



American Government

SETON HOME STUDY SCHOOL

Lesson Plans ♦ Tests ♦ Answer Keys ♦ Quarter Report Forms



Course Manual

HIS302_15A



The First Quarter

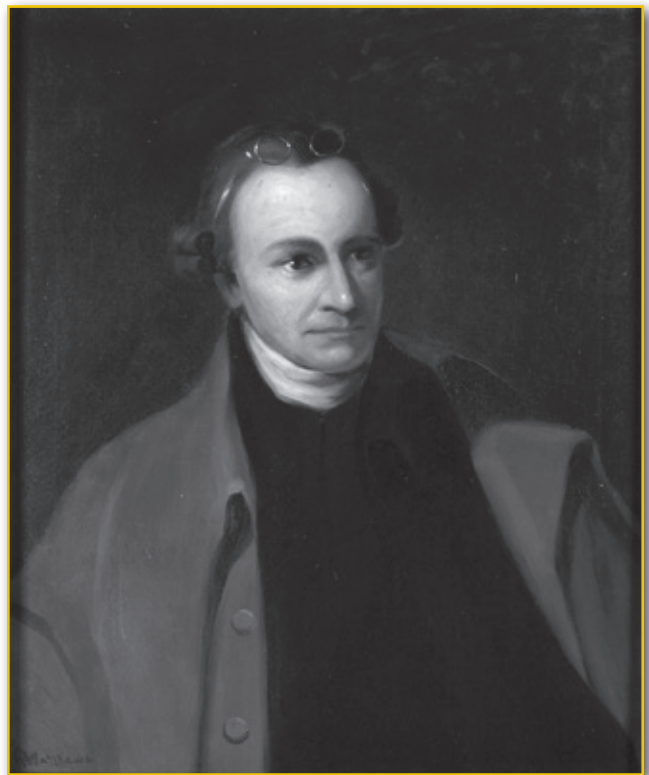
WEEK ONE

Day 1

Look over your textbook. Read the title page and the Table of Contents. Read “Special Features of this Volume.” Look over the terms in the Glossary. Skim through *The Federalist Papers*, written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay.

As you begin this course, think about how much you know about America. Why do you call yourself an American? What does that identification mean to you? Remember that before July 4th, 1776, everyone in the 13 colonies considered himself to be an Englishman and a subject of King George III, and not to be American. In 1775, the 13 colonies had only about 2.5 million inhabitants total, with the city of Boston boasting a population of some 16,000 people. Of the 2.5 million, roughly one-fifth of the population remained loyal to England, and were known as Loyalists or Tories. Over one-third of the people were neutral; they traded and communicated with both sides and did not much care who won the war. Only about 40% of the people were Patriots who opposed the tyranny of English Parliament and wanted independence. Many Patriots wanted independence but did not actually fight for it. At the beginning of 1776, Washington’s army consisted of only 20,000 men, a much smaller army than that of the British. Thus, as you study American Government, you should keep in mind that a very small number of people created America. They accomplished great things because they were willing to make the sacrifices demanded of them.

As Catholics look at the cultural decay in America today, many are discouraged by the abortion culture and by assaults on organized religion, particularly on the Catholic Church. Yet, as an American, you are a member of this society. You or your parents pay taxes to a government which promotes the “culture of death.” However, if you understand what the problem is, you can make changes. If you are determined to make things better, as Samuel Adams and Patrick Henry believed they were doing in 1775, and if you are willing to make personal sacrifices for the advancement of the greater good, effective political and societal change can happen. As a Catholic, you are

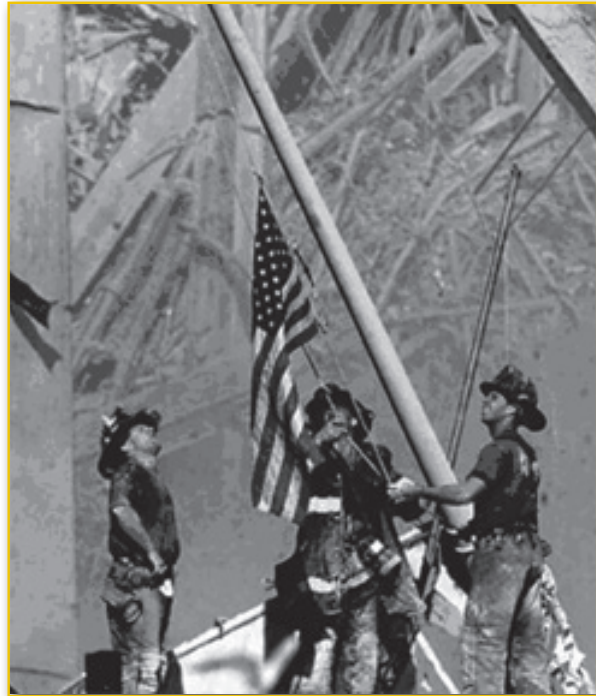


Painting
of *Patrick Henry*
by George Bagby Matthews



called by Christ in Baptism and Confirmation to spread His Holy Word, to stand up for the Revealed Truth He gave us, and to help everyone follow the path to the Heavenly City, as St. Augustine encourages us to do.

