



**Your
Education
Ally.**

By Teachers,
For Teachers.

Course Syllabus

Name:

Date:

Today is a Great Day to Learn Something New!

Professional learning to meet your needs.

Engaging and applicable, ELEVATE courses are the core of Teaching Channel. We offer a variety of courses that meet the continuing education needs of teachers from across the country. Teaching Channel courses work perfectly for license renewal needs, working to move up through salary schedules, or for professional learning to support improved student outcomes.

Teaching Channel provides continuing education graduate credit courses that have been approved and endorsed by regionally accredited colleges and universities from across the United States.



Current University Partners (See a current list of academic partners on our website)

Continuing Education courses are approved by our regionally accredited (HLC, NECHE, WSCUC, NWCCU) partners by review of syllabi, content, and coursework expectations.

(Indicate anticipated university/college partner below, if applicable.)

Course Creation and Evaluation:

Courses are created and evaluated by educators with a master's degree or higher in an education-related field and five or more years of classroom experience in PreK-12th grade education. Course evaluators provide personalized, specific feedback for assignments and rubric-based grading aligned with best practices in professional education.

Spring Term

Registrations Accepted
July 16-March 15
Coursework Due*
April 15

Summer Term

Registrations Accepted
December 16-July 15
Coursework Due*
August 15

Fall Term

Registrations Accepted
March 16-October 22
Coursework Due*
November 15

*Or first business day after the 15th if due date falls on a weekend.

Coursework Details

The Rigor of Teaching Channel Graduate-Level Continuing Education Courses.

Professional Learning Model

Our research-based Professional Learning Model is used to design ELEVATE continuing education courses. The model includes five elements used to guide professional learning and to positively impact student outcomes:



Course Content

ELEVATE Courses are self-paced, and per standard practice in the field, each credit carries the equivalent of fifteen hours of content and coursework. Participants explore resources that include a solid balance of research and applicability. All courses feature video clips, research-based articles, and interactive elements to enhance and support learning. To receive credit, participants must complete the following requirements according to expectations outlined in our course rubric:

Response Questions: Connect new learning from course resources to current pedagogy.

Resource Review: Find resources related to the course topic to extend learning and solve problems of practice.

Applications: Complete a variety of assignments encouraging participants to implement new learning in their classrooms or schools.

Reflection: Write a reflection paper that activates critical thinking and inspires the transformation of future professional practice.

Course Name	Civics Skills for Today's Students
Course Number	OL 5516
Course Credits	3 or Flex Credit

NOTE: This syllabus is an outline of the course requirements and is subject to change; the coursework will be completed and submitted in the online environment where you will have full access to a variety of media, links, and other online tools required to satisfactorily complete this course.

Course Description:

This course empowers you to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of civics by exploring topics, activities, and resources that promote inclusive civic engagement skills. Learn about practices in civil discourse using techniques that support respectful and informed discussions. Encourage students' critical thinking skills for a deeper understanding of historical and contemporary civic matters by working with documents and primary sources. Brainstorm opportunities for students to exercise civic action, so they can learn to make a difference in their communities and our nation. Join us on this enriching journey of civic education to prepare the next generation of informed and active citizens.

Course Objectives:

1. Use prompts about civics education, to describe assumptions and insights of practitioners, researchers and self, including how the information relates to professional education practice and growth.
2. Develop a SMART goal related to inclusive Civics education for today's students.
3. Create or refresh an activity for students to understand the need for media literacy.
4. Investigate resources to support student civil discourse.
5. Explore techniques and resources to support working with historical documents and primary sources.
6. Brainstorm opportunities for students to exercise civic action.

Required Reading:

All articles and other resources are linked in the online environment, within their respective assignments.

