



Current and Controversial Issue Discussions
GOLD GUARDIAN BADGE
SYLLABUS

Course Information

Course Name	Guardians of Democracy: Current and Controversial Issue Discussions Gold Guardian Badge
Continuing Education Hours	15
Location	Online Canvas Course
Office Hours	Facilitators are available via email and are happy to schedule a video conference as needed.

Guardians of Democracy Program Description

Developed in partnership between the Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida and IllinoisCivics.org, the Guardians of Democracy Program is an online professional development program with extended learning opportunities for interested 6-12 educators. Our goal is to support a national professional development program and establish a network of certified educators across disciplines that embrace the proven practices of civic education to empower young people for college, career and civic life success.

The course series provides instruction on (1) strategies for current and controversial issue discussions in the classroom, (2) the role of simulations of democratic processes in the classroom, and (3) informed action through service learning. This program is hosted and administered through Free for Teachers Canvas, an open learning management system.

The Guardians of Democracy Gold Guardian Educator in Current and Controversial Issue Discussions Badge recognizes the successful completion of advanced extension work demonstrating competency in teaching all three discussion strategies included in the Current and Controversial Issues Discussions course. This badge certifies that a recipient can successfully create, edit and implement a lesson plan and facilitate student reflection on the process. This badge also certifies that a participant engaged in reflective practice and in an instructional coaching cycle.



Course Objectives

- **Module 1: Planning for Success: Open Issues and Creating a Climate for Discussion**
 - Participants review the objectives and expectations of the course and are aware of the important role educators play in preparing young people to be “guardians of democracy”.
 - Participants will reflect on their lived experiences with current and controversial issue discussions to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth.
 - Participants will provide feedback and resources to peers to support their growth of student-centered classroom discussions.
- **Module 2: Strategy Selection**
 - Participants will review the proven practices of civic education; focusing on the relationship between current and controversial issue discussions and student voice in classroom governance.
 - Participants will engage student voice to identify areas students would like to see the class and themselves collectively improve upon.
 - Participants will analyze student feedback to set common goals for student success.
 - Participants will provide feedback and resources to peers to support their growth of student-centered classroom discussions.
- **Module 3: Current and Controversial Issue Discussion Lesson Plan**
 - Participants will select an open issue for their current and controversial issue discussion performance task aligned to their selected strategy.
 - Participants will review the three classroom strategies used to engage students in civil dialogue, comparing and contrasting the classroom outcomes and protocol for each.
 - Participants will frame a discussion prompt to facilitate student participation and mastery of content.
 - Participants will provide feedback to their peers on their controversial issue discussion performance task plan.
 - Participants will modify their controversial issue discussion performance task plan based on peer feedback and explicit coaching from course facilitators.
- **Module 4: Reflection on Practice**
 - Participants will select a strategy guide and text to create an original lesson plan to implement in their given context for the current and controversial issue discussion performance task.
 - Participants will respond to feedback given from course facilitators to revise and implement an original lesson plan for the current and controversial issue discussion performance task.
 - Participants will review and provide feedback on the lesson plans created by their peers.
- **Module 5: Next Steps**
 - Participants will use a reflection rubric to reflect on the implementation of their lesson plan, providing specific evidence of proficiency that may include student work, photographs, video, and other artifacts.
 - Participants complete a culminating survey reflecting on their professional growth in the course.
 - Participants explore opportunities for deeper learning through participation in future coursework.



Required Materials

- [Canvas: Free for Teacher Account](#)
- [Google: Free Email and Drive](#)

Badging

Digital badges are an important component of the Guardians of Democracy program. Participants have the option to earn three badges for each course. View the [Teacher Reflection Rubric](#) to learn more about how evidence for badges will be assessed.



The Guardians of Democracy Bronze Certified Educator in Current and Controversial Issue Discussions Badge recognizes the successful completion of all Current and Controversial Issue Discussions course modules. This includes the completion of required assignments, portfolio entries and satisfactory performance on the discussions. Participants create a Portfolio of Practice throughout the course in which they reflect on how the course content can enhance their own practice. Participants use their portfolio to create a plan of action to implement one strategy to support current and controversial issue discussions in the summative performance task.



