
Christopher D. Spinale

School of Politics, Security, & International Affairs
4297 Andromeda Loop N.
Howard Phillips Hall
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816-1356

Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government
Phone: (407) 823-4036
Email: Christopher.spinale@ucf.edu

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

Ph.D. University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida
2024 Concentration: Social Science Education
Specialization: Political Science

Ed.S. University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida
2007 Concentration: Curriculum and Instruction

M.Ed. University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida
2004 Concentration: Social Science Education

B.A. Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
1997 Major: Political Science

Florida Certifications: Social Science, 6-12; Political Science, 6-12; Civic Seal of
Teaching Excellence
Certificate Expiration: June 30, 2029

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University

2016 – Present **Associate Director & Instructional Specialist**, Lou Frey Institute, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, College of Sciences, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

2020 – 2023 **Adjunct Instructor**, School of Teacher Education, College of Community Innovation and Education, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

K – 12 Schools

2012 – 2016 **Curriculum Supervisor, Secondary Social Studies**, Brevard District Schools, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Viera, Florida

1997 – 2012 **Social Studies Department Chair and High School Teacher**, Brevard Public Schools, Viera High School, Viera, Florida & Titusville High School, Titusville, Florida

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2026 **Scholarly Excellence for Creative Published Works**, Faculty Excellence, Libraries, and Office of Research, University of Central Florida
- 2025 **Learner-Centered Design Badge for POS 2041**, Awarded for the creation of a supportive learning environment that meets diverse student needs and clarifies faculty expectations, College of Sciences, University of Central Florida
- 2022 **Excellence in Research Award**, Top 20 Funded Awards, College of Sciences, University of Central Florida
- 2022 **Excellence in Research Award**, Highest Funded Internal Collaboration, College of Sciences, University of Central Florida
- 2021 **Dr. B.J. Allen Outstanding Social Studies Leadership Award**, Florida Council for the Social Studies
- 2018 **Dr. J. Doyle Casteel Outstanding Leadership in Social Studies Award**, Florida Council for the Social Studies
- 2012 **Dr. Theron Trimble Florida Social Studies Teacher of the Year Award**, Florida Council for the Social Studies
- 2011 **Social Studies Teacher of the Year Award**, Brevard Public Schools, Viera, Florida
- 2010 **Teacher of the Year Award**, Brevard Public Schools, Viera High School, Viera, Florida
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RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP ACTIVITIES

Research Interest and Focus

- Civics Studies
- History of Social Studies
- Learning of civics as an apprenticeship
- Social Studies methods
- Student civic engagement
- Teaching and learning civics
- U.S. Government and Politics

Book Chapters (refereed)

Masyada, S.S., & Spinale, C. (2025). Practice what we preach: The teacher as advocate and leader. In S. Kaka, M. Hollstein, E. Kenyon, & N. Patterson (Eds.), *Teacher educators as scholar citizens: Activism and resistance in uncertain times*. Rowan & Littlefield.

Professional Journal Articles (refereed)

Masyada, S.S., Spinale, C.D., & Waring, S.M. (Forthcoming, 2026). Preparing for democracy: Civic education and democratic practice. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*.

Spinale, C. (2026). We hold these truths: Teaching the American promise with courage, care, and complexity. *Social Education*, 90(1), 10-14.

Masyada, S. S. & Spinale, C. (2025). Teaching current events during a contentious time. *Social Education*, 89(1), 33-38.

Spinale, C. (2018). [Review of the book *Turning pragmatism into practice: A vision for social studies teachers*, by D.W. Stuckart]. *Journal of Social Studies Research*, 42(4), 407-409

EXTERNAL GRANTS FUNDED

Masyada, S., Spinale, C., & Garton, K. (2022-2023). *Florida department of education civic literacy excellence initiative*. Florida Department of Education. Amount of Award: \$1.5 million. Co-Principal Investigator.

Masyada, S., & Spinale, C. (2021-2022). *Guardians of democracy project: Illinois middle school civics implementation*. McCormick Foundation. Amount of Award: \$100,000. Co-Principal Investigator.

Spinale, C. (2021). *Florida's uniform ballot project*. Florida Supervisors of Elections. Amount of Award: \$2,000. Principal Investigator.

PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES (refereed)

National and International Conferences

Spinale, C. & Conroy, A. (2026, April). *Teaching American government under constraint: Civic learning in a large general education course*. Presentation at the annual Research Virtual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Spinale, C., Bailey T., Masyada, S., McAlister, N., Osborn, E., Phillips, D. (2025, December). *A republic if we can teach it: Student-centered civic education resources*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, D.C.

Spinale, C., Garton K., Lowe, Z., Masyada, S. & Wood, E. (2025, December). *A revolution of words, the declaration at 250: Its promises & perspectives*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, D.C.