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

Knowledge Base:

Knowledge base, in part, is affirmed in the writing and research of these references:

- Aguilar-Kirchhoff, L., & Nakatsuka, K. W. (2022). *Bring History and Civics to Life: Lessons and Strategies to Cultivate Informed, Empathetic Citizens*. International Society for Technology in Education.
- Blanchet, M., & Deters, B. (2023). *Preventing Polarization*. Times 10 Publications.
- Cohen, R., & Murrow, S. E. (2021). *Rethinking America's Past: Howard Zinn's a People's History of the United States in the Classroom and Beyond*. University of Georgia Press.
- Garcia, A., & Mirra, N. (2023). *Civics for the World to Come: Committing to Democracy in Every Classroom*. W. W. Norton, Incorporated.
- Lesh, B. A. (2023). *Developing Historical Thinkers: Supporting Historical Inquiry for All Students* (W. Journell, Ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Metro, R. (2023). *Teaching U. S. History Thematically: Document-Based Lessons for the Secondary Classroom*. Teachers College Press.
- Nelsen, M. D. (2023). *The Color of Civics: Civic Education for a Multiracial Democracy*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated.
- R. Chasen, L. (2023). *Teaching Elementary Social Studies for Scholarship, Civic Engagement, and Mental Health: The Revolution WILL Be Dramatized*. Brill.

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

Teaching Channel Course Rubric

All course submissions must meet general graduate level standards through the use of correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics. Each paragraph should be clearly organized and include 5 sentences or more. If work does not meet the above criteria, it will be returned to the student for resubmission.

Rubric	A Grade = Outstanding Performance	B Grade = Target Performance	Below Target Performance
Statement of Intention and Awareness	The evaluator will only review the Statement of Intention and Awareness for a response to each prompt. If a student does not respond to each prompt, the Statement will be returned to the student for resubmission. The student's Statement of Intention and Awareness will be evaluated as part of the Reflection.		
Investigation: Read and Respond	Coursework thoroughly and accurately addresses all question components by summarizing key concepts from readings. In at least half of the responses, the participant also makes inferences related to professional practice or supports answers with professional experiences.	Coursework thoroughly and accurately addresses all question components by summarizing key concepts from readings.	Coursework will be returned to student for resubmission with evaluator instructions if it does not meet target performance.

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

Investigation: Resource Review Rubric	A Grade = Outstanding Performance	B Grade = Target Performance	Below Target Performance
Summary of Resource	Coursework summarizes the main ideas presented in the resource and includes at least one instance of critical analysis (i.e. asks questions, looks for gaps in information, disputes contradictions, etc.)	Coursework summarizes the main ideas presented in the resource.	Coursework will be returned to student for resubmission with evaluator instructions if it does not meet target performance.
Relation to Personal Assumptions or Course Content	Coursework provides more than one detailed example of how the resource supports or challenges personal assumptions and/or course content.	Coursework provides one example of how the resource supports or challenges personal assumptions and/or course content.	Coursework will be returned to student for resubmission with evaluator instructions if it does not meet target performance.
Impact on Professional Practice	Coursework provides more than one clear explanation of how the information in the resource could impact professional practice.	Coursework provides one explanation of how the information in the resource could impact professional practice.	

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

Application Rubric	A Grade = Outstanding Performance	B Grade = Target Performance	Below Target Performance
Planning, Development and Execution	Coursework shows complete planning, development and/or execution of application, clear articulation of details and inclusion of polished required artifacts.	Coursework shows complete planning, development and/or execution of application and inclusion of required artifacts.	Coursework will be returned to student for resubmission with evaluator instructions if it does not meet target performance.
	Coursework includes creative or innovative application of new knowledge and skills from course content to professional practice.	Coursework includes application of new knowledge and skills from course content to professional practice.	
Written Requirements	Coursework provides clear, logical, and organized responses to any writing prompts in the application. It also includes at least one detailed connection to course objectives, student learning goals or transformation of professional practice.	Coursework provides clear, logical, and organized responses to any writing prompts in the application.	

