

Civics & Community

Assessment Rubric (DRAFT)

Definition

In Civics & Community competency courses, students acquire a working knowledge of documents and ideas related to the founding and development of American democracy in wider social, historical, economic, or rhetorical contexts. Students also gain experience in critical thinking and inquiry, evaluating the quality of evidence and forming judgments about evidence, arguments, and conclusions of others.

Framing Language

A course approved in the Civics & Community competency should have an intense focus on critical thinking and the fundamentals of inquiry in the context of the foundations of American democracy. Critical thinking and inquiry should be explicit parts of the course design, with students using facts and arguments to form ideas and evaluate conclusions. Through these courses, students will develop the critical thinking skills, understanding of basic processes, and factual knowledge necessary for informed civic and community engagement, and learn to see themselves as ethical participants in the public discourse.

Courses designated in this competency will evaluate key concepts and contexts related to the origins of the American republic and progress toward realizing its founding ideals. They include exposure to seminal documents like the US Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Gettysburg Address, and Letter from a Birmingham Jail. Through these courses, students will develop the critical thinking skills, understanding of basic processes, and factual knowledge necessary for informed civic and community engagement, and learn to see themselves as essential participants in the public discourse.

Glossary

- Assumptions – beliefs about a claim, argument, artifact, or information that shape one’s understanding of it or make an understanding of its significance possible
- Civics – the study of the rights and duties of residents or citizens, with a special focus on social, legal, and policy structures and processes
- Context – related aspects of a claim, argument, artifact, or information that indirectly affect an understanding of its significance
- Community – relationships between individuals and organizations based on shared characteristics like place, culture, or norms, used to address specific needs and address shared challenges
- Disciplinary-appropriate – methods of analysis conform to supported standards of the related academic discipline

SLO #1: Critically analyze claims, arguments, artifacts or information.				
Dimensions	Sophisticated competence (Level 4)	Enhanced competence (Level 3)	MAC (Basic) competence (Level 2)	Developing competence (Level 1)
Critical Analysis	<p>Accurately and clearly identifies general features of claims, arguments, artifacts, or information. Analyzes claims, arguments, artifacts, or information with thorough support of reasoning, evidence and/or data, all of which is reliable, appropriate to the task, and persuasive. Effectively situates claims, arguments, artifacts, or information in broader contexts of inquiry by articulating motivating questions, underlying assumptions, competing interpretations, and/or implications for future inquiry.</p>	<p>Accurately and clearly identifies general features of claims, arguments, artifacts, or information. Analyzes the reasoning, evidence and/or data that underlies claims, arguments, artifacts, or information in terms of its strengths and weaknesses and/or in light of alternative explanations or counterarguments. Recognizes that claims, arguments, artifacts, or information are situated in broader contexts of inquiry. Where appropriate, articulates the questions motivating the analysis.</p>	<p>Identifies general features of claims, arguments, artifacts, or information in a mostly accurate and clear way. Articulates reasoning, evidence and/or data that underlies claims, arguments, artifacts, or information. Offers some interpretation of the reasoning, evidence and/or data in terms of quality, appropriateness, and/or assumptions, though possibly in uneven, partially inaccurate and/or incomplete ways.</p>	<p>Identifies general features of claims, arguments, artifacts, or information, though their representation lacks accuracy and/or clarity. Minimally articulates the reasoning, evidence and/or data that underlies claims, arguments, artifacts, or information, paying little attention to its quality, appropriateness, and/or underlying assumptions.</p>
SLO #2: Construct coherent, evidence-based arguments.				
Dimensions	Sophisticated competence (Level 4)	Enhanced competence (Level 3)	MAC (Basic) competence (Level 2)	Developing competence (Level 1)

Argument Construction and Inquiry Fundamentals	Formulates a research question and derives a clear thesis claim from that question. Identifies and justifies appropriate methods for collecting and analyzing reasons, evidence and/or data used to assess the thesis claim. Reasoning, evidence and/or data is of high quality (precisely tailored, well-defined, varied, appropriately sourced, etc.) and is used to build a well-organized, persuasive argument. Where appropriate, justifies the strength or validity of the argument in light of competing counterarguments or alternative interpretations.	Identifies a clear research question and derives a clear thesis claim from that question. Supports the thesis claim with appropriate, reliable and well-organized reasoning, evidence and/or data. Concepts are defined and applied clearly. Where appropriate, assesses the strength or validity of the argument in light of possible counterarguments or alternative interpretations.	Identifies a research question and articulates a thesis claim that responds to that question. Supports the thesis claim with reasoning, evidence and/or data that is broadly relevant, though some of it may come from inappropriate or unreliable sources. Where appropriate, attempts to define technical or otherwise key concepts.	Makes a claim and attempts to support that claim with reasoning, evidence and/or data. The claim, or its support, may be simplistic, incoherent, convoluted or not obviously relevant to the task.
SLO #3: Evaluate key concepts, principles, arguments, and contexts in founding documents of the American Republic, including the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and a representative selection of the Federalist Papers.				
Dimensions	Sophisticated competence (Level 4)	Enhanced competence (Level 3)	MAC (Basic) competence (Level 2)	Developing competence (Level 1)

	Interprets the documents, including their key concepts and arguments, in relation to other documents and contexts. Analyzes the context of the documents, in terms of their rhetoric, politics, and/or historical development. Synthesizes the documents across courses and experiences.	Explains the documents, including their key concepts and arguments. Explains in their own words the context of the documents, in terms of their rhetoric, politics, and/or historical development. Applies the documents to the course content.	Describes the documents, including their key concepts and arguments. Describes the context of the documents, in terms of their rhetoric, politics, and/or historical development. Connects the documents to the course content.	Identifies the documents. Minimally describes their key concepts, arguments, and the context of the documents, in terms of their rhetoric, politics, and/or historical development. Minimally connects the documents to the course content.
SLO #4: Evaluate key milestones in progress and challenges in the effort to form a more perfect Union, including the arguments and contexts surrounding the Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Letter from Birmingham Jail, as well as other texts that reflect the breadth of American experiences.				
Dimensions	Sophisticated competence (Level 4)	Enhanced competence (Level 3)	MAC (Basic) competence (Level 2)	Developing competence (Level 1)
	Evaluates interpretations of milestones and challenges in progress in the effort to form a more perfect union. Integrates skillfully arguments and contexts in documents to provide explanation and context across courses and experiences.	Examines milestones and challenges in progress in the effort to form a more perfect union. Develops arguments and explains contexts in documents to provide further understanding.	Explains milestones and challenges in progress in the effort to form a more perfect union. References appropriately arguments and contexts in documents to provide explanation and understanding.	Recognizes milestone(s) and/or challenge(s) in progress in the effort to form a more perfect union. References basic arguments and minimal contexts in documents.