

## AP United States Government Syllabus

### Course Description

AP United States Government is designed to teach students the workings of the US government and the political process. More than just memorizing the form of government, students are required to analyze the formal and informal processes that make the government function the way that it does.

Additionally, students will examine the foundations of government, its original intents, and how those ideas have played out over the course of American History. This class will prepare students to take the AP US Government and Politics Exam. This syllabus reflects the new format of the AP U.S. Government and Politics curriculum instituted by the College Board in the spring of 2018.

### Textbooks

Wilson, James Q. *American Government*. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Company. 2011. **(CR16)**

Bose, Meena. *Classical Ideas and Current Issues in American Government*. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Company. 2008. **(CR16)**

### Readings

Each section below contains one chapter from *American Government* by Wilson and may include readings from our primary source reader *Classical Ideas and Current Issues* by Bose. A specific reading schedule with due dates will be given separately. Plan on reading the entirety of each chapter and the corresponding primary sources by the date they are due. Other reading handouts largely from contemporary news and commentary may be given as well.

### Current events presentations

Students, individually or as a pair, will prepare a current events presentation that they will share with the class at the start of their assigned week. The presentation must include at least one story that links one or more of the big ideas to each of the five units in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework. The current events presentation also must include at least one relevant visual source (photo, political cartoon, or infographic) for each story with a caption that explains its connection to the big idea and/or unit that story covers.

### Analytical paper assignment (CR13)

Students will be required to write three analytical papers about important topics in United States government and politics. These papers will be due on varying dates during the school year. Each paper must be no more than four pages in length. In each paper, the students must briefly summarize the assigned readings, connect the readings to the current unit of study (how they do this will vary depending on the resources provided for each paper and the unit of study in which it is due), and make a connection between the readings and a current political issue. One to two analytical paper assignments will require students to also examine how the assigned article and a required case/foundational document corroborate or contradict one another.

### Debates (CR14)

Students, in teams of three, will participate in a debate about a current public policy or issue in American government and politics. Each team will get a five-minute opening statement, a five-minute cross examination period, and a five-minute closing statement. Students must also have a visual that

helps support their main arguments. This visual can be a chart, graph, table, political cartoon, or infographic. Students will analyze the visuals presented by other teams as part of the debate. Finally, each team is responsible for providing an annotated works cited page of the resources used to develop their arguments and questions.

Thinglink assignment for required court cases (CR14)

In pairs, students will create a Thinglink interactive presentation for one of the 15 required Supreme Court cases using Thinglink.com. Their interactive presentation must include a summary of the constitutional issue involved in the case, a summary of the holding of the case, any significant dissents in the case, and connections to at least two similar cases (acting as precedent or overturning the original decision). In addition to the previous requirements, each student’s Thinglink should contain relevant visuals, such as political cartoons, photographs, or tables/charts and a caption that explains their relevance to the case.

Local Civic Engagement Identify and research an issue of current debate. (CR1)(CR2)(CR5)

Attend a school board, city council, or local government meeting related to that issue. Observe and document policy making processes and outcomes. This requirement will be fulfilled in a field trip to the Colorado Statehouse in Denver. Students who might be absent from the field trip will be provided an alternative assignment in the local area. Document the differing perspectives and implications. Federalism reflects the dynamic distribution of power between national and state governments. Present your own perspective during a public comment period during a public meeting. Write a letter to the editor for the school or local paper, blog, or on-line forum relating your argument or perspective.

Curricular Requirements (CR)

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CR5 The course includes the Political Participation Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs). • See page 9	
CR6 The course integrates public policy within each unit. • See pages 10, 11	
CR7 The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units. • See pages 9, 11	
CR8 The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts. • See page 2	
CR9 The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret quantitative data to explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors. • See page 7	
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CR11 The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret visual information to explain how the elements of the visual illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors. • See page 2

CR12 The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios. • See pages 7, 11

CR13 The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant evidence, about a concept described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework. • See pages 8, 9

CR14 Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework that culminates in a presentation of findings. • See page 11

CR15 Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases. • See page 5

CR16 Students and teachers have access to a college-level U.S. government and politics textbook. • See page 4

## Introduction to AP U.S. Government and Politics

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level year-long course that not only seeks to prepare students for success on the AP Exam in May, but also provide students with the political knowledge and reasoning processes to participate meaningfully and thoughtfully in discussions and debates that are currently shaping American politics and society. It is important to note that this course is not a history course; it is a political science course that studies the interconnectedness of the different parts of the American political system and the behaviors and attitudes that shape this system and are the byproduct of this system.

