



Course Description
<p>This course explores the political theory and everyday practice that direct the daily operation of our government and public policies. It is a demanding program that allows the student the opportunity to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. The course is for all intents and purposes taught on a college level and it requires a substantial amount of reading and preparation for every class. The objectives of this course go beyond a basic analysis of how the United States government “works.” Students will develop a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system, as well as their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Additionally students will complete a summer work requirement. Any student who enrolls in an AP course is required to take the AP exam in May of the school year.</p>
Skills
<p>In accordance with College Board standards, each term, Grade 12 <i>AP Government and Politics</i> students will practice the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connecting political concepts to real-life situations 2. Explaining the impact and implications of certain U.S. Supreme Court decisions 3. Analyzing data to find patterns and trends and draw conclusions 4. Reading and analyzing text and visual sources 5. Developing a claim or thesis and supporting it in an essay
Leveling and Placement
<p>When determining placement in <i>AP Government and Politics</i> the following are considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance in Grade 11 World History 2. Expectations of document analysis skills 3. Expectations for independent study 4. Complexity of assessments, readings, and writing assignments 5. Delivery of class pace 6. Teacher recommendation 7. Completion of summer work



Subject: AP Government and Politics – Grade 12

Units	Essential Questions / Objectives
<p>Foundations of American Democracy</p> <p>The people who created the U.S. Constitution set up a structure of government intended to stand the test of time, and how the compromises they made left some questions unresolved that continue to be debated today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain how democratic ideas are reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. ▪ Explain how models of representative democracy are visible in major institutions, policies, events, or debates in the U.S. ▪ Explain how Federalist and Anti-Federalists views on central government and democracy are reflected in U.S. foundational documents. ▪ Explain the relationship between key provisions of the Articles of Confederation and the debate over granting the federal government greater power formerly reserved to the states. ▪ Explain the ongoing impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system. ▪ Explain the Constitutional principles of separation of powers and “checks and balances.” ▪ Explain how societal needs affect the constitutional allocation of power between national and state governments. ▪ Explain how the appropriate balance of power between national and state governments has been interpreted differently over time. ▪ Explain how the distribution of powers among three federal branches and between national and state governments impacts policy making.
<p>Interactions Among Branches of Government</p> <p>Explore how the government sets and administers policy, and learn about the complexities of this process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress. ▪ Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policy-making process. ▪ Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government. ▪ Explain how the president can implement a policy agenda. ▪ Explain how the president’s agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress. ▪ Explain how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers. ▪ Explain how communication technology has changed the president’s relationship with the national constituency and the other branches. ▪ Explain the principle of judicial review and how it checks the power of other institutions and state governments. ▪ Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life tenure can lead to debate about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court’s power. ▪ Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life tenure can lead to debate about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court’s power. ▪ Explain how other branches in the government can limit the Supreme Court’s power. ▪ Explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain how the federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rule making and implementation. ▪ Explain how Congress uses its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch. ▪ Explain the extent to which governmental branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable given the competing interests of Congress, the president, and the federal courts.
<p>Civil Rights and Civil Liberties</p> <p>Connect the founding principles of government to the debates over how best to balance freedom and order.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain how the U.S. Constitution protects individual liberties and rights. ▪ Describe the rights protected in the Bill of Rights. ▪ Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's Interpretation of the First and Second Amendments reflects a commitment to individual liberty. ▪ Explain how the Supreme Court has attempted to balance claims of individual freedom with laws and enforcement procedures the promote public order and safety. ▪ Explain the implications of the doctrine of selective incorporation. ▪ Explain the extent to which states are limited by the due process clause from infringing upon individual rights. ▪ Explain the extent to which states are limited by the due process clause from infringing upon individual rights. ▪ Explain how constitutional provisions have supported and motivated social movements. ▪ Explain how the government has responded to social movements. ▪ Explain how the Court has at times allowed the restriction of the civil rights of minority groups and at other times has protected those rights.
<p>American Political Ideologies and Beliefs</p> <p>Explore the various beliefs that U.S. citizens hold about government, how these beliefs are shaped, and how they affect which policies citizens support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government. ▪ Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization. ▪ Describe the elements of a scientific poll. ▪ Explain the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data. ▪ Explain how ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates. ▪ Explain how U.S. political culture influences the formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time. ▪ Describe different political ideologies on the role of government regulating the marketplace.
<p>Political Participation</p> <p>Learn about the many ways that US citizens can influence the decisions the government makes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation. ▪ Describe the different models of voting behavior. ▪ Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections. ▪ Describe the linkage institutions in American politics. ▪ Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate in government. ▪ Explain why and how political parties change and adapt.



Units	Essential Questions / Objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain how structural barriers impact third-party and independent candidate success. ▪ Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest-group influence on elections and policy making. ▪ Explain how variation in types and resources of interest groups affects their ability to influence elections and policy making. ▪ Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes. ▪ Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential elections. ▪ Explain how the Electoral College facilitates and/or impedes democracy. ▪ Explain the different processes work in U.S. congressional elections. ▪ Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process. ▪ Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaigns affect the election process. ▪ Explain the media's role as a linkage institution. ▪ Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.

Key Activities May Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading and annotating primary and secondary sources. ▪ Analysis and comparison of primary sources. ▪ In class lecture and discussion of key topics and concepts. ▪ Engage in class debates and seminar style discussions. ▪ Student led current event presentations and discussions. ▪ Student led panel discussions and corresponding research papers. ▪ Students will participate in mock trial and mock Congress activities to gain a better understanding of the work of the Supreme Court and Congress. ▪ Supreme Court case analysis. Breaking down the majority and dissenting opinions in required cases while students offer analysis of the case decisions. ▪ Concept application questions- students apply major concepts from the course to real world political events and stories to demonstrate their understanding of the key concepts. ▪ Quantitative analysis questions- students apply key concepts and ideas from the course while analyzing charts, graphs, maps, and other data related to government and politics. ▪ Supreme Court analysis questions - students will read about Supreme Court cases and offer comparative analysis of the case in relation to the required course cases.



Seminal Primary Sources

- **Required Documents:**

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

- **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 (1969)
- New York Times v. United States (1971)
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1971)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)
- Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- United States v. Lopez (1995)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Citizens United v. F.E.C. (2010)