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

Reflection Rubric	A Grade = Outstanding Performance	B Grade = Target Performance	Below Target Performance
Connection to Statement of Intention and Awareness	Coursework includes an evaluation of both learning goals articulated in the participant's Statement of Intention and Awareness from Module 1. Participant includes one future learning goal related to course content.	Coursework includes an evaluation of one of the learning goals articulated in the participant's Statement of Intention and Awareness from Module 1.	Coursework will be returned to student for resubmission with evaluator instructions if it does not meet target performance.
Summary of Learning	Coursework includes three or more detailed connections to specific assignments completed or course content viewed (assigned readings or videos).	Coursework includes two general connections to course content.	
Description of Positive Influence or Transformation	Coursework includes two or more specific ideas for changes in one's professional practice with timelines. OR Coursework includes two or more detailed action steps with timelines for positively impacting other stakeholders.	Coursework includes one general idea for changes in one's professional practice. OR Coursework includes one action step for positively impacting other stakeholders.	

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Module 1

1. Tell us about yourself!

Before we begin with course content, write 1 sentence about yourself. You will be asked to include this background in each of the modules submitted for the course. This provides context for your responses and enables the course evaluator to respond with feedback tailored to your specific role in education. Here are three examples to guide you:

- I'm a 4th grade teacher and teach all subjects.
- I'm a middle school counselor.
- I'm out of the classroom on leave this year, but next year I'll be back teaching 9th grade science.

2. Statement of Intention and Awareness

At Learners Edge, we want your learning to be purposeful and applicable to your professional practice. To do that, research says learners need to first identify their motivations and goals. Next, learners assess prior knowledge and previous experiences so they can create deeper connections to the course material.

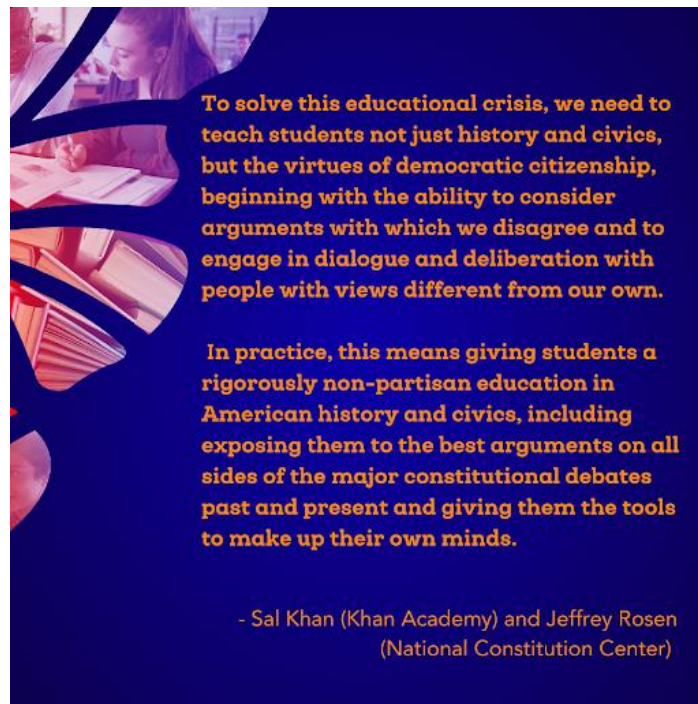
Using the guidelines below, please address the following in your Statement of Intention and Awareness, in a total of two paragraphs, or more:

1. Share your motivation for learning about teaching civics and the U.S. Government for today's students.
2. Summarize your previous knowledge or experience with teaching civics and the U.S. Government for today's students.
3. List your own two learning goals for the course.

In Module 1, your evaluator will review your Statement of Intention and Awareness to ensure it is complete. It will be graded within your Reflection Requirement in Module 3, where you'll revisit your Statement of Intention and Awareness to identify your growth and learning from the beginning of the course to the end.

3. Application: Critical Learning- Civics and Government

To become responsible citizens, our students must learn how our government works so they can see their roles in civic action. However, we are at a point in our country where we cannot rely only on the basics to educate our students in Civics. Read more about this contention in, "[Civic Education is How We Can Repair Our Democracy and Build a More Perfect Union](#)," by Sal Khan of Khan Academy and Jeffrey Rosen of the National Constitution Center. The following quote from the article inspires the focus of this course:



To begin this application, read through the Civics-related standards from the National Council for Social Studies to frame your learning.

