

## The Constitutional Foundations

The United States Constitution is the longest operating written charter of government in the world. Drafted in Philadelphia over the hot summer of 1787, it established the fundamental law of the United States, it gave form to three branches of government we know today: the Legislative, the Executive, and the Judiciary and a government capable of extending across the American continent. Built from James Madison's Virginia Plan, the Constitution is a truly timeless document, amended only 27 times since its adoption.

The Constitution supplied the many deficiencies of the Articles of Confederation: the creation of an executive branch meant that laws passed by Congress could be enforced, the Supreme Court could settle disputes as the first federal judiciary, Congress was granted the important powers of taxation and regulation of interstate commerce, and a lower bar for amendment made it easier to make necessary and expedient changes. It created the powerful national government needed to govern an extended area, and balanced difficult systems of federalism and representation while preserving the authority of individual states.

This free online course takes you through each article of the this foundational document, exploring the fundamental elements of the three branches: the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judiciary. The course also explores the integral place held by the States and the People, and explores the Ratification and Amendment process. After taking this course, you should emerge with a deeper understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the Constitution, its creation at the Philadelphia Convention, and the makeup of each of the three branches. Rich with history from the American founding, developments through case law and legislation, and contemporary challenges and applications, your introduction to the Constitution starts here.