Yet, just having the right ideas, while absolutely necessary, may still not be enough. You also need to understand other important things, like how political power flows in government, how the secular state is arrayed against the Church, why the power of government needs to be curbed so as to advance social justice, and how the institutions of government function. This American Government course is designed to help you understand these things about American Government, so that you as an American Catholic can act to “restore all things to Christ” by entering into society and the political arena as an informed American taxpayer and voter who understands how his country was founded, and what has changed it over the past 200 years.



Firefighters during the events of 9/11/2001

Day 2

Read the Declaration of Independence, beginning on p. 261 of your textbook. This is the formal document, adopted by the Second Continental Congress, separating the 13 English colonies from Great Britain and the rule of King George III. In effecting this separation, the 13 colonies became 13 separate but independent States, not a Union of States. Only later after the Constitution was ratified in 1789 did the 13 States formally create a Federal Union.

After reading the Declaration, write your thoughts on what you understand this document to be saying. Then have a discussion with your parents about the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and why Americans celebrate the 4th of July as a special holiday.

Read Romans 13:1-7 in your Catholic Bible, and memorize Proverbs 14:34.

Did you know that the Founding Fathers were overwhelmingly Christian? They all believed that man was subject to the Divine Laws of God, and everyone would, therefore, be held accountable before God for his actions in this life. They also believed that any government established by man must be subject to the Laws of God, because, as St. Robert Bellarmine stated, all authority comes from God. Do people still believe this today?



Day 3

Read the Articles of Confederation, beginning on p. 265 of your textbook. After your reading is completed, make a list of the major points in the Articles of Confederation regarding the powers of national government and powers of state governments. The Articles of Confederation was the first Constitution of the United States.

Day 4

NOTE: Seton has dropped Unit 1 [Chapters 1-3] to give the student time to focus on the more important chapters. One of these chapters also portrays Catholicism inaccurately (for a Catholic response, see the essay entitled “Wycliffe, Tyndale, and the Catholic Church,” beginning on p. 125 of this course manual). Furthermore, Unit 1 is not essential for a complete understanding of the nature, structure, and functions of the national, state, and local governments. Unit 1 contains some useful information, but it will not be part of the course nor included in the tests.

Begin Unit 2 – “Our Constitutional Republic,” on p. 52. Read the quotes by John Adams and Calvin Coolidge. Read the Focus box on p. 53.

In this unit, you will examine the institutions of government, and learn how they function. Before anyone may begin to change things in society, one must understand how things are supposed to be, and how they have changed. Thus, understanding the institutions of government is a major first step toward understanding politics in general.

Read Chapter 4, “From Plymouth to Philadelphia,” pp. 53-55.

Answer the questions in Section 1 Review on p. 55.

Day 5

Re-read the Articles of Confederation on pp. 265-272.

WEEK TWO

Day 1

Read the United States Constitution and Amendments, pp. 241-260. Be sure to read the study notes in the margins accompanying the text of the Constitution. Then, read the Study Guide for Reading the Constitution on p. 240, and refer to the Constitution as necessary.

Remember that the delegates in Philadelphia were there because their respective State’s legislatures and governors ordered them to attend the convention. The actions taken by the Philadelphia delegates were done only with the authority of the States, which already existed and were legitimate by the earlier colonial charters granted to each of them by the English kings and by the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution, which would form the Federal Union, was created by the States and not by the people. The delegates represented the State legislatures, but they were elected to the State legislatures by the citizens of each State.



Firefighters carrying an injured comrade to safety during 9/11/01.

Day 2

Read Chapter 4, “A New Constitution Adopted,” pp. 56-63. Read the Profile box on p. 58, and read the Voices of American Liberty on p. 60. Review the chart listing the signers of the Constitution on p. 62, and review the chart listing when the states ratified the Constitution on p. 63.

Day 3

Answer the questions in Section 2 Review, and identify the terms using the text or your glossary.

Day 4

Read Chapter 4, “Main Features of the Constitution,” pp. 64-68. Read and understand the In Brief box of the breakdown of the parts of the Constitution on p. 64; In Brief box regarding the separation of powers on p. 65; and In Brief box on

checks and balances on p. 67; and the In Brief box on How to Amend the Constitution on p. 68. Explain the three limits the Founders placed in the Constitution to ward against absolute political power in government. See pages 66-68. Read the Voices of American Liberty box on p. 69.

Day 5

Answer the questions in Section 3 Review, and identify the terms using the text or your glossary.

WEEK THREE

Day 1

Read *Federalist Papers*, Essays 1 through 8, on why the Constitution was necessary in 1789.

Thomas Jefferson said that *The Federalist Papers* was “the best commentary on the principles of government which has ever been written.” Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall called *The Federalist Papers* “a complete commentary on our Constitution, and is appealed to by all parties in the question to which that instrument has given birth. Its intrinsic value entitles it to its highest rank....”