As students and teachers discover the importance of inclusive Civics education, they must also understand how the systems in this country were developed, and key principles of democracy in today's world. Please read the following resources to learn more about how today's teaching of Civics will benefit all who are included in our democracy:

- "Civic Education is Having a Moment. Here is What That Means," by Carl Smith, [Governing.com](#)
- "Equitable Civics Learning for All: How K-12 Schools Can Grow Voters," from Tufts University
- "5 Civic Education Steps to Preserve Democracy," by Shawn McCusker and Tom Driscoll
- "Spotlight on Civic Learning," by the American Institutes of Research, funded by the U.S. Department of Education

Now, think about your learning from the above resources, and how you can increase inclusiveness and purpose in Civics education. Use our template to create a SMART Goal for highlighting the importance of an inclusive civics education for today's students. You may use any of the ideas above to inspire you!

Please submit your completed template with your Module submission. If you are sharing a link, be sure to set it to, "anyone with a link can view."

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4. Application: Media Literacy

Media literacy has a natural connection to civics education. In order to be active and engaged citizens, our students need media and information literacy to discern credibility and reliability in the sources with which they interact. Please watch the following Teaching Channel video to learn more:

The following resources provide support to teach this very important skill. We recommend you begin with *skimming* the outstanding handbook, "[Digital Media and Information Literacy in Civic Engagement](#)," from USAID and the Youth Cafe. YOU are welcome to read it more in depth!

There are many resources about media literacy below. They are all fantastic (of course) but you only need to explore 2 or more to get ideas for your students!

Fact checking and bias resources:

- [Checkology](#), free from the News Literacy Project with registration
- "[Recognizing Bias](#)," from NewseumEd
- Also free from the News Literacy Project: [Informable](#) (App) which helps identify fact from fiction.

Lesson plan ideas for teaching media literacy:

- "[Teenagers and Misinformation: Some Starting Points for Teaching Media Literacy](#)," by Katherine Schulten of the *New York Times*
- "[Civics in Digital Life: Lesson Plans for Grades 8-12](#)," and "[News and Media Literacy 101](#)," by Danial Vargus Campos, Common Sense Media

The following activities help students understand special interest groups, including advocacy organizations. This is a great way to connect to civic engagement!

- "[4.5: Online Messaging by Special Interest Groups](#)," from the text, *Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning*, by [Robert W. Maloy](#), [Torrey Trust](#), [Allison Butler](#), & [Chenyang Xu](#)
 - "[What is Advocacy?](#)" by Emmaline Soken-Huberty, is an updated resource to include in this activity.
 - [Here's a student example](#) for this activity.

Now it's time to apply your learning! With the inspiration and ideas above, please develop or refresh an activity for students to understand the importance of media literacy, focusing on one of the following:

- If you do not currently teach students about media literacy, your new or refreshed activity should provide students with an introduction to media literacy.
- If you currently teach students about media literacy, your new or refreshed activity should be an enhancement of something you already teach, or an addition to other media literacy content.

Be sure to include the following in your activity:

- Objective
- Step by step procedure
- Plan for implementation (when, how)
- Rationale for choosing the concept(s) of media literacy you did

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

Please submit your activity plan with your Module coursework. If sharing a link, be sure the share settings are set to, "anyone with the link can view."

Module 2

1. Tell us about yourself!

Provide a one sentence or longer explanation of your role in the field of education.

2. Application: Civil Discourse

At the beginning of Module 1 is a quote from an article by Sal Khan and Jeffrey Rosen focused on the need for people to discuss issues in a civil manner. This application asks you to determine how you will prepare your students for discussions of tough topics: civil discourse.

To begin, please read Holly Korbey's piece, "How Classroom Political Discussions - Controversies, Too - Prepare Students for Needed Civic Participation," at KQED.

