

NATION'S YOUTH *at Risk*

Higher education is failing to teach America's history and founding principles, according to a recent report released by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. This study, "The Coming Crisis in Citizenship," reveals the alarming decline of civic education in colleges and universities nationwide. The future of our nation depends on an informed citizenry. Thomas Jefferson said, *"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free... it expects what never was and never will be."*

More than half of college seniors surveyed in the study could not identify the correct century when the first American colony was established at Jamestown. And 55.4 percent of students could not recognize Yorktown as the battle that brought the American Revolution to an end (28 percent thought the Civil War battle at Gettysburg was the correct answer). Fewer than half of students recognized "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," is from the Declaration of Independence.



**JOHN M. ASHBROOK
CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Ashland University

This problem stems, in part, from a lack of middle and high school teachers who have received a proper education in the subjects they teach. Today, mastery of the subject content is no longer considered essential, and future teachers typically take more courses emphasizing educational techniques and methodology than they do courses on content in the subject areas they will teach.

The current picture of civic education in America is disheartening, but not hopeless. While some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the United States are falling short of the mark, the Ashbrook Center at Ashland University is renewing the foundations of civic education in America by reinvigorating the serious study of the principles of American liberty and self-government.

Through history and civic education programs for high school history and government teachers, undergraduate and high school students, and through events and resources for private citizens, the Ashbrook Center is renewing America's purpose and promise.

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Presidential Academy for American History and Civics

The Presidential Academy for American History and Civics, the newest program at the Ashbrook Center, leads secondary school teachers in a careful study of the pivotal turning points in American history memorialized by the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and the “I Have a Dream” speech. Each year, 50 teachers—one from each state—spend five days in Philadelphia, six days in Gettysburg and six days in Washington, D.C., studying the American Revolution and Founding, the Civil War and the Civil Rights movement, respectively. During their stay in each of these cities, participants are surrounded by the streets and halls, the battlefields, public places and private lodgings where the history they study took place. The Academy encourages teachers to enter into the debates, the ideas, and the arguments that shaped these three great American epochs while giving life to the great documents—those distinctly American poems—that uncover our history and the places where the history was made.

The excellent faculty teaching in the Presidential Academy hail from colleges and universities across the nation. Dr. Lucas Morel, Washington and Lee University, is the main instructor and academic director for the Academy. Among the faculty are two Pulitzer Prize winning authors, including Dr. James McPherson, Princeton University, who has written numerous books on the Civil War. Dr. McPherson leads teachers on an unforgettable tour of the Gettysburg battlefield.

Beginning with three documents, teachers in the Presidential Academy study the three fundamental ideas that shaped and continue to shape our national identity, our public institutions, and our public discourse. Participants join in a conversation across time about the most important issues facing America in 1776, 1863, 1963 and today—a conversation these teachers become better equipped to continue with their own students.

The Presidential Academy is funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Education. Teachers participating in the Academy may receive graduate credit in the new Master of American History and Government degree program.

Master of American History and Government

The Master of American History and Government degree program at Ashland University, established in 2005, is the only one of its kind in the nation, designed specifically for middle and high school teachers of history, civics and government.

The Master’s program was created to address the lack of proper history and civic education in our schools by providing teachers with a deep and broad understanding of the subjects they teach, focusing on the use of original historical documents in the classroom. The program does not teach methodology or classroom management techniques.

The courses in the program are intensive week-long seminars offered only during the summer. Seventeen courses will be offered



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over five weeks in the summer of 2007. A distinguished lineup of faculty from both Ashland University and other universities across the nation teach in the program.

Though the program is new, it has already gained national significance. In its second year, nearly 300 students, representing 50 states, took courses in the program. Though most are teachers taking courses for professional development, 61 students from around the country, including Alaska and Hawaii, are enrolled in the degree program. The program provides a unique and convenient alternative for teachers across the nation seeking a master's degree in the subject area they teach.

