

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

FILED SENATE
Mar 17, 2025
S.B. 300
PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE BILL DRS45133-MT-7A

Short Title: NC REACH Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Sanderson, Hanig, and Galey (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO REQUIRE AT LEAST THREE CREDIT HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN
AMERICAN HISTORY OR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO GRADUATE
FROM A CONSTITUENT INSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH
CAROLINA WITH A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE OR A COMMUNITY COLLEGE
WITH AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. TITLE

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "North Carolina Reclaiming College Education on America's Constitutional Heritage Act" or the "NC REACH Act."

PART II. REQUIRE THREE CREDIT HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN AMERICAN HISTORY OR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AT CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 116-11(3) reads as rewritten:

"(3) ~~The~~ Except as provided in subdivision (15) of this section, the Board shall determine the functions, educational activities and academic programs of the constituent institutions. The Board shall also determine the types of degrees to be awarded. The powers herein given to the Board shall not be restricted by any provision of law assigning specific functions or responsibilities to designated institutions, the powers herein given superseding any such provisions of law. The Board, after adequate notice and after affording the institutional board of trustees an opportunity to be heard, shall have authority to withdraw approval of any existing program if it appears that the program is unproductive, excessively costly or unnecessarily duplicative. The Board shall review the productivity of academic degree programs every two years, using criteria specifically developed to determine program productivity."

SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 116-11 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(15) The Board of Governors shall adopt a policy requiring each constituent institution of The University of North Carolina to require at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or American government, in accordance with G.S. 116-11.5, in order to graduate from the institution with a baccalaureate degree."



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SECTION 2.(c) Article 1 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 116-11.5. American history or American government instruction required for graduation with a baccalaureate degree.

(a) Each constituent institution of The University of North Carolina that offers a baccalaureate degree shall require as a condition of graduation with a baccalaureate degree that all students complete at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or American government that provides a comprehensive overview of the major events and turning points of American history and government. A course required pursuant to this section shall meet the following criteria:

(1) Require each student to read at least the following documents in their entirety:

- a. The Constitution of the United States of America.
- b. The Declaration of Independence.
- c. The Emancipation Proclamation.
- d. At least five essays from the Federalist Papers, as determined by the instructor.
- e. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail.
- f. The Gettysburg Address.
- g. The North Carolina State Constitution.

(2) Include a cumulative final exam on the principles in the documents listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection. The final exam shall meet the following criteria:

- a. Comprise at least twenty percent (20%) of the student's total course grade.
- b. Focus substantially on the provisions and principles of the documents listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the perspectives of the authors of the documents, and the relevant historic contexts at the time the documents were written.

(b) The chancellor of each constituent institution, or his or her designee, may exempt a student from the requirements of this section if the student has successfully completed at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or American government in a postsecondary-level course provided outside the constituent institution that satisfies the requirements of this section, including credit based on the following:

- (1) A passing score on an Advanced Placement exam.
- (2) A passing score on an International Baccalaureate exam.
- (3) A passing score on an AS-Level or A-Level Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) course.
- (4) A passing grade in a dual enrollment course.

(c) The Board of Governors shall ensure that the requirements of this section are incorporated into the degree requirements of all baccalaureate programs and do not do any of the following:

- (1) Add to the total number of credit hours required for a degree.
- (2) Conflict with the accreditation process for any constituent institution.

(d) The Board of Governors shall ensure that each constituent institution complies with the requirements of this section. No later than November 15, 2026, and annually thereafter, the Board shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on compliance with this section by each constituent institution. The report shall include, at a minimum, a copy of the syllabus for each course that is offered to comply with this section.

(e) The Board of Governors, in its discretion, may remove the chancellor of a constituent institution for failure to comply with this section over more than one academic year."

PART III. REQUIRE THREE CREDIT HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN AMERICAN HISTORY OR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AT NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

SECTION 3.(a) G.S. 115D-5 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(aa) The State Board of Community Colleges shall adopt a policy requiring each community college to require at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or American government, in accordance with G.S. 115D-11, in order to graduate from the community college with an associate degree."

SECTION 3.(b) Article 1 of Chapter 115D of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115D-11. American history or American government instruction required for graduation with an associate degree."

(a) Each community college shall require as a condition of graduation with an associate degree that all students complete at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or American government that provides a comprehensive overview of the major events and turning points of American history and government. A course required pursuant to this section shall meet the following criteria:

(1) Require each student to read at least the following documents in their entirety:

- a. The Constitution of the United States of America.
- b. The Declaration of Independence.
- c. The Emancipation Proclamation.
- d. At least five essays from the Federalist Papers, as determined by the instructor.
- e. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail.
- f. The Gettysburg Address.
- g. The North Carolina State Constitution.

(2) Include a cumulative final exam on the principles in the documents listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection. The final exam shall meet the following criteria:

- a. Comprise at least twenty percent (20%) of the student's total course grade.
- b. Focus substantially on the provisions and principles of the documents listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the perspectives of the authors of the documents, and the relevant historic contexts at the time the documents were written.

(b) The president of a community college, or his or her designee, may exempt a student from the requirements of this section if the student has successfully completed at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or American government in a postsecondary-level course provided outside the community college that satisfies the requirements of this section, including credit based on the following:

- (1) A passing score on an Advanced Placement exam.
- (2) A passing score on an International Baccalaureate exam.
- (3) A passing score on an AS-Level or A-Level Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) course.
- (4) A passing grade in a dual enrollment course.

(c) The State Board of Community Colleges shall ensure that the requirements of this section are incorporated into the degree requirements of all associate degree programs and do not do either of the following:

- (1) Add to the total number of credit hours required for a degree.
- (2) Conflict with the accreditation process for any institution.

(d) The State Board of Community Colleges shall ensure that each community college complies with the requirements of this section. No later than November 15, 2026, and annually thereafter, the Board shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on compliance with this section by each community college. The report shall include, at a minimum, a copy of the syllabus for each course that is offered to comply with this section.

(e) The State Board of Community Colleges, in its discretion, may remove the president of a community college for failure to comply with this section over more than one academic year."

PART IV. ALIGN FOUNDING PRINCIPLES COURSE REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 4.(a) G.S. 115C-81.45(d) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(3a) A passing grade in an advanced course, as defined in G.S. 115C-174.26(a), or a dual enrollment course, shall satisfy the Founding Principles of the United States of America and the State of North Carolina course requirement if, in addition to meeting the requirements of this section, the course requires students to read the following documents in their entirety:

a. The Constitution of the United States of America.

b. The Declaration of Independence.

c. The Emancipation Proclamation.

d. At least five essays from the Federalist Papers, as determined by the teacher.

e. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail.

f. The Gettysburg Address.

g. The North Carolina State Constitution."

SECTION 4.(b) This section is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with courses offered in the 2025-2026 school year.

PART V. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 5. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year to students accepted for initial enrollment in a baccalaureate program at a constituent institution or initial enrollment in an associate degree program at a community college.