

Instructional Schedule

This AP U.S. Government and Politics class is taught in one year using a traditional school day schedule.

Each class period is about 45 minutes long.

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy (Approx. 17-20 days)

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government (Approx. 28-32 days)

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (Approx. 26-30 days)

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (Approx. 22-24 days)

Unit 5: Political Participation (Approx. 20 days)

The course includes the following units and focus of study based on the AP Course and Exam Description:

A. Foundations of American Democracy Unit (big ideas: Constitutionalism, Liberty and Order, and Competing Policy-Making Interests)

1. Balance of governmental power and individual rights
2. Debate and ratification of the U.S. Constitution
3. Checks and balances and competitive policy-making process
4. Federalism

B. American Political Ideologies and Beliefs Unit (big ideas: Competing Policy- Making Interests and Methods of Political Analysis)

1. Development of political beliefs
2. Measurement and political influence of public opinion
3. How ideology shapes policy outcomes

C. Political Participation Unit (big ideas: Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy, Competing Policy-Making Interests, and Methods of Political Analysis)

1. Protections, barriers, demographics, and other political participation factors
2. Political parties, interest groups, and social movements
3. Federal policies on campaigning and electoral rules
4. Media's influence on political participation

D. Interactions Among Branches of Government Unit (big ideas: Constitutionalism and Competing Policy-Making Interests)

1. Congress
2. The presidency
3. Judicial branch and judicial review
4. Federal bureaucracy

E. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights Unit (big ideas: Constitutionalism, Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy, and Competing Policy-Making Interests)

1. Interpretation of the Bill of Rights
2. 14th Amendment due process and selective incorporation
3. 14th Amendment equal protection and advancement of equality
4. Influence of citizen-state interactions and constitutional interpretation on public policy
5. Supreme Court's protection and restriction of minority rights over time

Primary Textbook

Harrison, Brigid C, et al. *American Democracy Now*. 7th ed., AP, McGraw Hill.

Supplementary Textbook

Wolfford, David. *Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics*. 2nd ed., Perfection Learning.

Additionally, students have access to the following online resources:

- [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 that frame the debates underlying key clauses and provisions of the U.S. Constitution. The National Constitution Center also has a blog, videos, and other resources that apply constitutional principles to current events.
- Students will follow current events, using a variety of news media sources such as, [MSNBC](#), [Fox News](#), [CNN](#), [NPR](#), [BBC](#), [C-SPAN](#), [The Federalist](#), [The Washington Post](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), and [The New York Times](#).

Supplemental Readings

The primary text will be heavily supplemented by outside readings, including the 15 required Supreme Court cases [Street Law](#) and [9 foundational documents](#), which will all be assigned during the course.

In addition to the required cases and documents, recent articles regarding political science concepts and current political issues will be provided to students to supplement the primary text. Links to the supplemental readings will be posted on the course website or provided to students in hard copy.

Required Foundational Documents and Supreme Court Cases

The required foundational documents will be accessed online through AP Classroom, [The Avalon Project](#), C-SPAN, [The National Constitution Center’s Interactive Constitution](#). Primary focus will be on the following documents:

- Federalist No. 10
- Brutus No. 1
- The Declaration of Independence
- Articles of Confederation
- Federalist No. 51
- The Constitution of the United States (including the Bill of Rights and following Amendments)
- “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- Federalist No. 70
- Federalist No. 78

Required Foundational Documents and Supreme Court Cases

The required foundational documents will be accessed online through AP Classroom, Street Law, C-SPAN, Oyez, [The National Constitution Center's Interactive Constitution](#) . Primary focus will be on the following cases:

- Marbury v. Madison (1803)
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Schenck v. United States (1919)
- Brown v. Board of Education, I (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)

Graded Activities

- Announced reading quizzes on the chapters in the book
- Major Unit tests (Objective and Essay) that will mirror the AP Government Test
 - We will work on developing an argumentative essay for various standards during the school year
- Student-led lessons/Discussions/Presentations – The person doing the talking is the person doing the learning.
- In-Class essays on selected topics based on AP Government Standards (see below)
- In-Class Partner and Group Activities based on AP Government Standards (see below)
- Supreme Court Case Analysis-- 15 major cases bolded below and a other selected cases.
- Original Document Analysis-- see documents below in each unit.

Grading Policy: Frequent testing is the key to mastery of this course. We will take quizzes on a regular basis, so studying lecture notes, reading assigned textbook pages and documents and daily handouts every night will be necessary. **We will cover a unit every few weeks.** Tests dates will be announced in class and will be written on the board. **If you are absent**, you will need to call a friend to see what you missed that day, or you may email Mrs. Mahone at swmahone@bcbe.org. We will also use the **REMIND** app.