AP U.S. Government and Politics accomplishes these goals by framing the acquisition of political knowledge around enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics that can be applied to a set of disciplinary practices through the use of select reasoning processes. Through the development of this set of political knowledge, disciplinary practices, and reasoning processes, by the end of the course, students will be able to analyze current and historical political events like a political scientist and develop factually accurate, wellreasoned, thoughtful arguments and opinions that acknowledge and grapple with alternative political perspectives.

This year-long course will meet for 90 minutes every other day and for 45 minutes every day for 3rd period classes. This course uses Knowledge In Action Project Based Learning curriculum.

This course contains five projects that are organized around the following master question: "What is the proper role of government in a democracy?" Each project involves political simulations through which students take on roles that help contextualize the content required by the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework.

## Course Questions

Course Master Question:

What is the Proper Role of Government in a Democracy?

This question is used iteratively throughout the course. Students return to it in each unit, revising and deepening their responses in light of the concepts they are learning.

#### Unit Questions:

Unit 1: Founders' Intent . . . How do founding documents describe how our government should work?

To what extent should we be faithful to the founders' intentions? (4 weeks)

Unit 2: U.S. Elections . . . How are elections run?

To what extent do elections reflect the will of the people? (7 weeks)

Unit 3: SCOTUS . . . How does the Supreme Court work?

How does the Supreme Court balance the rights of the individual and the needs of society? (6 weeks)

Unit 4: Congress . . . How does the government work together to make laws?

To what extent is Congress designed to make laws that reflect the will of the people? (5 weeks)

Unit 5: Government in Action . . . How does the government work together to implement public policy?

To what extent is the way government implements public policy beneficial or detrimental to the people?

(6 weeks)

#### Other Important Questions to be Addressed:

- Is there too much – or too little – power in the federal government?
- Does federalism work?
- Is the judicial branch too powerful? Too active?
- Can liberty and security be balanced?
- Can there be liberty without equality? Can there be equality without liberty? What is the connection between liberty, equality, and democracy?
- Do you agree with the statement that “All men are created equal?” What kinds of equality are protected by the Constitution, and by what means?
- Are the rights of women and minorities protected adequately under U.S. law?
- Does the president possess adequate – or too much – power over war making and foreign policy?
- Does the U.S. government have too many constitutional checks and balances? Does the separation of powers among the three branches of government create a deadlock in government?

#### Sample Assignments and Assessments

- Socratic seminars of significant readings
- Observe and evaluate local and state government activities
- Observe and evaluate campaign/election events
- Evaluate and compare student's own sources of political socialization
- Evaluate and compare student's own respective positions on the "political spectrum"
- Read and compare the political perspectives of written and broadcast news editorials and news coverage

[CR8]

- Evaluate and explain the use of political cartoons for communicating arguments about course concepts such as polarization of politics, arguments over size and scope of power, or the current state of political campaigning [CR11]
- Analyze public opinion polling data and voting history data
- Research and evaluate various types of campaign advertising (TV and print ads) to examine how candidates use visual communication to convey messages about themselves and their opponents [CR11]
- Research and evaluate the legislative records/performance of local legislators
- Compare U.S. political structures and processes to parliamentary political systems and proportional electoral systems [CR8]
- Research the activities of various interest groups, including PACs and public interest groups, including analysis of records of campaign contributions to selected state and federal candidates
- Research the nature and potential influence of campaign contributions
- Research nature, viewpoints, and trends of various types of public opinion polls
- Write answers to free response questions within each unit
- Participate in managing an election campaign in a mock election
- Participate in an online simulation of Congress – including role playing the representation of diverse congressional districts, drafting legislation based on research on significant contemporary issues, and analyzing political campaign strategies.
- Analyze and present selected Supreme Court cases
- Participate in a "moot court" for a federal district court and the Supreme Court

[CR8] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts.

