

ADVANCED PLACEMENT UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Description

This course is designed to give students an analytical perspective on politics and government. It involves the study of general concepts used to interpret United States government and politics and the analysis of examples. It also requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that make up political reality as it relates to the United States system of government. Students will interpret and utilize basic data relevant to government and politics in sustained written arguments. An assessment for each unit will consist of a test constructed in the AP format that is 50% multiple choice and 50% free response. Students are expected to take the AP Exam in May.

Course Overview

Course Objectives

Students should:

- understand important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to US government and politics.
- understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the components of political behavior, the principles used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures).
- analyze and interpret basic data relevant to US government and politics.
- demonstrate an understanding of our American heritage.

Essential Questions

- How do different economic systems affect the allocation of goods and services? (CT)
- How does the study of historical themes help us understand change over time and adapt and respond to new challenges? (CT)
- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do global affairs impact the lives of people? (CT)
- How do limited resources affect choices by individuals, households, business and governments? (CT)
- How does study of historical periods, issues and trends affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- Why do governments exist and how do they work? (CT)
- How can citizens shape and influence democratic processes and government? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)

Assessments

Common Assessments

- AP Examination

<u>Content Outline</u>	<u>Standards</u>	<u>Grade Level Skills</u>
<p>I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government</p> <p>II. Institutions of National Government</p> <p>III. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties</p> <p>IV. Political Beliefs and Behaviors</p> <p>V. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media</p> <p>VI. Public Policy</p>	<p>Connecticut SDE - Social Studies Framework 2008</p> <p>Connecticut State Standards are met in the following areas:</p> <p>CSSF1: <i>Historical Thinking</i></p> <p>CSSF2: <i>Local, United States and World History</i></p> <p>CSSF3: <i>Historical Themes</i></p> <p>CSSF4: <i>Applying History</i></p> <p>CSSF5: <i>United States Constitution and Government</i></p> <p>CSSF6: <i>Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens</i></p> <p>CSSF7: <i>Political Systems</i></p> <p>CSSF8: <i>International Relations</i></p> <p>CSSF13: <i>Limited Resources</i></p> <p>CSSF14: <i>Economic Systems</i></p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Pacing Guide										
1st Marking Period		2nd Marking Period			3rd Marking Period			4th Marking Period		
September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	
Unit 1		Unit 2		Unit 3		Unit 4		Unit 5		Unit 6
Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government		Institutions of National Government		Civil Rights and Civil Liberties		Political Beliefs and Behaviors		Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media		Public Policy
4-5 weeks		12-14 weeks		3-4 weeks		1-2 weeks		1-2 weeks		3-4 weeks

Unit I - Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government, 4-5 weeks [top](#)

Standards

Students will be able to:

- CSSF 5.9-10.2 explain how the design of the U.S. Constitution is intended to balance and check the powers of the branches of government.
- CSSF 5.11-12.3 explain why state and federal courts powers of judicial review reflect the United States view of constitutional government.
- CSSF 6.11-12.1 evaluate whether or when their obligations as citizens require that their personal desires, beliefs and interests be subordinated to the public good.
- CSSF 7.11-12.2 explain how purposes served by government have implications for the individual and society.

Unit Objectives

Students should:

- demonstrate an understanding of the political theories and ideologies that led to the formulation and adoption of the Constitution.
- analyze the reasons for the separation of powers and how the balance has changed over the course of American history.
- demonstrate an understanding of the evolution of Federalism.
- demonstrate how democratic government evolves and changes.

Essential Questions

- How does the study of historical themes help us understand change over time and adapt and respond to new challenges? (CT)
- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- Why do governments exist and how do they work? (CT)
- How can citizens shape and influence democratic processes and government? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)

Focus Questions

- Why was the separation of powers developed and how is it implemented today?
- What is Federalism and how has the balance of power between state and federal government changed throughout American history?
- How do theories of democratic government evolve and change?

Suggested Assessments

- Free response essay
- Meet the Press simulation
- Read and annotate selections from the Federalist Papers

Unit Skills

Students will:

- evaluate the quality, credibility and reliability of information.
- analyze, interpret and apply complex information from various sources; compare and contrast viewpoints of various sources.
- apply principles to solve authentic problems.
- write structured, thesis-driven essays.
- synthesize information from a variety of sources and cite those sources appropriately.