Grade Determination: **Formative/Summative Assessments** (Tests/Major Assignments; Daily Reading Quizzes, ESSAYS) = **60%**
***TESTS AND ESSAYS ARE TIMED**
Daily In-class assignments-Short Writing Assignments, Daily Assignments, Classwork finished for homework = **40%**
Midterm/Final 5-10% (I will discuss in class with the AP students)

- Chapter tests and daily quizzes will include a variety of questions including short answer and essay/discussion questions. **Most of the tests will be completed in AP Classroom.**
- **AP STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DO HOMEWORK & COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNMENTS**
- **AP STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE & PRESENT IN FRONT OF THE CLASS**
- **Any work started in class is automatically homework unless stated otherwise.**

Deduction of points for most late assignments: 1 day late = no credit (We will discuss this in class)
Daily assignments started in class and due the following day that are completed for HW will not receive extra time for less credit. That work is due at the beginning of class the following day. I will work with students who have extenuating circumstances.

Attendance and Make-up Work Procedures

DAILY ATTENDANCE IS CRUCIAL FOR SUCCESS IN ANY AP COURSE. Students need to be present taking notes daily. It is the student's responsibility to get missed class notes from a peer. (If a student is out for an *extended* excused period, then I will schedule after-school help sessions to help that student get caught up with their notes, etc.). It is the student's responsibility to make sure they always have all of the necessary handouts in their notebook. **Most of our assignments are in Google Classroom so this has not been an issue since the pandemic. Within 3 days of an EXCUSED absence, students should have either completed and turned in the missed work or have discussed a due date with their teachers. The time between the students' return to school after an absence and the time that the missed work is turned in should not exceed 5 school days.**
Students will not be allowed to make up work due to an unexcused absence. Please keep this in mind when planning family trips during school hours.

Learning and Practice Activities

Practice 1: Concept Application

Big ideas: Constitutionalism and Competing Policy-Making Interests

- In pairs, students will read a variety of scenarios that reflect possible or current legislation and discuss how a member of Congress would likely decide based upon their view of their role of representation as either a delegate, trustee, or politico.

Practice 2: SCOTUS Application.

Big Idea: Competing Policy-Making Interests

- Students read the U.S. Supreme Court opinion in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Tenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.
- The class will then connect elements of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to the Tenth Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment. Students then discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing *Brown v. Board of Education* based on their connections between the SCOTUS decision and the Tenth and Fourteenth Amendments.

Data Analysis

Students will analyze presidential approval ratings using the Gallup Poll's "Interactive Presidential Job Approval Center."

- Students will compare the approval ratings of two presidents representing two political parties across three partisan groups (Democrat, Independent, Republican) at the same point in their presidency (e.g., one year, six years for re-elected presidents, etc.).
- Students will participate in a think-pair-share focusing on the implications of the similarities and differences between presidents and across partisan groups. (Practice 3: Data Analysis; big idea: Methods of Political Analysis)

Text-Based Analysis Skills

- Students will read an excerpt of the Declaration of Independence (e.g., the first five sentences, beginning with “He,” following the Preamble of the Declaration of Independence)
- Students will write a list identifying where and how the U.S. Constitution addresses and reflects the issues raised in the Declaration of Independence in its processes and institutions. (Practice 4: Source Analysis; big ideas: Constitutionalism, Liberty and Order)

Visual Source Analysis Skills

- In pairs, students will reference an image in their textbook identified by the teacher that represents state and local spending on public education.
- Students are to write a multiple-choice question that addresses how the visual element of the image relates to a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior. (Practice 4: Source Analysis
big ideas: Methods of Political Analysis, Competing Policy-Making Interests)

Argumentative Skills

Practice 5: Argumentation

Big idea: Constitutionalism

- Students analyze arguments from Federalist No. 78, Article II of the U.S. Constitution, and Supreme Court cases indicating that the president’s power needs to be curtailed or limited in specific areas such as U.S. v. Nixon, Andrew Jackson’s response to Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (30 U.S. 1), and Zivotofsky v. Kerry.
- Students compare these arguments with other sources that support a position that presidential power should be enhanced to deal with contemporary technology and/or events such as national emergencies. Students then write a thesis statement taking one position or another on presidential power.
- Students swap statements with a partner to ensure each has a clear and defensible position before listing the evidence and logic supporting it. They then find two other students taking the same position to compare statements and evidence
- The students then look at several opposing statements and lists of evidence in order to plan how they might defend and refute these alternative position(s). Finally, they incorporate these steps in an essay that they complete individually.

AP U.S. Government and Politics Course Plan

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy (About 21 days)

Essential Questions

- How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty, while also promoting public order and safety?
- How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the U.S. constitutional system?
- How does development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact U.S. citizens?

Readings

- The Declaration of Independence
- *Federalist No. 10*
- *Brutus No. 1*
- *Federalist No. 51*
- The Articles of Confederation
- The Constitution of the United States (Articles I-VII, 10th and 14th Amendments)
- **McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)**
- **Lopez v. United States (1995)**
- Rauch, Jonathan. "How American Politics Went Insane." *The Atlantic*, July/August 2016.
- Toobin, Jeffrey. "Our Broken Constitution." *The New Yorker*, December 9, 2013.