Then, depending on how you currently approach civil discourse in your classroom, below are a variety of related topics to meet you where you are. Review 4 or more resources (total) in preparation for creating a vision board or poster to reinforce specific messages in line with civic discourse.

Navigating Difficult Conversations

- "Learning from Conflict: Discussing Controversial Issues in the Classroom," from Common Sense Media
- Highly Recommended from Teaching Channel! Learning for Justice's "Let's Talk! Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students."
- "Navigating Difficult Conversations: 7 Tips for Civic Engagement Discussions," from the Sandy Spring Friends School

Tips for Civic Discourse

- Circle of Viewpoints protocol, from Harvard's Graduate School of Education
- "2022 Back-to-School Playbook: 5 Practices to Foster Constructive Dialogue in Your Classroom," by Jake Fey and Caroline Mehl
 - Companion article by Anna Merod of K12 Dive: "5 Ways to Practice Constructive Dialogue in the Classroom."

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Structured Academic Controversy (SAC)

- "Structured Academic Controversy," from Claudia Kourey- Bowers, Kent State University
- "Teaching for Civic Engagement: Individual and Systemic Responsibility," by Matt Colley, explaining how he uses SAC (please note: we have learned the links in the article cannot be restored, and apologize for the inconvenience)
- <https://learn.teachingchannel.com/video/structured-academic-controversy-sac>

High Quality Discussions

Download Teaching Channel's "Teacher Guidelines for Building a Respectful Atmosphere for Discussion"

Watch the following Teaching Channel videos to learn more about high quality discussions.

Then, design a vision board or inspirational poster (your choice!) to serve as a reminder and inspiration for civil discourse in your classroom. The articles, "How to Attract Anything Using a Digital Vision Board," and "How Vision Boards Work and How to Make a Powerful One for Yourself," both by Sarah Regan at Mind, Body, Green provide worthwhile information about how to create vision boards that manifest your goals. This free vision board maker from Canva can help too, or get out your scissors, paper, glue, markers etc. We'd like you to get creative and have fun with this assignment!

On your vision board or inspirational poster, please include:

- Any information of your choice from the resources above (no need to include everything—choose what will inspire and support you!)
- Attractive and inspiring colors, designs, images, etc. to reflect the mindset shifts you plan to make

Be sure to post your creation in a place where it can support the skills you are cultivating!

Submit a link to view your digital vision board, or share a photo. Be sure the share settings are set to, "anyone with the link can view."

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3. Application: Documents, 2 Ways

There's little question of the value of primary documents in Civics instruction, if we are to learn lessons from the past.

Fortunately, those who have come before us (or before the creation of this course) have developed a variety of ways to work with documents. To dig deeper, please complete one of the following options:

Option 1: New to Historical Inquiry and QFTs

Primary source exploration works well with specific frameworks in place to support teachers and students. This application will allow you to explore 2 techniques

- The Question Formulation Technique (QFT), from the Right Institute
- Historical Inquiry

Choose one of the above to explore further through the resources below. If you already use one of the above, choose the other technique, or Option 2

QFT

- "Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS)," from The Right Question Institute
- "Four Ways Educators Can Use the Right Question Institute's 'Primary Sources Hub,'" from EBSCO
- Select articles from The Right Question Institute's Social Studies resources

Historical Inquiry

- "What is an Inquiry Lesson?" from Teaching History.org
- "Foster Student-Based Learning with a Primary Source Mystery," by Cynthia Resor
- "Incorporating Historical Thinking Concepts Into an Inquiry Process," by Ronald Martinello

After exploring QFT and Historical Inquiry, in 2 paragraphs or more, summarize how you could apply one of the techniques in your classroom. Be sure to provide details of *how* and *why* you will use the technique.

Submit your 2 paragraphs or longer response with your Module coursework.