[CR11] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret visual information to explain how the elements

of the visual illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

The course also consists of:

- A unit exam at the end of each unit that will be administered over two class periods
- A week for civic engagement project presentations at the end of the course
- Two weeks of review for the AP Exam at the end of the course

The political knowledge, enduring understandings, and big ideas acquired and developed in each unit will be

applied to the disciplinary practices using the reasoning processes outlined below.

### **Overview of the AP Exam and Keys to AP Exam Success**

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will be comprised of the following sections:

Multiple-Choice Questions:

Number of Questions: 55

Structure – The questions on multiple choice will ask students to:

- Analyze and compare political concepts
- Analyze and interpret quantitative, text-based, and visual sources
- Apply course concepts, foundational documents, and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of hypothetical and real-world scenarios

Timing: One hour and 20 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

Free-Response Questions:

Number of Questions: 4

Structure – The four questions on the free response will ask students to:

- Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios
- Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
- Analyze quantitative data
- Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence

Timing: One hour and 40 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

As the breakdown of the AP Exam highlights, success in this course and on the AP Exam requires far more than the memorization of political knowledge. Success in this course and on the AP Exam requires connection-making with the aim of being able to analyze political information, regardless

of the format the information is presented, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned opinion regarding this information. The different pieces of the course fit together in pursuit of this aim through course content and big ideas, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices.

### **Course Content and Big Ideas**

The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics. The big ideas that connect the content in the course units include:

- Constitutionalism (CON)
- Liberty and Order (LOR)
- Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD)
- Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)
- Methods of Political Analysis (MPA)

### **Reasoning Processes**

The reasoning processes are the thought processes that will facilitate connection-making and analysis in the pursuit of effectively executing the disciplinary practices in the course. In other words, the reasoning processes form the cognitive bridge between the course content/big ideas and the disciplinary practices. The reasoning processes in this course include:

- Definition/Classification: Demonstrating knowledge of course concepts
- Explain - Process: Explaining political processes
- Explain - Causation: Explaining causes and effects of political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors
- Explain - Comparison: Explaining similarities and differences among political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors

### **Disciplinary Practices**

The disciplinary practices are the tasks students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices gives students the tools to analyze political information regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The disciplinary practices in this course include:

- Practice 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context
- Practice 2: Apply Supreme Court decisions
- Practice 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics



- Practice 4: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources
- Practice 5: Develop an argument in essay format

Every AP Exam question fuses course content, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices. Thus, in-class and outside of class assignments will focus on the acquisition of course content and the application of course content to disciplinary practices using reasoning skills.

### **Required Course Texts and Additional Resources**

NOTE: This course utilizes a college-level textbook. The AP Program does not endorse any one textbook for this course. However, students and teachers must have access to a college-level U.S. government and politics textbook. While the College Board has not listed a textbook here, you must identify the text you will use in your class to satisfy this curricular requirement. You may choose a text from the sample textbook list or identify another appropriate college-level textbook. [CR16]

[CR16] — Students and teachers have access to a college-level U.S. government and politics textbook.

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Additionally, students will have access to the following free online resources:

- AP United States Government and Politics reading skills lessons – This resource contains all of the required Supreme Court cases and foundational documents, along with close reading and discussion questions and activities.
- Oyez – This online database provides succinct and accessible overviews for all Supreme Court cases.
- The National Constitution Center’s Interactive Constitution – This online resource is an annotated U.S. Constitution that includes essays from multiple perspectives that frame the debates underlying key clauses and provisions of the U.S. Constitution. The National Constitution Center also has a blog that applies constitutional principles to current events.

### **Required Supreme Court Cases**

[CR15: Supreme Court cases]

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 required Supreme Court cases:

- Marbury v. Madison (1803)
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Schenck v. United States (1919)
- Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
- Baker v. Carr (1961)
- Engel v. Vitale (1962)

- Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)
- Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)
- New York Times Company v. United States (1971)
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)
- Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- United States v. Lopez (1995)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010)

[CR15] — Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases. For each of these cases, the facts, issues, holdings, and reasoning underlying the majority opinions can be found through the Oyez database online. Oyez also has an app that can be downloaded to smartphones. Students will be required to complete multiple assignments analyzing and comparing these cases with other non-required, contemporary landmark cases. [CR15: activity]