Topics and Skills

- 1.1 Ideals of Democracy- Skill 1.D
- 1.2 Types of Democracy- Skill 4.A
- 1.3 Government Power and Individual Rights- Skill 1.A
- 1.4 Challenges of the Articles of Confederation- Skill 4.B
- 1.5 Ratification of the Constitution- Skill 1.E
- 1.6 Principles of American Government- Skill 4.B
- 1.7 Relationship Between States and the Federal Government- Skill 5.A
- 1.8 Constitutional Interpretation of Federalism- Skill 2.A
- 1.9 Federalism in Action- Skill 5.B

Unit 2: Interactions among Branches of Government (About 33 Days)

Essential Questions

- How do the branches of the national government compete and cooperate in order to govern?
- To what extent have changes in the powers of each branch affected how responsive and accountable the national government is in the 21st century?

Readings

- The Constitution of the United States (Articles I-III)
- **Baker v. Carr (1962)**
- **Shaw v. Reno (1993)**
- *Federalist No. 70*
- *Federalist No. 78*
- **Marbury v. Madison**
- Moe, Terry M., and William G. Howell. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (December 1999): 850-73.

Primary Unit Focus

- Structure of Congress, including significant differences between the chambers regarding organization, leadership, incumbency, and powers. (EU CON-3)
- Congressional representation and gerrymandering. (EU CON-3)
- The president's formal and informal powers. (EU CON-4)
- Judicial independence, *Federalist No. 78*, *Marbury v. Madison*, and judicial decision-making. (EU CON-5)
- How the bureaucracy operates and its place in the checks and balances system. (EU PMI-1, PMI-2)
- The future of entitlement spending in the United States. (EU CON-3)

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (About 30 days)

Essential Questions

- To what extent do the U.S. Constitution and its amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from invidious discrimination?
- How have U.S. Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?

Readings

- The Bill of Rights
- The 14th Amendment's due process and equal protection clauses
- **Engel v. Vitale (1962)**
- **Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)**
- **Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)**
- **Schenck v. United States (1919)**
- **New York Times Co. v. United States (1971)**
- **McDonald v. Chicago (2010)**
- **Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)**
- **Roe v. Wade (1973)**
- **Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka Kansas (1954)**
- "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- Bentele, Keith G., and Erin E. O'Brien. "Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies." *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 4 (December 2013): 1088-1116.

Primary Unit Focus

- The role of the courts, and the due process and equal protection clauses in the expansion of civil liberties and civil rights, including the idea of selective incorporation. (EU LOR-2, CON-5)
- The expansion of the liberties protected by the 1st and 2nd Amendments. (EU LOR-2, CON-5)
- The development of the right to privacy and its implications for reproductive rights and 4th Amendment protections. (EU LOR-3)
- A history of civil rights issues and how historically disadvantaged groups in American society have achieved greater equality and equitable treatment in society. (EU PRD-1, PMI-3)

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (About 22 days)

Essential Questions

- How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time?
- How do political ideology and core values influence government policy making?

Readings

- The Monkey Cage series on political polarization in America found at *The Washington Post*.
- "Political Polarization in the American Public." *Pew Research Center*, June 12, 2014.
- Abramowitz, Alan I., and Morris P. Fiorina. "Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong with Our Politics, Anyway?" *The American Interest*, March 11, 2013.
- Fiorina, Morris P. "America's Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight." *The American Interest* 8, no. 4, February 12, 2013.

Primary Unit Focus

- Elements of a scientific poll, the different types of polls, and how they are used in U.S. government and politics. (EU MPA-2, PRD-3)
- The basic tenets of American political culture, the conservative and liberal political ideologies, and how these are acquired (political socialization). (EU MPA-1)

Unit 5: Political Participation (About 27 days)

Essential Questions

- How have changes in technology influenced political communication and behavior?
- Why do levels of participation and influence in politics vary?
- How effective are the various methods of political participation in shaping public policies?

Readings

- *Federalist No. 10*
- Desilver, Drew. "U.S. trails most developed countries in voter turnout." *Pew Research Center*, May 15, 2017.
- **Citizens United v. FEC (2010)**
- Gaslowitz, Lea. "How to Spot a Misleading Graph - Lea Gaslowitz." TED-Ed video, 4:09.
- Barthel, Michael, and Amy Mitchell. "Americans' Attitudes About the News Media Deeply Divided Along Partisan Lines." *Pew Research Center*, May 10, 2017.
- Kiely, Eugene, and Lori Robertson. "How to Spot Fake News." *FactCheck.org*, November 18, 2016.
- Neale, Thomas H. "The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections." *The Congressional Research Service*, May 15, 2017.

Primary Unit Focus

- The evolution of voting rights and the current state of voter turnout. (EU MPA-3, PMI-3, PMI-5)
- Factors that influence voter choice in elections. (EU MPA-3, MPA-1)
- The functions of political parties in the United States and third parties in United States government and politics. (EU PMI-5)
- The development of candidate-centered campaigns. (EU PMI-5, PRD-3)
- The theory of critical elections. (EU PMI-5)
- Interest groups in United States government and politics. (EU PMI-5)
- Nominations, campaigns, and elections in United States government and politics. (EU PRD-2)
- The media as a linkage institution, including changes in media, such as the growth of social media and partisan media sources. (EU PRD-3)