

## NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY HIS 268 - THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION (3 CR.)

### **Course Description**

Analyzes the origin and development of the United States Constitution. Includes the evolution of civil liberties, property rights, contracts, due process, judicial review, federal-state relationships, and corporate-government relations. Lecture 3 hours per week.

### **General Course Purpose**

Provides a basic understanding of the development (and application) of the American Constitution over the last two centuries.

### **Course Prerequisite/Corequisite**

It is preferable but not mandatory that the student take a survey course in American History, such as HIS 121 or HIS 122, before enrolling in History 268. The ability to read and write the English language effectively at the college level is expected.

### **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of the course, student will be able to:

- Understand the origins and development of the American Constitution;
- Study the relationship between the Constitution's philosophical principles and the specific form of government provided by the Constitution;
- Examine the evolution of civil liberties, property rights, contracts, due process, judicial review, federal-state relationships, and corporate-government relations;
- Explain how specific constitutional views have affected crucial events in American history;
- Study the major periods of constitutional stability and the movements for constitutional change;
- Compare and contrast how the seminal Supreme Court decisions have shaped the interpretation of constitutional principles in such areas as civil liberties, property rights, contracts, due process, judicial review, federal-state relationships, and corporate-government relations.

### **Major Topics to Be Covered**

- Historical context for the U.S. Constitution
- Ratification debate of 1787-1788
- The Bill of Rights
- Madison and Hamilton as constitutional thinkers
- The Marshall and Taney courts
- The Constitution and Slavery
- The Civil War
- The Reconstruction era civil rights cases
- The courts' decisions on corporate growth
- The revolution in the New Deal
- Modern civil rights/liberties.
- Judicial liberalism since the 1960's.
- The 1990s and neo-conservatist activism
- The Constitution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

### **Extra Topics May Be Covered**

Although the semester course is generally based as stated above, enough flexibility exists to allow for the inclusion of relevant topics and the use of innovative methods.