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Session I

Introduction & the Aftermath of the Revolutionary War

Readings:

- Timeline
- Alexander Hamilton, “A Letter from Phocion” (1784).

Guiding Questions:

- Does Hamilton make a moral case in favor of respecting the property rights of Loyalists? If so, what is it?
- According to Hamilton, of what significance is the treaty with Great Britain?
- What role does Congress play in Hamilton’s argument to respect the rights of Loyalists? Does he have a favorable opinion of Congress and the national government?

Session II

Hamilton on Republicanism, Power, and Taxation

Readings:

- Alexander Hamilton, “Federalist 1,” *The Federalist Papers* (1788).
- Alexander Hamilton, “Federalist 9,” *The Federalist Papers* (1788).
- Alexander Hamilton, “Federalist 31,” *The Federalist Papers* (1788).

Guiding Questions:

- What is Hamilton’s purpose in writing *The Federalist Papers*?
- What political obstacles does Hamilton argue that the ratification effort faces?
- What are the advantages of a large republic?
- What is the relationship between national security and taxation?

Session III

Hamilton on the Presidency and Judiciary

Readings:

- Alexander Hamilton, “Federalist 70,” *The Federalist Papers* (1788).
- Alexander Hamilton, “Federalist 78,” *The Federalist Papers* (1788).

Guiding Questions:

- According to Hamilton, what’s the most important thing about the executive? What features go into making a good executive?
- Why must an executive be unitary?
- What should judges get lifetime appointments to the bench?
- What is judicial review? Does Hamilton think it poses any problems for democratic government?

Session IV

Public Debt and Politics

Readings:

- Alexander Hamilton, “Report Relative to a Provision for the Support of Public Credit [excerpt]” (1790).

Guiding Questions:

- What is the basic problem that Hamilton seeks to address in this *Report*?
- What is “discrimination”? Why does Hamilton oppose it?

Session V

Constitutional Interpretation and Foreign Relations

Readings:

- Alexander Hamilton, “Pacificus No. I” (1793).
- Alexander Hamilton, “Pacificus No. II [excerpt]” (1793).
- Alexander Hamilton, “Pacificus No. V[excerpt]” (1793).

Guiding Questions:

- What is the political question that the *Pacificus Letters* seek to answer?
- Is Hamilton’s legal argument persuasive? Why or why not?
- Why does Hamilton distinguish between the King of France and the French people? Do you think this distinction holds up? Is this a distinction you’d find useful in our current politics?