

Department: History

Course Name: Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics

Seniors only

Course Description:

This is a college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. Students will study U.S. foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals to gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behaviors. They will also be required to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments.

Content:

Constitutionalism – The U.S. Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances among branches of government and allocates power between federal and state governments. This system is based on the rule of law and the balance of majority rule and minority rights.

Liberty and Order – Governmental laws and policies balancing order and liberty are based on the U.S. Constitution and have been interpreted differently over time.

Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy – Popular sovereignty, individualism, and republicanism are important considerations of U.S. laws and policy making and assume citizens will engage and participate.

Competing Policy-Making Interests – Multiple actors and institutions interact to produce and implement possible policies.

Methods of Political Analysis – Using various types of analyses, political scientists measure how U.S. political behavior, attitudes, ideologies, and institutions are shaped by numerous factors over time.

Skills:

Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context

Apply Supreme Court decisions

Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics

Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources

Develop an argument in essay format

Text and Materials:

Abernathy and Waples, [American Government: Story of a Nation](#), (2022)

Declaration of Independence

U.S. Constitution

[The Federalist](#) 10, 51, 70, 78

News articles and video news reports

Variety of pertinent videos

Recorded radio programs such as NPR reports

Methods of Instruction:

Document analysis

Data analysis

Socratic seminar

Lecture/discussion

Interactive, web-based learning activities (Google Slides, Google Forms, Padlet)

Group/partner activities

Methods of Evaluation:

Participation, including formal debates and informal (routine) discussion

Daily reading quizzes

AP style free response quizzes

Research-based and creative projects

Unit tests

AP examination in May