Web-based Lesson Plans

Related to the Master's program, the Ashbrook Center is working with the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop web-based lesson plans for U.S. History and Government teachers. The lessons, created as a part of this partnership, are placed on the NEH's EDSITEment web site, which features the best of the humanities on the web. The EDSITEment web site is a part of the Marco Polo consortium, a project of the Verizon Foundation.

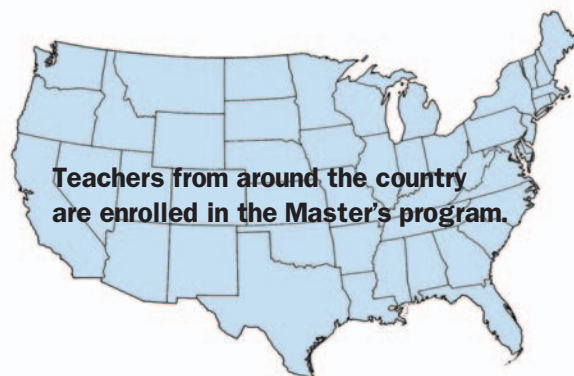
This project is funded by a series of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, part of the NEH's We the People initiative. The project is led by Dr. John Moser, associate professor of history at Ashland University, and distinguished faculty and secondary school teachers from across the nation are developing the lessons. To view the lessons, please visit TeachingAmericanHistory.org/neh.



"The Ashbrook Center has its own admirable history initiative underway. By offering summer institutes to social studies teachers, [the Ashbrook Center is] helping to enrich the knowledge of thousands of students reached by a single teacher in the course of a long career. That's a real 'value-added multiplier' program. In an era when history teachers too often lack history degrees, or even minors, or even hours in history, such programs are crucial, and they're going to make a difference."

Bruce Cole

Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities



Ashbrook on the Internet

ashbrook.org – The Center's flagship web site, ashbrook.org, features audio of all of the Ashbrook Center's speakers, regular commentary and articles, and information on events and the Center's many programs.

NoLeftTurns.ashbrook.org – Named after John Ashbrook's slogan in his 1972 Presidential Primary bid against Richard Nixon, No Left Turns is the Ashbrook Center's blog. The site features daily commentary by Dr. Peter Schramm and Ashbrook Adjunct Fellows.

TeachingAmericanHistory.org – The Center's web site for teachers, TeachingAmericanHistory.org, features an extensive library of over 1,500 original historical documents for use by teachers and students. The site also features an extensive audio archive of the Center's seminars and summer institutes for teachers.

PresidentialAcademy.org – The Center's web site for the program that takes teachers to Philadelphia, Gettysburg and Washington, D.C. This site features information about the program, the text of the original historical documents studied by the teachers and an audio archive of the entire first year of the Academy.

mahg.ashland.edu – The Master of American History and Government program attracts teachers from across the country, and this web site offers an explanation of the program and its curriculum, information about upcoming courses, and the ability to apply and register for courses online.

Podcasts (ashbrook.org/podcasts) – The Ashbrook Center offers three Podcasts, which allow visitors to subscribe to audio broadcasts that can be downloaded to your computer or portable MP3 player. Every week, Dr. Peter Schramm uses his "You Americans" Podcast to talk with interesting and thoughtful people about American politics and other topics. There is also a Podcast for events at the Center and one for the Center's seminars for teachers.

Ashbrook Scholar Program

The Ashbrook Scholar Program is a rigorous and top-rated academic program for undergraduate students at Ashland University educating principled leaders for America's future. The number of Ashbrook Scholars admitted to the program has more than doubled over the last five years – from 50 in 2001 to more than 100 in 2006.

Contrary to the alarming statistics citing how little college students know about American history, Ashbrook Scholars not only know American history but also understand what it means to be an American

and why our country merits their affection.

They come to understand that their country, the United States of America, is not only the most powerful and the most prosperous country on earth, but also that it is the most free and the most just. During their four years at the center, both in and out of the classroom, they learn why this is so.

