

U.S. Government and Politics

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course uses the perspective of political institutions to explore government history, organization, and functions. Students encounter the political culture of our country from the Declaration of Independence to the present day, gaining insight into the challenges faced by presidents, members of Congress, and other political participants. The course also covers the roles of political parties, interest groups, the media, and the Supreme Court. Students learn to use primary historical documents as evidence in evaluating past events and government functions.

PREREQUISITES: Success in U.S. History (or equivalent) is recommended but not required.

COURSE LENGTH: One Semester

REQUIRED TEXT: None

MATERIALS LIST: None

COURSE OUTLINE:

Unit 1: Principles of Government

- The Purpose and Origins of Government
- Power and Government
- Types of Government

Unit 2: Constitutional Underpinnings

- Origins of American Government
- Creating and Ratifying the Constitution
- The Constitution
- Federalism

Unit 3: Institutions of Government

- The National Government
- Congress
- The Presidency
- The Executive Branch and the Bureaucracy
- The Judicial Branch

Unit 4: Political Beliefs and Behaviors

- Political Participation
- Political Opinions
- America's Political Landscape

Unit 5: Linkage Institutions

- Political Parties
- Elections and Campaigns
- Interest Groups
- The Media

Unit 6: The Art of Policymaking

- Understanding Policymaking
- Policy Realms
- Policymaking at the State and Local Levels

Unit 7: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- American Rights
- First Amendment Liberties
- Privacy Rights and Rights of Due Process
- Rights for Minorities and Women

Unit 8: U.S. Government and Politics Review and Exam

- Review
- Exam