

American Institutions Competency

The American Institutions competency equips students with a foundational understanding of United States history, the principles and structure of the U.S. Constitution, and the organization and functions of federal, state, and local governments. This competency is aligned with the academic requirements of the California State University (CSU) system, facilitating seamless transfer while fostering informed citizenship and civic literacy.

To meet the American Institutions competency at Victor Valley College, students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Interpret major events, movements, and developments in U.S. history, with attention to the contributions, struggles, and perspectives of ethnic, social, political, economic, and cultural groups.
- Explain the origins, core principles, and structure of the U.S. Constitution, including the philosophical foundations of the American political system (e.g., natural rights, the social contract), the structure of government, separation of powers, and federalism.
- Evaluate the rights, responsibilities, and protections afforded to individuals under the Constitution, including civil liberties, civil rights, and due process, and understand how these rights have been contested and expanded over time.
- Demonstrate civic literacy by identifying effective methods of political participation and engagement, such as voting, advocacy, public service, and community organizing, and assessing the accessibility and responsiveness of democratic institutions.
- Critically examine the relationship between individuals and government, including the role of consent, accountability, and legitimacy in democratic governance, and reflect on how the social contract informs public expectations of justice, representation, and the rule of law.

Note: Courses used to fulfill the American Institutions competency may also be applied toward general education or major requirements, when applicable.