Spinale, C., Garton K., Masyada, S. & Wood, E. (2024, November). *15-minute civics and government lessons for k-5 students*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Boston, MA.

Spinale, C. & Masyada, S. (2023, November). *Cacophony at the state house: Stories of faculty activism in troubled times*. Panel discussion at the annual meeting of National Council for the Social Studies, Nashville, TN.

- Spinale, C., Garton, K., & Masyada, S. (2022, December). *Civics in real life: A resource for discussing current events*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Philadelphia, PA.
- Daneels, M., McVey, V., Renihan, P., & Spinale, C. (2019, November). *Guardians of democracy: Putting proven pedagogy into practice*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Austin, TX.
- Spinale, C., Sheridan, A., & Dougherty, M. (2019, November). *Incorporation of cross-curricular training in social studies and English language arts pre-service teacher preparation programs*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Austin, TX.
- Masyada, S., & Spinale, C. (2019, June). *Advancing civics education in Florida: Lessons learned*. Presentation at the summer meeting of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Orlando, FL.
- Spinale, C., & Sheridan, A. (2019, February). *Bridging the achievement gap: An examination of factors influencing student performance on the civic end-of-course assessment*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the International Society for the Social Studies, Orlando FL.
- Masyada, S., & Spinale C. (2019, January). *Civic education*. Presentation at the College and University Faculty Assembly Retreat, Miami, FL.
- Spinale, C., Medina, G., & McVey, V. (2018, November). *Keeping current with civic action*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Chicago, IL.

State Conferences

- Spinale, C., Garton, K., Masyada, S., & Wood, E. (2023, September). *Florida civics literacy exam: Approaching the four competencies and addressing the instructional challenges*. Workshop for the Florida Civics Educator Summit. Orlando, FL.
- Spinale, C., McVey, V., & Shields, S. (2021, October) *Going for gold! Increase student engagement through discussion, simulations, and service learning*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the Florida Council for the Social Studies, Orlando, FL.
- Masyada, S., McVey, V., & Spinale, C. (2021, February) *Civics in real life: Resources for virtual instruction*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the Florida Council for the Social Studies, Orlando, FL.
- Masyada, S., McVey, V., & Spinale, C. (2020, November) *Civics in real life...in real time*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, Hartford, CT.
- Spinale, C., Sheridan, A., & Dougherty, M. (2019, October). *Incorporation of cross-curricular training in social studies and English language arts pre-service teacher preparation programs*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the Florida Council for the Social Studies, Orlando, FL.

Spinale, C. (2018, October). *Keeping current with civic engagement*. Presentation at the annual meeting of the Florida Council for the Social Studies, Orlando, FL.

Lo, J. C., & Spinale, C. (2018, October). Politics in action: A project-based approach to semester high school government. Presentation at the annual meeting of the Florida Council for the Social Studies, Orlando, FL.

Lo, J. C., & Spinale, C. (2017, October). Project-based learning in high school government. Presentation at the annual meeting of the Florida Council for the Social Studies, Innisbrook, FL.

DISCUSSANT (invited)

Spinale, C. (2026, August). *Toward a more perfect union: Separation of powers*. Discussant for the Florida League of Women Voters and the Brevard County Library System, Satellite beach, FL.

Spinale, C. (2024, November). *State of civic education*. Panel discussant for Florida Press Educational Services, Tampa, FL (virtual event).

Spinale, C. (2024, September, August, & July). *Growing voters' framework*. Panel discussant for Tufts University's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement's Teaching for Democracy Alliance's Task Force on Educating for American Democracy, Somerfield, MA (virtual event).

Spinale, C., Healy, S., Hurh, E., & Miller, J. (2024, April). *How might we build culture and support with policymakers (local, state, national) to advocate for teaching constitutional democracy as content and practice?* Panel discussant for Tufts University's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement's Teacher Leadership Task Force on Educating for American Democracy, Somerfield, MA (virtual event).

Spinale, C. (2023, December). *Preparing future voters learning series: Supporting classroom instructional efforts in rural communities – implementing*. Panel discussant for Tufts University's Teaching for Democracy Alliance, Somerfield, MA (virtual event).

Jackson, R., Levenick, C., Spinale, C., & Wise-Bauer, S. (2022, November). *What K-12 educators need for stronger civics*. Panel discussant at the Jack Miller Center's National Summit on Civic Education, Mt. Vernon, VA.

PRESENTATIONS (invited)

Spinale, C. (2025, May). *Understanding the 22nd amendment and presidential succession*. Presentation for the Florida League of Women Voters, Suntree, FL.

Spinale, C., Masyada, S., & Petri, S. (2025, May). *Understanding the 22nd amendment and presidential succession*. National presentation with the Bill of Rights Institute, Arlington, VA (virtual event).