[CR15] — Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP

U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases. The list above is not an exhaustive list of the Supreme Court cases that will be analyzed and discussed in this course. Additionally, students will have access to the AP United States Government and Politics reading skills lessons which includes information and majority opinion excerpts for cases that complement the required cases, such as:

- Gonzales v. Raich (2005) to go along with the analysis of McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Heart of Atlanta Motels v. United States (1964) to go along with the analysis of United States v. Lopez (1995) 5

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- Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002) to go along with the analysis of Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Morse v. Frederick (2007) to go along with the analysis of Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

Required Foundational Documents

[CR10: foundational documents]

This course will incorporate both in-class and take home assignments in which students are asked to analyze and discuss the nine required foundational documents to help them understand the context and beliefs of the founders and their critics and the debates surrounding the writing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution: [CR10: activity]

- The Declaration of Independence
- The Articles of Confederation
- Federalist No. 10
- Brutus No. 1
- Federalist No. 51
- The Constitution of the United States
- Federalist No. 70
- Federalist No. 78
- “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

[CR10] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret qualitative sources (primary and secondary sources including the nine required foundational documents) to explain how they relate to political concepts. To aid in the analysis of these foundational documents, students will also have access to the AP United States Government and Politics reading skills lessons. This online reader contains strategies for analyzing the required foundational documents and a sampling of related readings, including:

- Excerpts from Locke’s Second Treatise of Civil Government to go along with the analysis of the Declaration of Independence
- “Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republican I” to go along with the analysis of the Articles of Confederation
- Essays from the National Constitution Center’s “Matters of Debate” series (Interactive Constitution resource) to go along with the analysis of the Tenth Amendment

## Section #2: Civic Engagement Project – Elections and Congress Units

The civic engagement projects in this course are embedded in Unit 2 (Elections) and Unit 4 (Congress).

**Elections:** Elections is a simulation of a mock presidential election. This cycle is the next step in students discovering the proper role of government in a democracy. In this project cycle, students take on one of four roles in an election simulation: candidate team, interest group leader, political party leader, or member of the media. Through five tasks, students are able to see how each role influences the outcome of an election from the primary phase through general election season. Through the tasks that drive the project, students have the opportunity to master some of the new skill objectives emphasized in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework. For example, students have an authentic reason to practice analyzing public opinion data (Gallup Poll) on a variety of issues in the role of candidate team as they craft a campaign plan based on voter demographic information. Students now take on roles as candidate teams, interest groups, media outlets, and political party leaders. Through a series of tasks from announcing their candidacy to the general election, students familiarize themselves with public opinion (Gallup Poll, Pew), political ideology formation, polls, and the voting characteristics of the electorate. They also learn

the complex relationships between interest groups, political parties, and the media as they attempt to navigate and influence the campaigning process in their respective roles. With campaign platforms and promises presented and finalized, students vote to elect the next president of the United States at the end of the cycle. Once the president is elected and sworn in, students learn about the roles of the president and the impact that a presidency, and the political party it supports, can have on the political process and the proper role of the government. Depending on their role, students will share/communicate by writing campaign memos, news stories, interest group pamphlets, and speeches. Candidate teams will also create political ads for their campaigns. Candidates for each party will participate in primary and general election debates. [CR9]

**Congress:** The purpose of this cycle is to learn how the legislative process works. Students are legislators in the United States Congress. While this cycle helps students understand how a bill becomes a law in greater detail, it also helps students better understand the intricacies of political compromise within a two-party legislative body. Through this cycle, the teacher should help students make connections to concepts from prior cycles: party platforms created by the political party leaders and candidate teams from the Elections cycle, and the application of ideas like separation of powers and checks and balances. Students will experience the consequences of the bicameral system framed by the Constitution, looping back to Founders' Intent. As students write, amend and debate bills, they have the opportunity to learn more about different areas of public policy. Students also experience firsthand the causes and consequences of political polarization as they work to advance party strategy at the committee level and during congressional floor debate. Depending on their role, students will write and/or mark-up legislation, participate in committee meetings, and speak during floor debates. [CR12]

[CR9] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret quantitative data to explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

### **Section #3: Course Outline**

This section provides a breakdown of each of the course's five units. Included in each breakdown is an overview of unit topics, big ideas, learning objectives, key terms, and connections to the required foundational sources and required Supreme Court cases. Each breakdown also includes a sampling of activities and assignments used during the unit and the Civic Engagement Project tasks that fall under the unit.

