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Session I

The Declaration of Independence and the Founders’ Understanding of Equality and Liberty

Readings:

- The Declaration of Independence (1776), draft.
- Thomas Jefferson, “Letter to Roger Weightman” (1826).
- New Hampshire Bill of Rights (1784).
- James Madison, “Property” (1792).

Guiding Questions:

- What did the Founders mean by equality?
- What is the purpose of government according to the Founders?

Session II

Lincoln and Douglas on Equality, Liberty, and the Philosophy of American Democracy

Readings:

- Stephen Douglas, “Homecoming Speech at Chicago” (1858).
- Abraham Lincoln, “Speech on the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise” (1854).

Guiding Questions:

- What are “popular sovereignty” and “self-government” according to Stephen Douglas? How does he justify these conceptions?
- What is Lincoln’s critique of Douglas’s understanding of self-government?

Session III

Frederick Douglass on Equality and Liberty

Readings:

- Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852).
- Frederick Douglass, “What Should Be Done with the Slaves if Emancipated?” (1862).

Guiding Questions:

- What should be done with the emancipated slave according to Fredrick Douglass?
- What is the 4th of July to the slave according to Douglass?

Session IV

Equality, Liberty and the First Amendment

Readings:

- *Minersville School District v. Gobitis* (1940).
- *West Virginia v. Barnette* (1943).
- *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947).

Guiding Questions:

- What did the Supreme Court decide in *Gobitis*?
- How did the *Barnette* decision modify *Gobitis*?
- If you were on the Supreme Court, how would you have voted in *Gobitis*, *Barnette*, and *Everson*?

Session V

Equality, Liberty and the First Amendment – II

Readings:

- *Braunfeld v. Brown* (1961).
- *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969).
- *Lee v. Weisman* (1992).

Guiding Questions:

- What did the Supreme Court decide in *Braunfeld*, *Tinker*, and *Lee v. Weisman*?
- How would you have voted in each of these cases if you were on the Supreme Court?