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Option 2: Choose Your Path

Below, you'll find a list of resources focused on a variety of ways to approach primary sources and documents. Please read 3 or more articles of your choice

- From USC Libraries, a [Guide to Evaluating Primary Sources](#)
- Free [DBQs](#) (document-based questions) from Teachers Pay Teachers (DBQ's are mostly referenced as an essay for AP students.
- "[Teaching With Documents](#)," from the National Archives
- [DocsTeach](#), a tool from the National Archives
- Teaching Channel videos

Then, in 2 paragraphs or more, summarize how you could apply what you've read to your Civics instruction. Be sure to provide details of *how* and *why* you will use the idea in the reading(s).

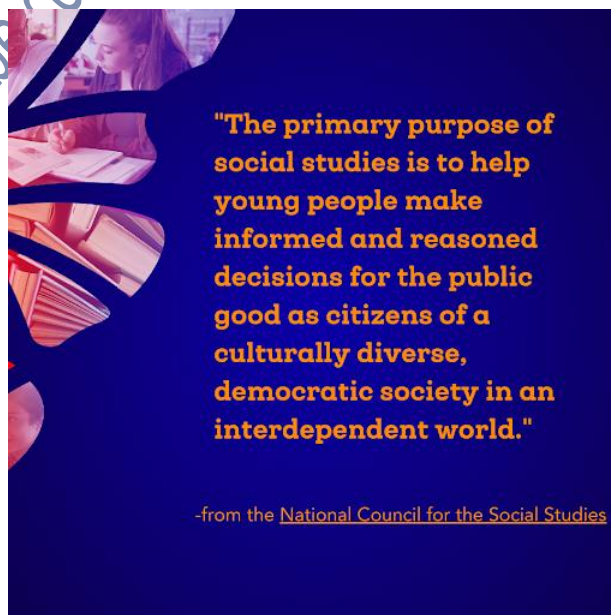
Submit your 2 paragraphs or longer response with your Module coursework.

Then, in 2 paragraphs or more, summarize how you could apply what you've read to your Civics instruction. Be sure to provide details of *how* and *why* you will use the idea in the reading(s).

Submit your 2 paragraphs or longer response with your Module coursework.

4. Application: Students Take Action

As the National Council for the Social Studies notes,



All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

How can we inspire students to take action? Let's find out!

To begin this application, please watch the following videos on civic engagement.

Civic Engagement in the Digital Age:

We have so many resources to share for student civic engagement! Please review 3 or more of the following:

- "Getting to Know the 10 Questions," allows students to explore their passions for civic engagement, from Facing History and Ourselves
- Another 10! "Ten Ways to Practice Civic Engagement," from UP to US
- "4 Ways to Develop Students' Civic Engagement Skills," by David Tow, Edutopia
- Lesson plan: "Civic Engagement and How Students Can Get Involved," from PBS NewsHour
- "Teaching for Student Engagement," by Matt Colley, Teaching Channel (please note: we have learned the links in the article cannot be restored, and apologize for the inconvenience)
- Chapter: "The Five STAT Strategies," from ASCD's, *Students Taking Action Together: 5 Teaching Techniques to Cultivate SEL, Civic Engagement, and a Healthy Democracy*

For this application, conduct a "mind sweep," by writing down any and all your ideas for engaging students in civic action. Consider the strategies and tips you've learned, and lesson plans and activities presented.

There are no right or wrong answers—simply write down all of the things that come to mind. Then, next to 5 of the ideas from your list, provide a 3 or more sentence explanation about the item to ensure we understand its meaning.

When submitting your work for this module, include a photo of your initial mindsweep and your list of 5 ideas with explanations. You may instead provide a link to the document where you added your ideas and descriptions. If submitting a link to your document, be sure it is set to "anyone with the link can view."

5. Investigation: Resource Review

To complete the Resource Review, identify two resources related to (but not directly from) the

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

course content to enhance your professional practice, and deepen your understanding of the course content.

Resources may include blog posts, podcasts, websites, videos, documentaries, films, articles, books, or journals, published within the last five years. To find a resource, we suggest a web search (Google) using terms or ideas from the course you'd like to learn more about, or that relate to your specific professional learning needs.