Students undertake a program of courses and activities that challenge their mettle and bring out the best qualities of their character. It is a serious program for serious, public-spirited students with a passion for civic leadership.

An integral part of the education of an Ashbrook Scholar is hands-on, real-life experience in public affairs provided through internship opportunities. Each summer, Scholars are placed in internship positions at a variety of organizations including think tanks, government offices, non-profit agencies, and businesses around the country.

Scholars have interned at the White House, the Heritage Foundation, The Fund for American Studies, "The Weekly Standard," Fox News, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Center for Equal Opportunity, The American Conservative Union, The Institute of United States Studies at The University of London, "The Washington Times," The Vatican, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and various offices in state and national government.



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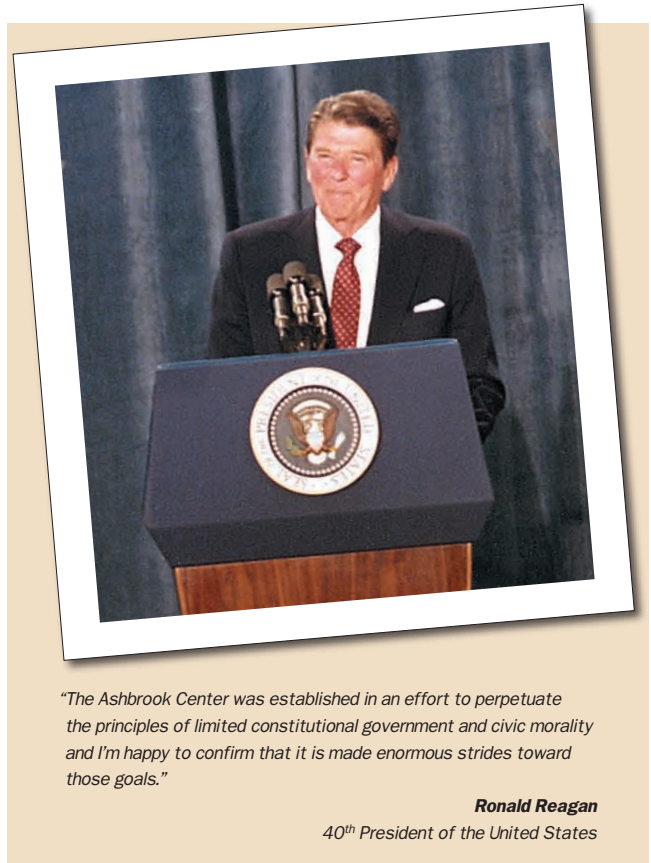
Dr. Peter W. Schramm
Executive Director, Ashbrook Center



The following is an excerpt from a guest speaker's letter recounting his visit with students in the Scholar program in the Ashbrook Center:

"I had a delightful experience by accident after my seminar which, because it so eloquently revealed one of the great accomplishments of the Center, I want to tell you about. I came back to the Center with Peter—it was about 3 p.m. on Saturday—to drop off and pick up a few things. There we found about a dozen students gathered around one of the large tables in the vicinity of Peter's office. They were sharing some buckets of KFC Chicken and bubbling over with contagious camaraderie. Peter introduced me and excused himself to go take care of some business. I sat down with the students, and there began a wonderful half-hour conversation which is especially what I wanted to tell you about."

"What wonderful students! They were happy, full of energy, completely at home with one another, with the faculty and at the Center. Most importantly, they were completely at home with interesting ideas. They were brimming over with them, overflowing with them. Their intrepid curiosity was like a joyous thirst. 'Do you think it is worth reading Heidegger if you don't know German?' 'Will studying Biblical Greek help in learning Attic Greek?' Their conversation was laced with good-humored and informed references to Platonic dialogues, Aristotle's works, Shakespeare, Kant, Nietzsche, American politics. They talked with great enthusiasm about the most challenging classes and the most challenging teachers. I learned from them that they gather together all the time at the Center to study and work on papers and talk—and it was clear that they loved these times. They seemed to me to be a perfect model of what a student community should be. They were friends who were both supportive of and competitive with one another, mutually engaged in serious study of the most serious things, and taking delight in it all."



