



The American Flag and Pledge of Allegiance in Public Education Course Syllabus

Course Description

The goal of this course is to learn about the history of the American flag and the unique tradition of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools. Educators will also learn whether participation in the pledge by students is mandated by the United States government or if it is a matter of personal choice.

A crucial component of this course will be to recognize the significant and powerful symbol that the American flag serves for the people of the United States of America. Throughout American history, the flag has been a symbol with a multitude of meanings and interpretations.

It will be a helpful guide through the course to consider the flag as a flexible symbol in both function and spirit. Just as the wind and rain may reproach the physical flag without causing damage, the spirit of that flag can also withstand criticism and protest. And, just as the wind may cause us to pause and look upon the wavering symbol to consider its strength and flexibility, criticism and protest might also give us pause to deeply consider what the American flag truly stands for, not only for ourselves or some citizens, but for all citizens.

To know the history of the American flag is to know our nation and its citizens better. The knowledge gained in this course should enable greater empathy for our neighbors and students by understanding the constitutional underpinnings that imbue the American flag with the maturity and confidence to handle diverse interpretations. That one person's interpretation does not devalue our own interpretation, but strengthens the concept of democracy and "love thy neighbor". Knowing the history of the American flag can be a significant step toward mutual respect and toward becoming confident enough in our democracy to allow space for others to share in the promise of America, in thought and in action, in ways of their own choosing.

This course enhances classroom teaching effectiveness and supports improved student outcomes by introducing new knowledge in the American Flag and Pledge of Allegiance in public education.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Analyze the historical, cultural, and symbolic factors that influenced the creation and evolution of the American flag in order to evaluate its role as a unifying and contested emblem in U.S. history.



2. Evaluate the historical, cultural, and legal factors shaping the use of the Pledge of Allegiance in U.S. public schools in order to interpret its role in civic education and individual rights.
3. Analyze how the American flag has been adapted, challenged, and reimagined in response to national events and social movements in order to evaluate its role as both a unifying and divisive cultural symbol.
4. Analyze how the American flag's varied portrayals convey conflicting cultural messages to better address its meaning thoughtfully and inclusively in educational settings.

Modules

- Module 1: Origin of the American Flag, Quiz 1
- Module 2: The Pledge of Allegiance in Public School, Quiz 2
- Module 3: A flag to call my own: Protest, Memorial, and Alternatives, Quiz 3
- Module 4: The Flag in American culture: Past, Present, and Future, Quiz 4

Grading

Each quiz must be passed at an 80% or higher (three attempts allowed).

Format

This is a self-paced, asynchronous (no required live meetings) course. Throughout the PD course, you will find it helpful to take notes along the way to assist with the quizzes. Within each module, you will find reflection assessments that are not graded but will help in your journey through the course. There is an interactive forum in the course to help you connect with peers and instructors, share ideas, and collaborate on best practices throughout your learning journey.