

# Hillsdale

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My name is Douglas Anthony and I have been homeschooled for most of my life. I'm interested in programming, mathematics, swords, lore, and game design, in approximately that order. I recently took up fencing, which has taught me a lot about honor and the "rules of engagement". I personally believe that the most honorable thing one can do in a discussion is to be as intellectually honest as possible, at all times. To achieve this requires freedom of thought and thus freedom of speech. In fact, such a high degree of *learning* is necessary for a functioning society, and in turn, for a functioning economy, and ultimately, for a functioning government. However, such discipline can only come from sound *character*. And such character comes only from the Almighty, through *faith*. Namely, the Christian Faith, as expressed in the Nicene Creed. But such faith can only be observed through *freedom*, and freedom exists only through constant *learning*. Hillsdale's Four Pillars, learning, character, faith, and freedom, are somewhat unique among the virtues. None of them can fully and truly exist without the others, though many people and governments have tried. Moreover, any body, governmental or otherwise, lacking in any of the four will surely fail. As James Madison said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

It is interesting, though perhaps somewhat depressing, that it appears that our government has abandoned all of these pillars. Indeed, our very culture has abandoned them. To find an honorable man is a rare event, to find an honest one even rarer. Any sense of duty we once had has been systematically corrupted in all but the most astute of individuals. Respect is almost an afterthought, and comes only once you have cast your vote and exercised your rights, so long as they are in line with how other people think you should be exercising them.

And this opens the doors to the strange world of authoritarian democracies, or the tyranny of the mob. And this is precisely why our constitution exists: to keep the Federal Government in check, and to provide a minimal, basic common ground on which the several states could unite. This is why our country is named the way it is: not America, not even North America or the States. We are the United States of America. And that is for a reason.

Yet it seems a lot of people never stop to even ask themselves what that name is supposed to mean. We are not one grand "American Empire", but rather, fifty distinct, unique territories, unified on a basis of Liberty and self-government.

I have found so very few institutions that respect this. Hillsdale is one of them. And because of that, I'm grateful for this opportunity. Not an opportunity to merely *learn* a thing, but to grow in character—faith—freedom.