Unit II – Institutions of National Government, 12-14 weeks [top](#)

Standards

Students will be able to:

- CSSF 5.9-10.2 explain how the design of the U.S. Constitution is intended to balance and check the powers of the branches of government.
- CSSF 5.11-12.1 apply an understanding of historical and contemporary conflicts over constitutional principles.

Unit Objectives

Students should:

- demonstrate an understanding of the formal and informal arrangements of power.
- analyze the relationships among the four institutions: Congress, the presidency, the federal courts, and the bureaucracy.
- demonstrate the linkages between these four institutions and the following: public opinion and voters, interest groups, political parties, the media, and sub-national government.

Essential Questions

- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)

Focus Questions

- How and why does the operation of formal institutional arrangements of power influence the governmental process?
- How does and why does the operation of informal institutional arrangements of power influence the governmental process?
- How and why does the balance of power change among the institutions of government?

Suggested Assessments

- Mock Trial analysis
- Political cartoons analysis
- Resolution of a significant crisis
- Role Play response
- Simulation response

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- analyze, interpret and apply complex information from various sources; compare and contrast viewpoints of various sources.
- demonstrate an analysis of cause and effect.
- synthesize information from a variety of sources and cite those sources appropriately.
- write structured, thesis-driven essays.

Unit III – Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, 3-4 weeks [top](#)

Standards

Students will be able to:

- CSSF 1.11-12.1 formulate historical questions and hypotheses from multiple perspectives, using multiple sources.
- CSSF 2.11-12.3 explain relationships among the events and trends studied in local, state, national and world history.

Unit Objectives

Students should:

- analyze the beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders.
- analyze the processes by which citizens learn about politics.
- demonstrate an understanding of how public opinion is formed.
- demonstrate the consequences of public opinion.
- analyze the ways in which citizens participate in political life.
- analyze how political beliefs and behaviors are formed.

Essential Questions

- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How does study of historical periods, issues and trends affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)

Focus Questions

- How do beliefs influence opinions about government and its leaders?
- How do citizens learn about politics?
- How is public opinion formed and what are its consequences?
- How do citizens participate in political life?
- How do citizens formulate political beliefs and how does it influence behavior?

Suggested Assessments

- Data analysis and interpretation of wage gap tables
- Free response writing
- In Depth Analysis of Pertinent Court Cases of Liberties and Rights; ex: Sheff vs. O’Neill (CT Supreme Court Case)
- Seminar Discussion - political beliefs, behaviors, and public opinion.

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- evaluate the quality, credibility and reliability of information.
- write structured, thesis-driven essays.
- demonstrate techniques to improve performance on multiple choice tests.
- apply principles to solve authentic problems.
- use technology tools to locate, evaluate, collect, and communicate information.

Unit IV – Political Beliefs and Behaviors, 1-2 weeks [top](#)

Standards

Students will be able to:

- CSSF 1.11-12.1 formulate historical questions and hypotheses from multiple perspectives, using multiple sources.
- CSSF 2.11-12.3 explain relationships among the events and trends studied in local, state, national and world history.
- CSSF 3.11-12.4 analyze the causes and consequences of major technological turning points in history, e.g., their effects on people, societies, and economies.

Unit Objectives

Students should:

- demonstrate an understanding of the function, organization, and development political parties and their effect on the political process.
- analyze elections.
- analyze the impact of interest groups on the political process.
- analyze the impact of mass media on the political process.

Essential Questions

- How does the study of historical themes help us understand change over time and adapt and respond to new challenges? (CT)
- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)

Focus Questions

- What do polls really mean?
- What is public opinion?
- How do we form political opinions?
- How do we measure public opinion?
- What purposes served by elections?
- How do polling and public opinion affect politicians, politics, and policy?
- Do we vote for the candidate or the campaign?
- How are campaigns and the news media related?
- How does political socialization and other factors influence opinion formation?

