NEW
AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework
Content Outline - Executive Summary
2019
Big Ideas in U.S. Government and Politics

1. 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 that seeks to balance majority rules with minority rights.

2. LIBERTY AND ORDER: Governmental laws and policies balancing order and liberty are based on the U.S. Constitution and have been interpreted over time.

3. 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.

4. COMPETING POLICY-MAKING INTERESTS: Multiple actors and institutions interact to produce and implement possible policies.

5. METHODS OF POLITICAL ANALYSIS: Using various types of analyses, political scientists measure how U.S. political behavior, attitudes, and ideologies are shaped by a number of factors over time.

Unit 1: Foundations of Democracy

The U.S. Constitution arose out of important historical and philosophical ideas and preferences regarding popular sovereignty and limited government. To address competing states' visions for the allocation of governmental authority, compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises have frequently been the source of debate and negotiation in U.S. politics over the proper balance between federal and state power and between liberty and social order.

Enduring Understandings:

A. A balance between governmental power and individual rights has been a hallmark of American political development. (Liberty and Order)

B. The Constitution emerged from the debate about weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation as a blueprint for limited government. (Constitutionalism)

C. The Constitution creates a complex competitive policy-making process to ensure the people's will is represented and that freedom is preserved. (Competing policy-making interests)

D. Federalism reflects the dynamic distribution of power between national and state governments. (Constitutionalism)

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

2. Explain how models of representative democracy are visible in major institutions, policies, events, or debates in the U.S.

3. Explain how Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy as reflected in U.S. foundational documents.
4. Explain the relationship between key provisions of the Articles of Confederation and the debate over granting the federal government greater formerly reserved to the states.
5. Explain the ongoing impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system.
6. Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and “checks and balances.”
7. Explain the implications of separation of powers and “checks and balances” for the U.S. political system.
8. Explain how societal needs affect the constitutional allocation of power between national and state governments.
9. Explain how the appropriate balance of power between national and state governments has been interpreted differently over time.
10. Explain how the distribution of powers among three federal branches and between national and state governments impacts policy-making.

Unit 2: Interaction Among Branches of Government

Because power is widely distributed and checks prevent one branch from usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in the position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern.

Enduring Understandings:

A. The republican ideal in the United States is manifested in the structure and operation of the legislative branch. (Constitutionalism)
B. The presidency has been enhanced beyond its expressed constitutional powers. (Constitutionalism)
C. The design of the judicial branch protects the Court’s independence as a branch of government, and the emergence and use of judicial review remains a powerful judicial practice. (Constitutionalism)
D. The federal bureaucracy is a powerful institution implementing federal policies with sometimes-questionable accountability. (Competing policy-making interests)

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the different structures, powers and functions of each house of Congress.
2. Explain how the structures, powers and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policy making process.
3. Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.
4. Explain how the president can implement a policy agenda.
5. Explain how the president’s agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress.
6. Explain how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers.
7. Explain how communication technology has changed the president’s relationship with the national constituency and the other branches.
8. Explain the principle of judicial review and how it checks the power of other institutions and state governments.
9. Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life-tenure can lead to controversy about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court’s power.
10. Explain how other branches in the government can limit the Supreme Court’s power.
11. Explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government.
12. Explain how the federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rule making and implementation.
13. Explain how Congress uses its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch.
14. Explain how the president ensures that executive branch agencies and departments carry out their responsibilities in concert with the goals of the administration.
15. Explain the extent to which government branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable given the competing interests of Congress, the president, and the federal courts.

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Through the U.S. Constitution, but primarily through the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment, citizens and groups have attempted to restrict national and state governments from unduly infringing upon individual rights and from denying equal protection under the law. Sometimes the Court had handed down decisions that protect both public order and individual freedom, and at other times the Court has set precedents protecting one at the expense of the other.

Enduring Understandings:

A. Provisions of the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights are continually being interpreted to balance the power of government and the civil liberties of individuals. (Liberty and Order)
B. Protections of the Bill of Rights have been selectively incorporated by way of the Fourteenth Amendment’s “due process” clause to prevent state infringement of basic liberties. (Liberty and Order)
C. The Fourteenth Amendment’s “equal protection clause” as well as other constitutional provisions have often been used to support the advancement of equality. (Civic participation in a representative democracy)
D. Public policy promoting civil rights is influenced by citizen-state interactions and constitutional interpretation over time. (Competing policy-making interests)
E. The Court’s interpretation of the U.S. Constitution is influenced by the composition of the Court and citizen-state interactions. At times, it has restricted minority rights and, at others, protected them. (Constitutionalism)

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain how the U.S. Constitution protects individual liberties and rights.
2. Describe the rights protected in the Bill of Rights.
3. Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the First and Second Amendments reflects a commitment to individual liberty.
4. Explain how the Supreme Court has attempted to balance claims of individual freedom with laws and enforcement procedures that promote public order and safety.
5. Explain the implications of the doctrine of selective incorporation.
6. Explain the extent to which states are limited by the due process clause from infringing upon individual rights.
7. Explain how constitutional provisions have supported and motivated social movements.
8. Explain how the government has responded to social movements.
9. Explain how the Court has at times allowed the restriction of the rights of minority groups and at other times has protected those rights.
Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

American political beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, and the changing demographics of the citizenry. The beliefs about government, politics, and the individual’s role in the political system influence the creation of ideological trends that span decades impacting public policies.