The Guardians of Democracy Silver Distinguished Educator in Current and Controversial Issue Discussions Badge recognizes the successful completion of extension work to demonstrate competency in teaching two of the discussion strategies included in the Current and Controversial Issue Discussions course. This badge certifies that a recipient can successfully create, edit and implement a lesson plan and facilitate student reflection on the process. This badge also certifies that a participant engaged in an instructional coaching and reflective practice



The Guardians of Democracy Gold Guardian Educator in Current and Controversial Issue Discussions Badge recognizes the successful completion of advanced extension work demonstrating competency in teaching all three discussion strategies included in the Current and Controversial Issues Discussions course. This badge certifies that a recipient can successfully create, edit and implement a lesson plan and facilitate student reflection on the process. This badge also certifies that a participant engaged in an instructional coaching cycle and reflective practice.

Discussions

A discussion board is used to discuss and reflect upon the various topics presented in each module. Discussion prompts with specific guidelines and due dates are provided for each module. Participants are expected to submit an original post (response to the discussion prompt) by the deadline and substantive responses (more than yes, no, or I agree) by the end of the following week. Adhere to the expectations outlined in the Discussion Board Rubric when submitting original posts and responses.



**Current & Controversial
Issue Discussions**

Discussion Board Rubric

CATEGORY	5	4	3	2	0-1
Demonstrates Understanding of the Module Content	Post makes 3 or more relevant and insightful references to the module content	Post makes 2 relevant and insightful references to the module content	Post makes 1 relevant and insightful reference to the module content	Post makes 1 reference but it is not from the module content, relevant or insightful	Post does not reference or quote from the module content and shows a lack of understanding
Promotes discussion	Post includes original ideas, poses questions and invites responses	Post poses questions, invites responses	Post is thoughtful enough to promote some discussion	Post does little to promote discussion	Post does not encourage discussion
Connections	Post makes 3 or more clear connections to student learning and/or classroom experiences	Post makes 2 clear connections to student learning and/or classroom experiences	Post makes 1 clear connection to student learning and/or classroom experiences	Post attempts to connect to student learning and/or classroom experiences	Post makes no connections to student learning and/or classroom experiences
Responds	Participant substantively responds to posts of others and responds to queries by others on own posts	Participant substantively responds to posts of others	Participant substantively responds to posts of 1 other participant	Participant responds to posts of others but are not substantive	Participant does not respond to posts of others

Module Topics and Assignments

Module 1: Planning for Success: Open Issues and Creating a Climate for Discussion

- Portfolio of Practice
- Portfolio – Reflection on Past Practice
- Discussion Board Groups – Successes and Intentions for Growth

Module 2: Strategy Selection

- Portfolio – Analysis of Student Surveys
- Discussion Board Groups – Student Reflections

Module 3: Current and Controversial Issue Discussion Lesson Plan

- Portfolio – Planning for Success
- Portfolio – Reviewing the Strategies
- Portfolio – Choosing the Right Issue
- Portfolio – Crafting your Prompt
- Discussion Board Groups – Let's Get Feedback



**Current & Controversial
Issue Discussions**

Module 4: Reflection on Practice

- Current and Controversial Issue Discussion Lesson Plan DRAFT Submission
- Current and Controversial Issue Discussion Lesson Plan REVISED Submission

Module 5: Next Steps

- Portfolio – Teacher Reflection Rubric
- Discussion Board – Share Your Work
- Closing Survey

Evaluation and Grading

Completion of all modules is required. Completion of the required assignments, Portfolio of Practice activities and satisfactory performance on the discussions is required to receive the Bronze Level Guardians of Democracy CCID Badge. Grading criteria for the Threaded Discussions and activities are based on rubrics and the professional judgment of the instructor.

Performance	Points
Satisfactory	70-100
Unsatisfactory	69 or below

Professional Integrity Statement

Participants will adhere to the highest standards of professionalism by engaging as a productive member of the learning community, submitting original work and respecting the thoughts and ideas of others.

Accessibility Statement

The course providers are committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the instructor at the beginning of the course to discuss needed accommodations.

Copyright

This course may contain copyright-protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course, you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

