

2017 University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Faculty Fellows' Recommended American History and Government Teaching Websites

Editor's note:

As we all worked on the development of American Civic and History digital teaching resources this past year, the twenty entries below gradually were compiled, primarily because our superb group of teachers used them in their instructional modules development or incorporated a given site on a regular basis in their classroom instruction. I also added some sights that have been particularly useful for teachers and students. There are many excellent history and civics websites (including sites CRC Fellows included in the digital teaching resources they authored) on the Internet and the sites in this document are far from inclusive or even a representative sample of what is available. However, some of the best teachers I've ever known recommended them for quite good reasons. In some cases, registrations are required but there is no charge for access to any of the sites. We encourage all readers who aren't familiar with the sites featured in this document to explore the entries.

American Rhetoric

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/>

This award-winning website contains free access to famous speeches and essays on rhetoric. The site includes a bank of 5,000 speeches, audios of some of the greatest political speeches since the invention of sound recording, famous movie speeches (especially movies focusing upon history and politics, and a top 100 list of the most significant U.S. political speeches of the 20th century that two professors compiled based upon feedback from 137 scholars. The site also is a superb introduction to the concept of rhetoric and offers example speeches for aspiring orators.

Bill of Rights Institute

<https://www.billofrightsinsitute.org/>

Established in September 1999, the Bill of Rights Institute is a 501c3 non-profit educational organization that works to engage, educate, and empower individuals with a passion for the freedom and opportunity that exist in a free society. The Institute develops educational resources and programs for a network of more than 50,000 educators and 30,000 students nationwide. Although the site contains a number of classroom-related resources and professional development and student programs, *Voices of History* is one of many features in the site recommended. This site component includes key themes in American history and numerous lesson options for each theme.

Bill of Rights in Action: The Constitutional Rights Foundation

<http://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/>

The Constitutional Rights Foundation has been providing high quality programs for social studies teachers for decades but the *Bill of Rights in Action (BORIA)* digital publication (also available for no charge in hard copy) is arguably the jewel in the organization's crown. *BORIA's* are published quarterly and each issue contains short, accurate, informative, and interesting student readings on U.S. History, Government, and World History topics. The

reading level of this curricular newsletter is high school and teachers who use *BORIA* often comment upon how much they learn from the publication.

Center for Civic Education

<http://www.civiced.org/>

The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in California. The principal goals of the Center's programs are to help students develop (1) an increased understanding of the institutions of constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, (2) the skills necessary to participate as competent and responsible citizens, and (3) the willingness to use democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict. Ultimately, the Center strives to develop an enlightened citizenry by working to increase understanding of the principles, values, institutions, and history of constitutional democracy among teachers, students, and the general public.

Civics Renewal Network

<http://www.civicsrenewalnetwork.org/>

The Civics Renewal Network is a consortium of nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations committed to strengthening civic life in the U.S. by increasing the quality of civics education in our nation's schools and by improving accessibility to high-quality, no-cost learning materials. On the Civics Renewal Network site, teachers can find the best resources of these organizations, searchable by subject, grade, resource type, standards, and teaching strategy. The home page includes many sites included in this resources module as well as a number of other exemplary sites not in this document.

Constitute: The World's Constitutions to Read, Search, and Compare

<https://www.constituteproject.org/>

Constitute offers access to the world's constitutions that users can systematically compare them across a broad set of topics — using an inviting, clean interface. Currently Constitute includes the constitution that was in force in September of 2013 for nearly every independent state in the world, but it is regularly updates texts as they are amended or replaced. Constitute was developed by the authors of the Comparative Constitutions Project at the University of Texas at Austin.

C-SPAN CLASSROOM: Free Primary Source Materials for Social Studies Teachers

<https://www.c-span.org/classroom/>

C-SPAN Classroom is a free membership service for social studies teachers. Membership gives educators access to their own library to store C-SPAN Classroom videos clips, supplementary materials such as lesson plans and handouts, and special offers. This site is multi-faceted, comprehensive, and constantly updated.

EdTechTeacher: Best of History Websites

<http://besthistorysites.net/>

Best of History Websites aims to provide quick, convenient, and reliable access to the best history-oriented resources online in a wide range of categories and has been designed to benefit history teachers and their students. Best of History Websites was created in 2001 by Tom Daccord, the Director and Co-Founder of [EdTechTeacher](#). This site is a treasure trove of classroom-applicable history websites. The U.S. site, like other history disciplines, is quite comprehensive.

Foreign Policy Research Institute: Wachman Institute for Civic and International Literacy

<https://www.fpri.org/education/wachman-center>

The educational division of the Foreign Policy Research Institute generates instructional materials and sponsors institutes for secondary school and survey-level college and university instructors. The FPRI perspective is that knowledge of geography and history are key foundations for better understanding foreign policy and policy options that promote U.S. national interests. Restoring the study of military history in American History courses has been a key theme FPRI has addressed in recent years.