Spinale, C. Garton, K., Masyada, S., & Wood, E. (2024, March). *Civic learning week: A conversation with former congressman Denis Ross*. Presentation for CivXNow, Boston, MA (virtual event).

Spinale, C. (2024, March). *Community of practice: Elementary civics*. Presentation for Jack Miller Center, Philadelphia, PA (virtual event).

Spinale, C. (2023, November). *Preparing future voters learning series: Supporting classroom instructional efforts in rural communities – integrating*. Presentation for the Tufts University's Teaching for Democracy Alliance, Somerfield, MA (virtual event).

Spinale, C. & Daneels, M.E. (2023, October). *Preparing future voters learning series: Supporting classroom instructional efforts in rural communities – planning*. Presentation for the Tufts University's Teaching for Democracy Alliance, Somerfield, MA (virtual event).

Spinale, C. (2022, August). *Double clicking for democracy: The importance of engaging students in simulations of democratic processes*. Presentation for the Arizona Bar Association, Phoenix, AZ (virtual).

Spinale, C. (2022, June/July) *Florida's Constitution and citizenship: why it matters*. Keynote address for the Florida Department of Education, Jacksonville and Pensacola, FL.

Spinale, C., Masyada, S., & Garton K. (2022, April) *Citizenship and civics education, pride and engagement*. Presentation for the Florida Department of Education, Orlando, FL.

Spinale, C. (2021, July) *Founding principles: An analysis of primary source documents*. Presentation for the Florida Department of Education, Chipola, FL.

Masyada, S., McVey, V., & Spinale, C. (2021, May) *Civics in real life: Resources for virtual instruction*. Presentation for Illinois Civics, DuPage Regional Office of Education, DuPage, IL.

Spinale, C., & Wesley, L. (2021, April). *Tips & tricks for implementing the civic action project in your middle school classroom*. Presentation for the Constitutional Rights Foundation Webinar Series, Los Angeles, CA.

Spinale, C., Masyada, S., & McVey, V. (2020, October). *Living civics online: Resources for virtual instruction*. Presentation for the American Federation of Teachers Share My Lesson's Civics/Election Webinar Series, Washington, D.C.

COURSES TAUGHT

University of Central Florida

POS 2041: *American National Government* - This course investigates how the national government is structured and how the American constitutional republic operates and examines the ways in which citizens participate in their government and ways their government responds to citizens. Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Summer 2025, Fall 2025, Spring 2026, Summer 2026, Fall, 2026

POT 3206: *Political Ideals and the U.S. Constitution* – This documents-based course examines the origins of the ideals that shaped the U.S. Constitution and analyzes how constitutional principles are reflected in political and governing documents.
Summer 2024

SSE 4042: *Teaching Social Science as a Profession* – This course explores the daily processes and responsibilities of a professional social studies teacher and assesses the organizational structure of a social studies teacher as a career and profession.
Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Fall 2023

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Service to the University

- 2025 – Present “AI for All” Initiative, Faculty Liaison to the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida
- 2025 POS 2041 (American National Government) Course Redesign Committee member, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida
- 2025 Chair, Lou Frey Institute Instructional Specialist Search Committee, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida

Service to the Media

- 2024 “Clearwater proposes a big change in elections. What voters need to know: Experts discuss the pros and cons of a March referendum on whether city council races can be decided with runoffs.” *Tampa Bay Times*, Tampa, FL (January 25, 2024).

Service to National Organizations

- 2022 – 2025 Leadership Council, Teaching for Democracy Alliance, Tufts University
- 2021 – Present Civic Practitioner Committee, Jack Miller Center, Philadelphia, PA.
- 2017 Constitutional Rights Foundation, Civic Action Project Curriculum Development for Middle Schools, Los Angeles, CA.

Service to State Organizations

- 2025 – Present Chair, Endowment Board, Florida Council for the Social Studies (FCSS)
- 2021 – 2023 President, Florida Council for the Social Studies (FCSS)

- 2015 – Present Board Member, Florida Council for the Social Studies (FCSS)
- 2021 Florida Department of Education, Civics End of Course Exam Item Review Committee, St. Petersburg, FL.
- 2020 Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year Selection Committee, Tallahassee, FL.
- 2017 Florida Department of Education, Civics End of Course Exam Item Review Committee, Jacksonville, FL.
- 2016 Florida Department of Education U.S. History End of Course Exam Item Review Committee, Jacksonville, FL.
- 2015 – 2016 Vice President, Florida Association of Social Studies Supervisors (FASSS)
- 2015 Florida Department of Education, U.S. History End of Course Exam Item Review Committee, Jacksonville, FL.
- 2013 Florida Department of Education, U.S. History End of Course Exam Standard Setting Committee, Orlando, FL.
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