Suggested Assessments

- Analysis of polls from gallup.org and other sites
- Data analysis of text tables and maps of voter demographics
- Debate response
- Free response writing
- Research Paper
- Students conduct their own political polls

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- evaluate the quality, credibility and reliability of information.
- analyze, interpret and apply complex information from various sources.
- compare and contrast viewpoints of various sources.
- demonstrate an analysis of cause and effect.
- write structured, thesis-driven essays.
- demonstrate techniques to improve performance on multiple choice tests.
- use technology tools in constructing models, preparing publications, and producing other creative works.

Unit V - Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media, 1-2 weeks [top](#)

Standards

Students will be able to:

- CSSF 1.11-12.1 formulate historical questions and hypotheses from multiple perspectives, using multiple sources.
- CSSF 1.11-12.2 evaluate data within the historical, social, political and economic context in which it was created, testing its credibility and evaluating its bias.
- CSSF 3.11-12.4 analyze the causes and consequences of major technological turning points in history, e.g., their effects on people, societies, and economies.
- CSSF 5.9-10.3 evaluate the contemporary roles of political parties, associations, media groups and public opinion in local, state, and national politics.

Unit Objectives

Students should:

- demonstrate an understanding of the function, organization, and development political parties and their effect on the political process.
- analyze elections.
- analyze the impact of interest groups on the political process.
- analyze the impact of mass media on the political process.

Essential Questions

- How does the study of historical themes help us understand change over time and adapt and respond to new challenges? (CT)
- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)

Focus Questions

- How do the function, organization, and development of political parties influence the political system?
- How does mass media influence government and politics?
- What is the purpose of political parties in the twenty first century?
- What is the best way to get people to vote?
- How do interest groups influence the political process?
- What are the ethical issues behind interest groups?
- What makes an interest group successful?
- What is a political party?
- How does the media impact the political process?

Suggested Assessments

- Creation of Students' Own Political Parties
- Free response writing
- Interpretation of political cartoons and maps
- Media Diary – Logged Various Hours of News Programming - Comparison
- Presidential Campaign Video Ads
- Research Paper

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- synthesize information from a variety of sources and cite those sources appropriately.
- demonstrate techniques to improve performance on multiple choice tests.
- apply principles to solve authentic problems.
- use technology tools in constructing models, preparing publications, and producing other creative works.
- use technology tools to locate, evaluate, collect, and communicate information.

Unit VI - Public Policy, 3-4 weeks [top](#)

Standards

Students will be able to:

- CSSF 8.11-12.2 identify and analyze the various domestic, political, economic, and social interests, which play roles in the development of foreign policy.
- CSSF 8.11-12.3 describe and analyze the process by which foreign policy decisions are developed and executed.
- CSSF 14.11-12.2 interpret important statistics about the national economy: the inflation rate, unemployment rate, Gross Domestic Product, and its growth rate.
- CSSF 14.11-12.5 analyze the impact of specific government actions in the economy on different groups, including consumers, employees and businesses.

Unit Objectives

Students should:

- explain the role of policy making in a federal system.
- describe how policy agendas are formed.
- describe the role of institutions in the enactment, implementation and interpretation of public policy.
- describe the linkages between policy processes and political institutions, federalism, political parties, interest groups, public opinion, elections, and policy networks.

Essential Questions

- How do different economic systems affect the allocation of goods and services? (CT)
- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do global affairs impact the lives of people? (CT)

Focus Questions

- How are policy agendas formed?
- How do some institutions affect the enactment of public policy?
- How do the bureaucracy affect the implementation and interpretation of public policy?
- How are policy processes linked to the following: Political institutions and federalism, Political parties, Interest groups, Public opinion, Elections, and Policy networks?
- What types of social welfare policy do Americans want to see enacted?
- Should the United States practice deficit spending?

Suggested Assessments

- Data Analysis and Interpretation of tables and graphs in text
- Debate
- Each student will analyze a different public policy initiative
- Free Response Writing
- Research
- Teams will create and present new public policy initiatives
- White Paper

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- evaluate the quality, credibility and reliability of information.
- demonstrate effective and appropriate questioning and critical thinking skills.
- synthesize information from a variety of sources and cite those sources appropriately.
- write structured, thesis-driven essays.
- apply principles to solve authentic problems.
- use technology tools in constructing models, preparing publications, and producing other creative works.