Foundation for Economic Education

<https://fee.org/>

This excellent economic education site is dedicated to teaching the economic principles that advance both economic and political liberty. It offers a wide range of seminars and readings for students, educators and the general public.

Hillsdale College Online Courses

<https://online.hillsdale.edu/dashboard/courses>

Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, MI offers free, not-for-credit online courses in government, history, philosophy, and the humanities. The courses are content-rich, taught by exceptionally talented professors, and epitomize the best features of liberal education. This is a highly recommended site for high school students, educators, and adults.

Jack Miller Center for Teaching American Founding Principles and History

<http://www.jackmillercenter.org/programs/civic-education-outreach/>

This center has been a viable force for American history and civic education since 2007. In 2016 it began a program for high school teachers. Both secondary and undergraduate instructors are advised to explore the above site and watch for new programs that should be appearing soon.

iCivics

www.icivics.org

Founded by Sandra Day O'Conner in 2009, iCivics gives students tools to learn about and participate in civic life, and teachers the materials and support to achieve this goal. They have

free resources that include print lesson plans, interactive digital tools, and award-winning games.

Museum of the Moving Image

The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2016

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>

The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2016 is an online exhibition presenting more than 300 television commercials from every election year since 1952, when the first campaign TV ads aired. The site includes a searchable database and features commentary, historical background, election results, and navigation organized by year, type of ad, and issue. Educators and students are the primary intended site audience.

ProCon.org: The Leading Source for Pros & Cons of Controversial Issues

<http://www.procon.org/>

Promoting critical thinking, education, and informed citizenship by presenting controversial issues in a straightforward, nonpartisan, primarily pro-con format. ProCon.org does not take a position on any of the issues it explores. It provides high quality and unbiased research so that readers can make up their own minds. ProCon.org is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity. Steven C. Markoff, the Chairman of ProCon.org, has been active in trying to find pros and cons of various controversial issues since 1986. He created an organization to pursue this effort, and after going through several iterations, that organization became ProCon.org on July 12, 2004.

Teaching American History: A leading online resource for American History teachers and students

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/>

TeachingAmericanHistory.org is a project of the Ashbrook Center at Ashland University. The Ashbrook Center is an independent, non-partisan non-profit. Its mission is to restore and strengthen the capacities of the American people for constitutional self-government. TAH.org sponsors a variety of resources, courses, and programs to help classroom teachers improve their knowledge of American history, government, civics, and ideas through the use of primary documents. TAH.org and Ashbrook programs and courses are unique in that they are all rooted in primary documents, and are created and conducted by university scholars who are experts in their respective fields. This site is the major repository of American History and Government Ashbrook resources and professional development options.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/>

Founded in 1994 by Richard Gilder and Lewis E. Lehrman, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is a nonprofit organization devoted to the improvement of history education. The Institute has developed an array of programs for schools, teachers, and students that now operate in all fifty states, including a website that features more than 60,000 unique historical documents in the Gilder Lehrman Collection.

The Heritage Guide to the Constitution
<http://www.heritage.org/constitution>

The Heritage Guide, (created by the Heritage Foundation) to the Constitution is intended to provide a brief and accurate explanation of each clause of the Constitution as envisioned by the Framers and as applied in contemporary law. Although the site is intended for a broad audience including elected officials, the organization offers a print teacher's guide to the Constitution for a modest fee. Access to the site is free.

Teachinghistory.org: National History Education Clearinghouse
<http://teachinghistory.org/>

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Teachinghistory.org is designed to help K–12 history teachers access resources and materials to improve U.S. History education in the classroom. The Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (CHNM) has created Teachinghistory.org with the goal of placing history content, teaching strategies, current research and issues, community building, and easy access to resources at center stage. The site is comprehensive and contains useful information for elementary, middle, and high school history teachers.

What So Proudly We Hail: Making Americans citizens through literature
<http://www.whatsoproudlywehail.org/>

Created by distinguished teacher-scholars, the late Amy Kass, and Leon Kass, the What So Proudly We Hail literary-based e-curriculum is a rich source of materials compiled to aid in the classroom instruction of American History, civics, social studies, and language arts. This collection of classic American stories, speeches, and songs is based on the critically acclaimed anthology of the same name. edited by this husband-wife team along with Diana Schaub. It seeks to educate both hearts and minds about American ideals, American identity and national character, and the virtues and aspirations of our civic life. This site is excellent but is much more useful if individual educators or libraries own the book *What So Proudly We Hail: The American Soul in Story, Speech, and Song*, arguably the most enjoyable and readable volume on civic education published thus far in the 21st Century.

University of Virginia Miller Center
<https://millercenter.org/>

The Miller Center is a nonpartisan affiliate of the University of Virginia that specializes in presidential scholarship, public policy, and political history and strives to apply the lessons of history and civil discourse to the nation's most pressing contemporary governance challenges. The site is a superb resource for both American