"The Ashbrook Center was established in an effort to perpetuate the principles of limited constitutional government and civic morality and I'm happy to confirm that it is made enormous strides toward those goals."

Ronald Reagan
40th President of the United States

History of the Center

The John M. Ashbrook Center, located on the Ashland University campus, was established and named in honor of the late Congressman who represented Ohio's 17th Congressional district for 21 years. The Ashbrook Center is devoted to the study, research, discussion, and perpetuation of the great traditions of America, to which John Ashbrook dedicated his life's work. These concepts were re-emphasized by President Ronald Reagan when he personally dedicated the Center on May 9, 1983.

The opening remarks at dinner that evening declared the Ashbrook Center's mission to educate this and future generations of students and citizens, sustaining President Lincoln's dream— *that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.*

The Ashbrook Center teaches what it means to be an American. It is here that students, teachers and citizens learn they are the fortunate of the earth, among the blessed of all times and places. And, they learn this is an obvious and incontrovertible thing—a truth, a self-evident truth. They learn that their blessing, their great good fortune, lies in the nation into which they were born.

Events

The Ashbrook Center hosts events and lectures reaching beyond campus, encouraging citizens to develop a deeper understanding of the principles upon which our great nation was founded.

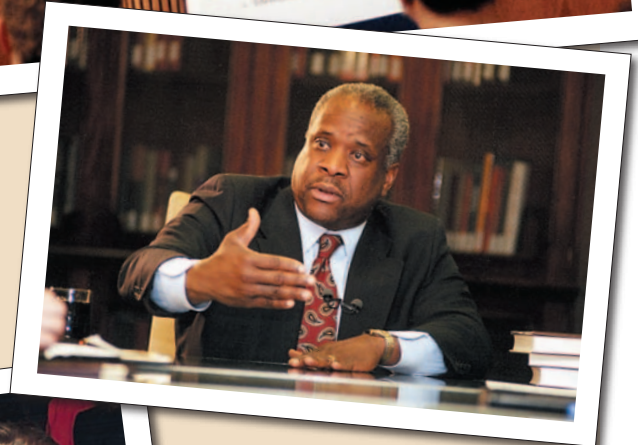
Ronald Reagan inaugurated the Center at the First Annual Ashbrook Memorial Dinner. This annual event features some of the world's most noted political dignitaries. Past speakers include George H. W. Bush, Lady Margaret Thatcher, Justice Clarence Thomas, Karl Rove, Henry Kissinger, Benjamin Netanyahu and Barbara Bush.

The Major Issues Lecture Series has played an important role in the region, featuring six lectures each year. More than 100 speakers have participated in the series including Dick Arney, Fred Barnes, William J. Bennett, Linda Chavez, Lynne V. Cheney, Bruce Cole, John Fund, Jonah Goldberg, Rudolph Giuliani, Jeane Kirkpatrick, William Kristol, Rich Lowry, Edwin Meese, Robert Novak, Kathleen Parker, Dan Quayle, Bill Sammon and Tony Snow, among others.

Each year, the Ashbrook Colloquia Series features scholars or authors from across the disciplines who discuss their recent book or work.

For the past eight years, the Ashbrook Center has held a public lecture on Constitution Day, celebrating and commemorating the great charter of our liberties. While already a tradition at Ashland, new federal legislation now requires colleges and universities to conduct annual programs on the Constitution.

Beyond their value to the general public, these events serve as an important educational tool for the undergraduate students in the Ashbrook Scholar Program and for high school students. In addition, C-SPAN's coverage of select Ashbrook events extends these events beyond the campus and community to impact a national audience.



