by the Veritas Fund of the Center for the American University.

²⁷ <http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cau.htm>

²⁸ Lucero interview, September 19, 2007.

²⁹ University Press Release, "New Student Orientation Revamped at Cu-Boulder," 9 June 2005. <http://www.colorado.edu/news/>

[releases/2005/244.html](http://www.colorado.edu/news/releases/2005/244.html)

³⁰ Kim Glassock, "ASC takes a look at course content for 'CU 101'," *CU Silver & Gold*. 4 October 2007.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ The "CU 101" Syllabus is available at *The Boulder Daily Camera* Web site, <http://www.dailycamera.com/news/2007/may/15/cu-101-syllabus/>

³⁴ Lamborn interview, October 15, 2007.

³⁵ DU Law Public Interest Requirements: <http://www.law.du.edu/publicinterest/>

³⁶ Gonzaga Law Public Service Requirements: <http://www.law.gonzaga.edu/Academic-Program/Registrar/Public-Service-Requirements/>

³⁷ Tulane University Undergraduate Public Service Requirements: <http://www.admission.tulane.edu/index.shtml>