

[Peer Assessments \(https://class.coursera.org/conlaw-001/human_grading/\)](https://class.coursera.org/conlaw-001/human_grading/) / Essay 1 (Option 1)
[Help \(https://class.coursera.org/conlaw-001/help/peergrading?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclass.coursera.org%2Fconlaw-001%2Fhuman_grading%2Fview%2Fcourses%2F970970%2Fassessments%2F2%2Fresults%2Fmine\)](https://class.coursera.org/conlaw-001/help/peergrading?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclass.coursera.org%2Fconlaw-001%2Fhuman_grading%2Fview%2Fcourses%2F970970%2Fassessments%2F2%2Fresults%2Fmine)

Submission Phase

1. Do assignment ☒ (/conlaw-001/human_grading/view/courses/970970/assessments/2/submissions)

Evaluation Phase

2. Evaluate peers ☒ (/conlaw-001/human_grading/view/courses/970970/assessments/2/peerGradingSets)

Results Phase

3. See results ☒ (/conlaw-001/human_grading/view/courses/970970/assessments/2/results/mine)

Your effective grade is **14.5**

Your unadjusted grade is 14.5, which is simply the grade you received from your peers.

See below for details.

*Write a **500-750 word** essay response, making sure to address **ALL** parts of the question.*

In 1787, the Constitution was the largest-scale instance of a democratic form of self-government in the history of the planet.

- What specific provisions or features of the Constitution best exemplify or demonstrate the embodiment of the value of democracy?
- How were these features uniquely democratic compared to other forms of government at the time, such as the monarchy and Parliament of England, or under the Articles of Confederation?

When the preamble stated "We the people of the United States...do ordain and establish this Constitution...", in the 1780's did more than promise popular self-government. It was the most democratic deed the world had ever seen.

Ordinary people on juries would hear sides of an argument and make a decision in court. Juries of ordinary people would counterbalance judges in the Judicial branch. The House of Representatives was elected by people with no property qualification, nor could this statute be added. The presidency and judgeships were open to men of merit regardless of lineage or wealth. Government servants in all three branches would receive a salary to prevent these offices only held by the independently wealthy. The minimum age rule for Congress helped prevent the wealthy from having these offices at a young age.

Every state was guaranteed to be a "Republican" or "Democratic" government, a government derived from people rather than aristocracy. To speed legislative reforms, the Constitution allowed people to form elected conventions to propose and ratify new constitutional rules. Religious hierarchies were not allowed to entrench the Federal Government or exclude religions. Representatives were chosen by the people and were per-capita according to the state's population (although including a percentage of slaves later considered unfair). No state was allowed to pass a bill of attainder, grant a title of nobility, or pass a post facto law. This prevented judging a person on birth status rather than on behavior.

There was no military funding for more than two years without a new vote, and they could do this by electing a new House. The national government could stop insurrection menacing a republican form of government for any state, but any scheme of national tyranny could be thwarted by an alliance of local militias led by state governments. Military hierarchies answered to democratically elected leaders and not vice versa.

Economic clauses stated that states could not unfairly tax out-of-state people. States could not coin money, emit bills of credit, make anything but gold or silver a coin of tender in debt payment, or pass any law prohibiting contract obligation.

President's serve for four years. The House was biennial, the Senate sextennial, and the Executive quadrennial, forming the separation and balance of powers.

You had to be a citizen at the time of your birth to be elected US President to prevent wealthy foreigners from buying their way to that office. The President as chief defender of the Constitution, can veto bills passed by Congress, forcing another vote. Congress could impeach President's if found untrustworthy.

There was one Supreme Court and other inferior courts. The Constitution stated the right to alter the Constitution with Amendments.

The Constitutions' features that were uniquely democratic compared to other forms of government at the time, such as the monarchy and Parliament of England, or under the Articles of Confederation, were as follows.

In 1787, democratic self-government was almost non-existent. Kings, Emperors, czars, princes, sultans, moguls, feudal lords, and tribal chiefs were in charge. England featured a limited monarchy and an aristocracy, a House of Commons and a restricted electorate. The English Constitution was a hodgepodge of institutions, enactments, cases, usages, maxims, procedures and evolved principles over

many centuries. This Constitution had never been a composite writing nor voted on by the British people or Parliament. The ancient world saw small-scale democracies in Greek city-states and pre-imperial Rome, but none were founded democratically. Before the American Revolution, no people voted on their Constitution. Patriot leaders before the Constitution proposed the Articles of Confederation to govern the 13 states. The 13 state legislatures ratified it with no citizen vote. The US Constitution was a breakthrough in political science, much like Benjamin Franklin's inventions were in natural science. By ordaining the federal Constitution, Americans had altered their state Constitutions and abolished the Articles of Confederation.

Unlike the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution did not have to show proof of past tyranny to change government. The people could amend anything found imperfect or outdated. The 17th and 18th Century British Constitutions were amended by restoring old rules, rather than minting new modern rules. The founders of Greek Republics used myths and superstitions, and altered less.

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Evaluation/feedback on the above work

Note: this section can only be filled out during the evaluation phase.

On-Topic?

Score from your peers: **3**

Style and Organization

Score from your peers: **3**

Strength of Argument

Score from your peers: **2.5**

Use of Evidence

Engagement with Course Themes and Critical Thought

Score from your peers: **3**

