

CSU AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS (CSU requirement)

CSU Graduation Requirements in United States History, Constitution and American Ideals

Establishes for all CSU students a separate graduation requirement in [United States History, Constitution and American Ideals](#) (informally abbreviated “American Institutions” or “AI”). As with lower-division general education, transfer students may fulfill American Institutions requirements before or after matriculating to the CSU. Typically, students take courses that count for both AI and GE.

U.S History, Constitution, and American Ideals

The CSU’s Graduation Requirements in United States History, Constitution and American Ideals are established in (Executive Order 1061), separately from the areas of CSU GE Breadth. EO 1061 implements Title 5 Section 40404 of California’s Code of Regulations, which calls for study in three areas:

1. The historical development of American institutions and ideals (Area US-1),
2. The Constitution of the United States and the operation of representative democratic government under that Constitution (Area US-2), and
3. The process of California state and local government (Area US-3).

While Executive Order 1061 does not set a unit or course minimum for these areas, it’s unusual for a single course to adequately address all three. Instead, participating CCC submit a sequence of courses – typically including courses from their history and/or political science departments – that together meet the graduation requirement in American Institutions.

Following the Graduation Requirements in United States History, Constitution and American Ideals, reviewers use these criteria for each of the three areas:

Area US-1: American History

Students are expected to learn significant events from U.S. history, as follows:

- covering a minimum time span of approximately 100 years
- occurring in the entire area now included in the United States of America
- including the relationships of regions within that area and with external regions and powers
- the role of major ethnic and social groups

- the “continuity of the American experience” (i.e., not a string of isolated events) and its derivation from other cultures, including study of politics, economics, social movements, and/or geography (at least three of the four)

Area US-2: The U.S. Constitution

Course outlines should reflect content that teaches:

- the political philosophies of the framers of the Constitution
- the operation of United States political process and institutions under the U.S. Constitution
- the rights and obligations of individual citizens in the political system established under the Constitution

Area US-3: California State and Local Government

Courses in this area will address:

- the Constitution of the State of California
- the nature and processes of California state and local government
- the relationships between the U.S government and California’s state and local governments

Notice that these criteria are extremely detailed. Good courses are often turned down, as reviewers must consider not only their quality but also how closely they meet these exact criteria, as set by administrative law and CSU policy.