#### **Unit 1: Founders' Intent**

(4 weeks)

Time and again, we see modern Americans invoke the founders as they express their vision of what our government should be. Some today claim that modern government is far overstepping the boundaries envisioned at the Constitutional Convention, and advocate a much smaller federal government. Others argue the opposite. Liberals argue forcefully about the founders' embrace of freedom of speech, while conservatives argue just as forcefully about the right to bear arms. During this project cycle, students will be the decider. Students will examine historical debates between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists, as well as an argument between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. Finally, students will investigate a current issue and uncover what is at the crux of these cyclical arguments.

The unit will allow students to evaluate the purpose and function of government, particularly in regard to the role of government in creating or protecting liberty, and to learn foundational concepts such as state, nation, politics, and sovereignty. Students will examine alternative ideas of democracy and the social and political conditions that support the development of democracy. Students will gain an understanding of the events and philosophical principles behind the U.S. Constitution. The unit will have students examine the economic, political, and social realities of the period during which the Constitution was framed and consider how these realities shaped important constitutional principles including limited government, judicial review, popular sovereignty, federalism, checks and balances, separations of powers, limited government and popular sovereignty. By examining one aspect of state government, students will begin to develop a practical appreciation for the characteristics of contemporary federalism. [CR1]

In this unit, students will be introduced to the argumentative essay. To prepare for the essay, students will read and debate the Federalist and Anti-Federalist ideas at the time of the Constitutional Convention. In the argumentative essay assessment, students will be presented with a quotation from a Federalist or an Anti-Federalist and will be asked to evaluate the author's claim using the Constitution. [CR13]

[CR1] — The course includes the Foundations of American Democracy Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

[CR13] — The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant evidence, about a concept described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework.

### **Unit 1 Supplemental Reading**

Selected supplemental readings on the role of government, democracy, and concepts of liberty, including Gabriel A. Almond, "Capitalism and Democracy." PS: Political Science and Politics, Vol. 24, No. 3. (1991): 467-474;

David Brooks, "The American Way of Equality," New York Times, January 14, 2007; Supreme Court decision in *DeShaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services*, 489 U.S. 189 (1989); the U.S. Constitution; excerpts from writings by Locke, Mill, and other Enlightenment authors; excerpts from the Magna Carta, Articles of Confederation, Federalist No. 1, and Federalist No 51; selected current news articles; excerpts from Woll, Peter. *American Government: Readings and Cases*. 19th ed. New York, NY: Pearson Higher Education, 2012; and Supreme Court opinions in *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 4 Wheaton 316 (1819), *Gibbons v. Ogden*, 9 Wheaton 1 (1824), and *U.S. v. Morrison*, 529 U.S. 598 (2000).

### **Unit 2: U.S. Elections**

(7 weeks)

Elections are the closest link between the citizens and their government as they demonstrate their values through voting. In this cycle, students will learn about party politics and public opinion, as well as the role of media, interest groups, and social movements on participation. They will also examine how legal and practical protections, barriers and demographics influence participation and participate in a mock election. Each student will take on the role of campaign consultant, candidate, interest group leader, party leader or member of the media over the course of a mock presidential campaign.

Students will gain an understanding of the nature and influence of political culture on the political process and of the agents of political socialization. Students will consider the nature of beliefs that individuals hold about their government, the processes by which individuals learn about politics (newspapers, internet, media, radio, and parenting, etc.), and the extent to which the processes of political socialization shape voting behavior and participation in political life. They will examine how ideology shapes policy outcomes as well as the measurement of public opinion. The unit will also have students examine the extent to which economic class, age, and gender affect voter behavior, including by comparison the political behavior in other countries and by analyzing and evaluating data on political formation and participation, demographics and group behavior. Students will understand the organization, role, and function of linkage institutions in American politics. This necessarily will involve developing an understanding of the principles behind the concerns expressed by James Madison in Federalist No.10 for the potential formation and influence of factions. Students will consider the similarities and differences between an interest group and a political party. Students will examine the role and influence of political parties and interest groups within the specific context of the structure of American government and the American electoral system, including comparison to their role and influence in parliamentary systems and proportional electoral systems. Students will develop an understanding of the workings of the electoral processes, including the role of money and interest groups on campaigns, the laws governing elections and campaign financing (and the debates over the regulation of elections and campaign financing), the evolving influence of technology, and the way that campaigns work on the national, state, and local level. This includes how federal policies on campaigning and other electoral rules influence election outcomes. Students will compare the nature of elections in the context of American government with those in parliamentary systems and proportional electoral systems and will research data on political participation, campaign contributions, and polling. [CR4] [CR5]

