

Actually Reading the Constitution

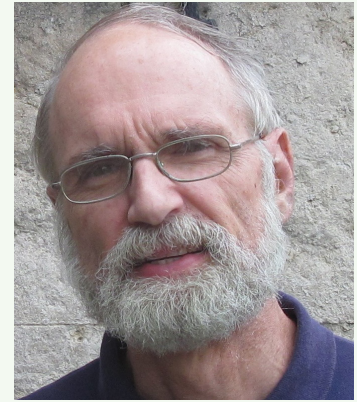
Study Leader: Larry Crocker
Thursdays, 9:30–11:30 a.m.
6 weeks beginning April 17
AIL Classroom, Lethbridge Lodge, Colby-Sawyer College
Maximum number of participants: 40

What does the U.S. Constitution say? We will focus on the language of the Constitution and the history that helps show what that language meant when it was ratified. We will touch only lightly on Supreme Court decisions.

Our first question will be whether the Constitution was constitutional. (There was a prior constitution.) Just what are constitutions and what is their force? Still in the first session, we will turn to the religion clauses. During the second session, we will move to the foundational structure of the Constitution: congressional powers, executive powers, judicial powers and states' powers.

After that, what we will discuss will depend in part upon class interest. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, guns & swords; impeachment; emoluments; republics & democracies; property rights; punishment; racial, gender, & orientation equality; plea bargaining; libel & slander; and executive orders.

The mix between lecture and discussion will vary depending on the topic and participant preference. Reading, in addition to the Constitution, will all be online, including a little case law. There will rarely be more than 30 minutes of reading for a class. Access to the internet will be important.



Larry Crocker

Larry Crocker received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Harvard and taught philosophy for several years at the University of Washington. He then attended Duke Law, clerked for a conservative federal appeal judge, practiced law on Wall Street and in Seattle mostly representing Boeing, prosecuted criminals and taught law at NYU. From 2004 through 2012 he taught classes at Dartmouth in philosophy of law, crime and punishment, ethics, political and social philosophy, philosophy of science and philosophy of religion.