Please provide the resource title, author, copyright or publishing date, and URL (if applicable). Then, in two paragraphs or more per resource, respond to one or more of the following:

- Share information about how the resource information could impact your professional practice
- Explain how each resource supports or challenges your professional assumptions
- Summarize any questions that remain, i.e.: gaps in information or contradictions

To meet "A" criteria as outlined in the course rubric, for each resource, include two or more different examples of how the resource supports or challenges assumptions, *and* explain two ways this resource will impact your professional practice.

Module 3

1. Tell us about yourself!

Provide a one sentence or longer explanation of your role in the field of education.

2. Application: Synthesis

Professional learning is essential for teachers to continue growing and improving their practice. Now, it's time to put your learning into action with a culminating project. This project is an opportunity for you to utilize the knowledge and skills you've acquired throughout the course to create something practical for your classroom or school. Teaching Channel wants you to culminate this course through an assignment that's relevant, applicable, and useful. Please select and complete one of the following options:

Option A: Plan an Initiative

Develop a plan to incorporate a paradigm shift, a specific educational model or a growth initiative into your classroom, on your team, or in your building. You may use Google Slides, Google Docs (for a narrative)—whatever works best for you. Please include each of the following in your 2 page or more plan:

1. Goals – what will the end results be?
2. Allies and Resources – who and what could help you reach your goals?
3. Communication – how will you engage with all stakeholders
4. Roadblocks and possible solutions
5. Timeline for implementation

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Please submit your plan with your coursework submission.

Examples:

- Based on your school or classroom demographics, choose one area (attendance, free/reduced lunch, graduation rate) and create a plan to address this issue.
- Detail implementation of a new discussion protocol for civic discourse
- Create a program providing a pathway for students' civic action

Option B: Design a Presentation

Create a 30 min or more presentation for an audience of your choice, based on your learning in this course. Please include the following in your presentation:

1. One slide identifying your audience and how the presentation will benefit the group
2. Three or more concepts or ideas to be addressed in the presentation
3. Speaker notes embedded in the slides (or in a separate document)
4. One or more interactive activity (e.g. discussion prompt, jigsaw, gallery walk)
5. An explanation of next steps, such as additional trainings, resources, and/or collaborations

Please submit your presentation with your coursework submission.

Examples:

- Explain the rationale for implementing Civics education in your school or district
- Rally your colleagues to adopt a technique in Civics education
- Introduce your colleagues to ways to promote student civic action or civil discourse

Option C: Develop a Unit of Study

This option presents you with the opportunity to significantly enhance an existing unit of study or create a brand new one, comprised of 5 or more lessons. For this option:

- Describe the student goals/objectives of the unit
- Using our template, please include enough detail to ensure full understanding of the program or unit of study. Could a colleague teach this from your explanation, without preparation from you?
- Embed links to lesson resources (e.g. websites, videos, readings) within the template
- If you are revising an existing unit, please describe the areas you've enhanced or extended the original lesson(s)

Please submit your template with your coursework submission.

Examples:

- Incorporate new strategies into an existing unit plan used with your students
- Create a new student activist group addressing issues pertaining to your learning
- Recommendations for improvement regarding an existing program in your school or district

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.

3. Reflection

In 2 or more double-spaced pages (12pt font), synthesize your learning by summarizing how your learning in this course has evolved your professional practice. To meet "A" criteria as outlined in the course rubric, your reflection should include:

- A comparison of your learning goals from your Statement of Intention and Awareness in Module 1 with your new learning, to assess how you've grown.
- One key takeaway from your learning.
- One future learning goal related to course content.
- Three or more detailed connections to specific course applications, information from readings, and other completed course activities.

And your choice of *one* of the following:

- Two or more specific ideas for changes to your professional practice with timelines for implementing changes.
- Two or more detailed action steps you'll take to positively influence others (students, parents, colleagues, administrators, community members, etc.), including implementation timelines.

All coursework is to be completed in the Teaching Channel online environment.