Above: **Former First Lady Barbara Bush** speaks to a class of Ashbrook Scholars at Ashland University.

Clarence Thomas, U.S. Supreme Court Justice, speaks at an Annual Ashbrook Dinner.

Margaret Thatcher, Former Prime Minister of Britain, speaks to Ashbrook Scholars.



"I salute this very, very wonderful program and I applaud the work that you are doing in the name and in the memory of that great American, Congressman John Ashbrook."

Colin Powell
Secretary of State

Ask the Executive Director



Dr. Peter W. Schramm

How long have you been at Ashland and at the Ashbrook Center? Eighteen very good years. I have the best job at Ashland University! I look after 100 first-class students, and I teach in one of the best political science departments in the country. I have great colleagues who are fine scholars and excellent teachers. We spend our time doing political philosophy and introducing our students

to people like Jefferson, Madison and Lincoln. It is an exciting and friendly place that is always invigorating. The Center is full of energy and seriousness. We couldn't get lazy here even if we wanted to because either the students or the faculty press one another on the critical questions relating to self-government.

How many faculty teach in the history and political science department at Ashland University? There are nine professors. In terms of students, I think the department is now one of the largest at Ashland University. The department is exceptionally good, arguably among the top 10 undergraduate political science departments in the country. The classes for students studying political science and history are incomparable. I recently had a conversation with a Harvard professor who was teaching some of the same books in his junior level classes that we teach in freshman level classes.

The quality of the Ashbrook Scholar program is directly related to the quality of the political science and history faculty. These professors are wonderful teachers and first-class scholars who breathe new life into the study of things that would, at other universities, seem to be dry-as-dust.

Are there other programs like this at other colleges and universities? No, not to my knowledge. I don't think there is anything like the Ashbrook program anywhere else, although there are some that look similar, for example at Princeton, Hillsdale, Grove City or Louisville. None of these programs, however, focus on the principles of civil and religious liberty and civic education the way we do, and frankly, their students aren't as good. Some have tried to imitate us, but we are unique. We are not imitable in part because we are such a unique part of Ashland University; we are responsible for running our own affairs as well as raising our own funds to support our many programs.

How has the Ashbrook Center changed over the years? The Ashbrook Center has expanded dramatically in size and scope. The Center has grown from an organization with a strong local and state identity to one of national reach and influence. The public visibility of the Ashbrook Center was built initially on events and speaking engagements that featured well-known public leaders. Our speaking events are now a small component of the Center's many programs.

The Ashbrook Center's educational programs have been the source of the Center's greatest growth. These programs have an aim and audience that extend nationwide. The Center has taken the national lead in providing educational programs that seek to teach the meaning and significance of America through civic education, emphasizing the study of America's founding principles and constitutional government.

Why is the Ashbrook Center prospering? We have achieved a national reputation as the leader in history and civics education. We attract the best students and utilize the finest faculty both from the History and Political Science Department at Ashland University and from universities across the nation. Our programs are well administered, and Ashbrook faculty and staff dedicate a great amount of time and energy to the success of our programs and to individual students. This dedication, coupled with a comprehensive curriculum that emphasizes reading original historical texts and documents, makes the impressive character of the Ashbrook Center immediately apparent to our students. And the seriousness, respect and honesty that characterize everything we do form the foundation for a community of colleagues and friends among students, faculty and staff.

What do you see as the future of the Ashbrook Center? We will continue to get even better, and also bigger. The Ashbrook Center is poised to continue to grow in ways that will reshape the way history, civics and politics are taught nationwide. The Center's activities will emphasize our many educational programs for high school teachers, undergraduate college students and high school students.

We will continue to seek fine students, both for our undergraduate and graduate programs, from all around the country. We will continue to use only the best professors and continue to have a very large presence on the internet. The work of the Center will become ever more national in scope, helping Ashland University attain national preeminence in the teaching of the principles upon which our nation was founded. **Accent**