

Origins of the U.S. Constitution

Was it Ideals or Interests?

Course #	19FOC
Format:	Seminar
Moderator(s):	Gene Fisher
Date and Time:	Tuesday, 1:30-3:30 10 weeks, starting September 24
Location:	Smith College Campus Center, Room 102
Maximum number of participants:	16
Auditors accepted:	Yes, up to 2

Purpose: Through a study of its origins, we ask whether the U.S. Constitution was shaped too much by economic interests rather than by the ideals of liberty, justice, and equality.

Description: At every session, members will present and lead a discussion on their chosen topic. Among these topics are economic interests, the impact of slavery, government in the colonies, and the English government as a model or a foil.

Role of participants: Participants will research their chosen topic, drawing on the publications listed below. All members will read material related to the topic of the day to prepare for the discussion that follows the presentation.

Resources: Two books are required: Woody Houton, *Unruly Americans*; and Robert Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* Recommended books are: Charles Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*; and Larry Sabato, *A More Perfect Constitution*.

About the Moderator: Gene Fisher is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts. He has moderated three seminars, the latest on the Imperial Presidency.