Students will write a second position essay in this unit. Students will be given articles from authors with varying opinions on the debate over the role of money in the political process. The position essay prompt will read as follows: Do SuperPacs harm the United States political process? Write a thesis statement that takes a position on this question and develops a line of reasoning. Provide evidence to support your argument from at least two authors. Identify an opposing author's argument and provide refutation or rebuttal to that argument. [CR7] [CR13]

[CR4] — The course includes the American Political Ideologies and Beliefs Unit and addresses all related big ideas

(BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

[CR5] — The course includes the Political Participation Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

[CR7] — The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

[CR13] — The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant evidence, about a concept described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework.

### **Unit 2 Supplemental Reading**

Selected supplemental readings from current election sites and news sources; selected data from Stanley, Harold W. *Vital Statistics on American Politics 2015-2016*. 1st ed. Moline, IL: QC Press,

2015; selected data from Cohen, Rich, James A. Barnes, Charlie Cook, and Michael Barone. Almanac of American Politics 2018. Bethesda, MD: Columbia Books, Inc., 2017.

### **Unit 3: Supreme Court of the United States**

(6 weeks)

In the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) unit, students will expand upon knowledge acquired as they test the constitutionality of public policy. Through the study of the Bill of Rights and landmark Supreme Court cases, students will prepare for the civil rights and civil liberties portions of the AP Exam and will engage with these topics through two, smaller project cycles. Students will explore civil liberties through a circuit court simulation and will take on the role of a federal judge or team of lawyers arguing for or against a case. Then, students will explore civil rights cases, building to the culminating challenge of a mock Supreme Court case. Each student will serve as a petitioner, respondent, law clerk, or Supreme Court Justice to help decide the outcome of a landmark case. [CR6]

Students will understand the workings of the judicial process, the function and powers of the federal judiciary, and the relationship of the judiciary to the other branches of government, including comparison to the role of the courts in other governmental systems. Students will understand the development and significance of the Rule of Law and of judicial review to successful democracies. Students will evaluate the history of the federal judiciary and the role the courts in the American political system. Students will examine the courts' history, its protections and restriction of minority rights, structure, and its major decisions, citizen state interactions and evaluate the extent to which the court has acted as a policy-making institution (the pros and cons of judicial activism or restraint), and consider the politics of judicial appointments. Students will observe cases before local federal and state courts. Students will develop an understanding of the key provisions of the Bill of Rights due process and the 14th Amendment, the evolution of modern concepts of civil liberties and civil rights, and the framework of analysis used by the Supreme Court in evaluating claims pertaining to civil liberties. This includes a discussion of the history of the interpretation of the Bill of Rights, including how the 14th Amendment was interpreted to selectively incorporate parts of the Bill of Right to the states. Students will analyze and present Supreme Court cases that are important to the development and definition of civil liberties and civil rights. Students will participate in a mock Supreme Court case on a recent or pending case with issues of contemporary political significance, including 14th Amendment equal protection cases. Civil Rights will be explored, including how the 14th Amendment advanced equality, and how the citizen social movements influenced the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Finally, students will examine how Supreme Court rulings have both protected and restricted minority rights over time. [CR2] [CR3]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR2] — The course includes the Interactions Among Branches of Government Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

[CR3] — The course includes the Civil Liberties and Civil Rights Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

### **Unit 3 Supplemental Reading**

Selected supplemental readings include selected Federalist papers; *Marbury v. Madison* 5 U.S. 137 (1803); and selected Supreme Court cases arising under the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 14th Amendments.