Enduring Understandings:

A. Citizens’ beliefs about government are shaped by the intersection of demographics, political culture, and dynamic social change. (Methods of political analysis)
B. Public opinion is measured through scientific polling, and the results of public opinion polls influence public policies and institutions. (Methods of political analysis)
C. Widely held political values shape the policy choices available in American politics. (Competing policy-making interests)

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government.
2. Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization.
3. Describe the elements of a scientific poll.
4. Explain the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data.
5. Explain how ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates.
6. Explain how U.S. political culture (e.g. values, attitudes, and beliefs) influences the formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time.
7. Describe different political ideologies on the role of government in regulating the marketplace.
8. Explain how political ideologies vary on the government’s role in regulating the marketplace.
9. Explain how political ideologies vary on the role of government in addressing social issues.
10. Explain how different ideologies impact policy on social issues.

Unit 5: Political Participation

Governing is achieved directly through citizen participation and indirectly through linkage institutions (e.g. political parties, interest groups, and mass media) that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policy making.

Enduring Understandings:

A. Factors associated with political ideology, efficacy, structural barriers, and demographics influence the nature and degree of political participation. (Methods of political analysis)
B. Political parties, interest groups, and social movements provide opportunities for participation and influence how people relate to government. (Competing policy-making interests)
C. The impact of federal policies on campaigning and electoral rules continues to be contested by both sides of the political spectrum. (Civic participation in a representative democracy)
D. The various forms of media provide citizens with political information and influence the ways in which they participate politically. (Civic participation in a representative democracy)
Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation.
2. Describe different models of voting behavior.
3. Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections.
4. Describe linkage institutions.
5. Explain the function and impact of political on the electorate and the government.
6. Explain why and how political parties change and adapt.
7. Explain how structural barriers impact third party and independent candidate success.
8. Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest group influence on elections and policy making.
9. Explain how variation in types and resources of interest groups affects their ability to influence elections and policy making.
10. Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes.
11. Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential election.
12. Explain how the Electoral College impacts democratic participation.
13. Explain how the different processes work in U.S. Congressional elections.
14. Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process.
15. Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaigns affect the election process.
16. Explain the media’s role as a linkage institution.
17. Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.

Required Supreme Court Cases

1. McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
4. Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
15. Marbury v. Madison (1803)

Required Foundational Documents

1. Federalist 10
3. The Declaration of Independence.
4. The Articles of Confederation.
5. The U.S. Constitution (including the Bill of Rights and following Amendments).
6. Federalist 51
7. Letter from Birmingham Jail. Martin Luther King, Jr.
8. Federalist 70 "The Executive Department Further Considered"
9. Federalist 78 "The Judiciary Department"

AP U.S. Government and Politics Disciplinary Practices (Skills)

1. Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context.
2. Apply Supreme Court decisions.
3. Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics.
4. Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources.
5. Develop an argument in essay format.

AP U.S. Government and Politics Reasoning Processes

1. Definition/Classification.
3. Causation.
4. Comparison

AP U.S. Government and Politics EXAM Overview

- Multiple-choice (55 questions – 80 minutes)
- Free Response (4 questions – 100 minutes)

  Concept Application
  Quantitative Analysis
  SCOTUS Comparison
  Argument Essay
Explain to participants that the College Board has created this unit/topic breakdown as a guide for teachers to plan their instruction. In this document, there are suggested days for each topic based on both a semester and a year-long course.

The units and topics have been designed to match the resources available in 2019–2020, including the unit tests, skills-based instructional resources, Teaching and Assessing videos, and more. For example, there will be a unit test that covers the topics and skills (disciplinary practices) that are specifically outlined in each unit.

Remind teachers that they can choose to organize their course in any way they choose, including a modification of the unit/topic version presented. However, the resources available in 2019–2020 are being designed to match this model.

## Unit 1

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*For 45-60 minute instructional periods
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*For 45-60 minute instructional periods
S.N.A.C.K. Time

Student name:

Title, source and date of article:

Summarize this piece in 20 words or less:

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Note words and concepts that you don't understand:

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Analyze the piece for any inaccuracies or bias:

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Connect the piece with another article, a concept you've mastered, or your opinion on the topic:

________________________________________________________________________

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Konverse about the piece with your group, your class and throughout the day:
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**Making American Government and Politics TENABLE, one word at a time:**

1. We go with... 2. Teachers