

Orange Unified School District
GOVERNMENT & POLITICS: US AP
Semester Course

GRADE LEVEL: 12

PREREQUISITES: A.P. or Honors U.S. History: B or better grade.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT:

Advanced Placement (AP) American Government & Politics is designed to give students a critical perspective on politics and government in the United States. This course involves both the study of general concepts used to interpret American politics and the analysis of specific case studies. Topics in the course are generally covered in college courses and will prepare students for advanced placement exam in the subject area.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

BY THE END OF THE COURSE THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:

Examine the kind of government established by the Constitution, paying particular attention to federalism and separation of powers.

Be familiar with a variety of theoretical perspectives relating to the Constitution, such as democratic theory, theories of republican government, pluralism, and elitism.

Appreciate that individual citizens hold a variety of beliefs about their government, its leaders, and the U.S. political system in general. It is important for students to understand how these beliefs are formed, how they evolve, and the processes by which they are transmitted.

Understand what leads citizens to differ from one another in their political beliefs and behaviors, and the political consequences of these differences.

Understand the historical significance of the U.S. party system, the functions and structures of political parties and the effects they have on the political process.

Apply their understanding of the roles played by lobbyists and interest groups to the institutions of government.

Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the media in the political system and its impact on public opinion, voter perceptions, campaign strategies, electoral outcomes, agenda development, and the images of officials and candidates.

Become familiar with the organization and powers, both formal and informal, of the major political institutions in the United States Congress, the presidency, the federal bureaucracy, and the federal courts.

Expected to understand ties between the various branches of national government and political parties, interest groups, the media, and state of local governments.

Able to explain in detail the formation of policy agendas, enactment of public policies by Congress and the President.

Able to compare and contrast in detail policy networks.

Explain in detail the ramifications to society of the major Supreme Court decisions.

Come to an understanding of the legal, social and political evolution of minority groups and women.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND APPROXIMATE UNIT TIME ALLOTMENTS:

	<u>WEEKS</u>
1. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government	2
1. Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution	
2. Separation of powers	
3. Federalism	
4. Theories of democratic government	
II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors of Individuals	2
1. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders	
2. Processes by which citizens learn about politics	
3. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion	
4. The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life	
5. Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors	
III. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media: Mechanisms that Facilitate the Communication of Interests and Preferences by Like-Minded Citizens	3

WEEKS

1. Political parties and elections (including their functions, organization, historical development, and effects on the political process)
 2. Interest groups (including PACs)
 1. The range of interests that are or are not represented
 2. The activities of interest groups
 3. The effects of interest groups on the political process
 4. The unique characteristics and roles in the political process
 3. The mass media
 1. The functions and structures of the media
 2. The impacts of media on politics
- IV. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts 5
1. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of powers
 2. Relationships among these four institutions
 3. Links between these institutions and political parties, interest groups, the media, subnational governments, and public opinion
- V. Public Policy 2
1. Policy making in a federal system
 2. The formation of policy agenda
 3. The role of institutions in the enactment of policy
 4. The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation
 5. Linkages between policy processes and the following:
 1. Political institutions and federalism
 2. Political parties
 3. Interest groups
 4. Public opinion
 5. Elections
 6. Policy networks
- VI. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights 3
1. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation
 2. Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties
 3. The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties

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Addendum

THE CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS FOR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT GRADE 12

Principles of American Democracy

Students in grade twelve pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government. They compare systems of government in the world today and analyze the history and changing interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government. An emphasis is placed on analyzing the relationship among federal, state, and local governments, with particular attention paid to important historical documents such as the *Federalist Papers*. These standards represent the culmination of civic literacy as students prepare to vote, participate in community activities, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

12.1 Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.

1. Analyze the influence of ancient Greek, Roman, English, and leading European political thinkers such as John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Niccolò Machiavelli, and William Blackstone on the development of American government.
2. Discuss the character of American democracy and its promise and perils as articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville.
3. Explain how the U.S. Constitution reflects a balance between the classical republican concern with promotion of the public good and the classical liberal concern with protecting individual rights; and discuss how the basic premises of liberal constitutionalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence as “self-evident truths.”
4. Explain how the Founding Fathers’ realistic view of human nature led directly to the establishment of a constitutional system that limited the power of the governors and the governed as articulated in the *Federalist Papers*.
5. Describe the systems of separated and shared powers, the role of organized interests (*Federalist Paper Number 10*), checks and balances (*Federalist Paper Number 51*), the importance of an independent judiciary (*Federalist Paper*

Number 78), enumerated powers, rule of law, federalism, and civilian control of the military.

6. Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments.

12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).
2. Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society (e.g., the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; right to choose one's work; right to join or not join labor unions; copyright and patent).
3. Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes.
4. Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.
5. Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations; that is, why enjoyment of one's rights entails respect for the rights of others.
6. Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States, including the process of naturalization (e.g., literacy, language, and other requirements).

12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

1. Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.
2. Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.
3. Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity.
4. Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

1. Discuss Article I of the Constitution as it relates to the legislative branch,

including eligibility for office and lengths of terms of representatives and senators; election to office; the roles of the House and Senate in impeachment proceedings; the role of the vice president; the enumerated legislative powers; and the process by which a bill becomes a law.

2. Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.
3. Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government.
4. Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.
5. Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
6. Explain the processes of selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices.

12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.

1. Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly) articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal-protection-of-the-law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.
2. Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over the decades (e.g., the Warren and Rehnquist courts).
3. Evaluate the effects of the Court's interpretations of the Constitution in *Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, and *United States v. Nixon*, with emphasis on the arguments espoused by each side in these cases.
4. Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, and *United States v. Virginia* (VMI).

12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices.

1. Analyze the origin, development, and role of political parties, noting those occasional periods in which there was only one major party or were more than two major parties.
2. Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections.
3. Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding.
4. Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office).
5. Discuss the features of direct democracy in numerous states (e.g., the process of

referendums, recall elections).

6. Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.

12.7 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

1. Explain how conflicts between levels of government and branches of government are resolved.
2. Identify the major responsibilities and sources of revenue for state and local governments.
3. Discuss reserved powers and concurrent powers of state governments.
4. Discuss the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government's power.
5. Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders.
6. Compare the processes of lawmaking at each of the three levels of government, including the role of lobbying and the media.
7. Identify the organization and jurisdiction of federal, state, and local (e.g., California) courts and the interrelationships among them.
8. Understand the scope of presidential power and decision making through examination of case studies such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, passage of Great Society legislation, War Powers Act, Gulf War, and Bosnia.

12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press.
2. Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics.
3. Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.

12.9 Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

1. Explain how the different philosophies and structures of feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies, parliamentary systems, and constitutional liberal democracies influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.
2. Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary

- systems of government.
4. Describe for at least two countries the consequences of conditions that gave rise to tyrannies during certain periods (e.g., Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, Cambodia).
 5. Identify the forms of illegitimate power that twentieth-century African, Asian, and Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.
 6. Identify the ideologies, causes, stages, and outcomes of major Mexican, Central American, and South American revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
 7. Describe the ideologies that give rise to Communism, methods of maintaining control, and the movements to overthrow such governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, including the roles of individuals (e.g., Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel).
 8. Identify the successes of relatively new democracies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the ideas, leaders, and general societal conditions that have launched and sustained, or failed to sustain, them.

12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