#### Unit 4: Congress

(5 weeks)

This unit puts students in the role of members of the U.S. Congress, specifically in the House of Representatives. Students will choose the congressional district they will represent, and will conduct preliminary research on the political, economic, and social composition of the electorate as a foundation for creating their legislative agendas. Students are then challenged to tackle real issues of contemporary significance to the Congress while representing the interests of their respective constituencies. Students will organize their office, choose leadership, and select committees for the work of the House. Working in small groups, students will write legislation concerning significant policy issues with which Congress is currently engaged. The bills will be first submitted to committee, and if the committee passes the bill, it will be debated on the House Floor. In a culminating event, students will participate in a House Floor Debate and will work to pass their legislation consistent with the interests of their district/state. [CR6] [CR7] [CR12]

Students will understand the functions, organization, and powers of Congress and the workings of the legislative process, including comparison to those of a legislature in a parliamentary system of government. Students will consider how the role, organization, and function of Congress, including the relationship between Congress and the president, have changed with events in American history. Students will understand domestic and foreign policy and policymaking in the federal system, the role of various government and non-governmental institutions on the formulation of the public policy agenda and public policy, the role of the bureaucracy and the courts interpreting and implementing public policy, and the means by which linkage institutions communicate public policy and provide feedback to policymakers. [CR2]

Mock Congress Simulation: Students will begin the simulation of Congress by researching and selecting a Congressional District (House members) or state (Senators) to represent and registering to participate. Students will research their districts and/or states, identifying and evaluating the key constituencies, identifying the interests of the most important interest groups, identifying the important issues relevant to the state's congressional delegation, researching and analyzing historic voting data and current public opinion polling, and researching the campaign positions and voting records of recent representatives of the district. Students will request committee assignments, organize caucuses, and select leadership. Students will draft and introduce bills that implement their proposals, complete committee hearings, prepare committee reports, receive statements from the president on pending legislation including threatened vetoes, and participate in floor debates and voting.

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR7] — The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

[CR2] — The course includes the Interactions Among Branches of Government Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).



## Unit 4 Supplemental Reading

Selected supplemental readings include Federalist papers and selected current news articles.

### Unit 5: Government in Action

(6 weeks)

This cycle puts students in a political advisor role, working for interest groups that are fighting either for or against a current issue (health care reform, immigration reform, etc.). Students will develop policy expertise while learning about the elected institutions of government, as well as the bureaucracy and the budget. Students will be tasked with creating a strategy for change to help advance their client's cause. The difficulty will be in navigating the institutions of government. In the end, students will find the complexity of government challenging and understand the characteristics and functions of our democratic system. Students will give a public presentation of their findings and results in which they make an appeal for their group's proposal. [CR6] [CR14]

Students will understand the functions, organization, powers, and workings of the executive branch and its bureaucracy, including comparison to those of a prime minister and supporting ministries in a parliamentary system. Students will evaluate the various roles of the president and the connection between those roles (and American's expectations for the president), public opinion (polling data), and presidential "success." Students will consider how the relationship of the president to the other branches of government has changed, including in response to events in American history. Students also will examine the growth of the federal bureaucracy. Students will chart significant aspects of the major departments and agencies and their responsibilities over time. Students will understand the roles of the respective elements of government, including the bureaucracy and state government, in formulating the federal budget. Students will research and evaluate data on current and projected federal spending and will consider the impact of budget decisions on American politics, on federal and state policy, and on the American economy. Students will research and evaluate the conflicting claims of interest groups aimed at the federal budget, through both tax revenues and expenditures. Students will also explore some of the policy issues influencing the budget and the challenges of balancing the budget and managing the national debt. [CR2]

Students will explore how forms of political participation influence policy outcomes, including participation in a political party, interest group, or social movement. Students will examine how demographic characteristics of people influence their participation in the political process and how the media influences participation.

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR14] — Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework that culminates in a presentation of findings.

[CR2] — The course includes the Interactions Among Branches of Government Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

## Unit 5 Supplemental Reading

Supplemental readings include selected current news articles; selected readings with different perspectives on the War Powers Act; selected polling data and analysis for 1980-present; selected

commentaries on the federal budget and federal taxation from various interest groups; selected budget data from 1980-present; and The National Budget Simulation game from the Center for Community Economic Research, U.C. Berkeley.

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### **Signatures**

**Parent** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_