

Course materials required. See 'Course Materials' below.

AP U.S. Government and Politics studies the operations and structure of the U.S. government and the behavior of the electorate and politicians. Students will gain the analytic perspective necessary to critically evaluate political data, hypotheses, concepts, opinions, and processes. Along the way, they'll learn how to gather data about political behavior and develop their own theoretical analysis of American politics. They'll also build the skills they need to examine general propositions about government and politics, and to analyze the specific relationships between political, social, and economic institutions. The equivalent of an introductory college-level course, AP U.S. Government and Politics prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in political science, law, education, business, and history.

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Length: One semester

UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

LESSON 1: POLITICS IN A DEMOCRACY

Study: Introduction to Politics

Explore political issues that concern Americans, the study of politics, and three theories of American democracy.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: Your Political Background

Discuss your political interests and background, your political biases in terms of how you view democracy, and your community in terms of its groups and its politics.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 25 points

Read: Reading Political Science Material

Research theories of governance in America (Mills, Dahl). Complete study questions based on the reading and compare your work to an answer sheet.

Duration: 1 hr

Discuss: What Is Unclear From the Reading?

Discuss the readings by Mills and Dahl with your classmates and instructor to help you prepare for writing your first course essay.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 25 points

Practice: Outlining and Writing Essays

Outline an essay answer in preparation for writing your first course essay.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 50 points

Practice: Theories of American Democracy

Decide which of three theories of democracy is the most accurate analysis of current American politics. Write a short essay supporting your choice with examples from the readings.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 50 points

Quiz: Politics in a Democracy

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 2: CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Explore: Examining the Founding Principles

Read excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation and examine principles that inspired the development of these important documents.

Duration: 1 hr

Study: The Debate Over Ratification

Examine the process of ratification, the federalists and the anti-federalists, and the great debate.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Read: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists

Read *Federalist No. 10* and *Brutus No. 1* and respond to reading questions designed to help you gain a better understanding of key ideas in each document.

Duration: 1 hr

Discuss: What Is Unclear From the Reading?

Discuss *Federalist No. 10* and *Brutus No. 1* with your classmates and instructor.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 25 points

Study: Completion of the Constitution

Explore the following: ratification by the states, the amendment process, the rise of the federalists and anti-federalists, national vs. state government rule, separation of powers, and the development of judicial review.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: Amending the Constitution

Discuss with your classmates whether you think it's too difficult to amend the Constitution.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 25 points

Explore: How Democratic is the Constitution?

After reading about the intentions of the framers of the Constitution, answer a series of questions focusing on whether the Constitution is an elitist document.

Duration: 1 hr

Quiz: Constitutional Foundations

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 3: FEDERALISM

Study: Federalism

Examine the establishment of federalism in the Constitution, the evolution of federal-state relationships, and federalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: Returning Power to the States

Write an essay answering this question: How has the debate over federal-state relations been affected by efforts to increase homeland security since the events of 9/11/2001?

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Explore: The New Federalism

Answer a series of questions on the Supreme Court's views on new federalism.

Duration: 2 hrs

Quiz: Federalism

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 4: WRAP-UP: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Review: Foundations of American Democracy

Review your studies of American politics, the Constitution, and federalism. Complete a question-outlining exercise.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

Quiz: Foundations of American Democracy

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

Test (CS): Foundations of American Democracy

Take a 20-minute test covering American politics, the Constitution, and federalism.

Duration: 0 hrs 20 mins Scoring: 30 points

Test (TS): Foundations of American Democracy

Take a 40-minute test covering American politics, the Constitution, and federalism.

Duration: 0 hrs 40 mins Scoring: 70 points

Project: Civic Engagement Project Task 1

Students who chose option 1, the media literacy guide, make use of online resource to familiarize themselves with 1) media literacy and related concepts, including bias, and 2) the current political landscape. Students who chose option 2, the group presentation, make use of online resources to familiarize themselves with political practices at various levels of government.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 40 points

UNIT 2: INTERACTION AMONG BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

LESSON 1: CONGRESS

Study: Congress: Part 1

Explore the characteristics of the members of Congress and the powers and functions of Congress.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: Congressional Demographics

After conducting research to identify and characterize members of Congress from your state, comment on how representative you think they are of your state as a whole.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 25 points

Study: Congress: Part 2

Learn about congressional organization and leadership, the committee system, and how a bill becomes a law.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: Congressional Voting Decisions

Based on the Mayhew, Fenno, and Starobin readings about serving in Congress, examine data about the primary factors influencing legislative voting behavior.

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Explore: Researching Legislation

Conduct research on a piece of congressional legislation that affects an issue of interest to you. Briefly summarize the legislation and track its legislative history.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

Quiz: Congress

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 2: THE PRESIDENCY

Study: The Presidency: Part 1

Examine the president's role as Chief of State and Chief Executive. Consider other formal presidential roles, informal presidential roles, and public expectations of the president.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: The President's Roles

Read the Cronin and Genovese excerpt. Then characterize President Obama's and/or President Trump's efforts to fulfill the obligations of his (their) multiple roles.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 25 points

Study: The Presidency: Part 2

Explore the executive branch resources, presidential resources, and constraints on presidential power.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: Presidential Power

After reading about presidential power (Neustadt and Federalist 70), write an essay analyzing the effectiveness of presidential rhetoric.

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Quiz: The Presidency

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 3: THE BUREAUCRACY

Study: The Bureaucracy: Part 1

Explore the theories of bureaucracy, the functions and organization of the federal bureaucracy, the size and cost of the bureaucracy, and the selection and characteristics of federal employees.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: Bureaucratic Organization

Participate in a discussion about the bureaucratic challenges confronting the Department of Homeland Security.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 25 points

Study: The Bureaucracy: Part 2

Examine the pathologies of the federal bureaucracy and their causes, the efforts to reform the bureaucracy, and the concept of incrementalism.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Quiz: The Bureaucracy

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 4: THE COURTS

Study: The Courts: Part 1

Explore the three types of law in the U.S., the organization of the judicial system, and how the judicial process works.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: You Be the Judge

Read about how the Supreme Court ruled in an important case. Do you agree or disagree with the court's decision?

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 25 points

Study: The Courts: Part 2

Examine the processes of judicial review, appointment of Supreme Court justices, Supreme Court decision-making, judicial activism, and judicial restraint.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: The Power of Judicial Review

Read about the Supreme Court's power of judicial review and excerpts from the Supreme Court's decision in *Bush v. Gore*. Write about whether you think the power of judicial review is antidemocratic.

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Quiz: The Courts

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 5: CHECKS AND BALANCES

Study: Checks and Balances

Examine Congress and the presidency domestic and foreign policy Congress and the bureaucracy and the courts. Consider these in terms of the Madison's vision.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: Do Checks and Balances Work?

After reading *Federalist* No. 51, write an essay on whether our contemporary system of checks and balances is working as Madison intended.

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Explore: Line-Item Veto

Conduct research and answer a series of questions on whether the lineitem veto is constitutional.

Duration: 1 hr

Quiz: Checks and Balances

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 6: WRAP-UP: INTERACTION AMONG BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

Review: Interaction Among Branches of Government

Review your studies about the institutions of American government and complete a question-outlining exercise.

Duration: 3 hrs

Quiz: Interaction Among Branches of Government

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

Test (CS): Interaction Among Branches of Government

Take a 20-minute test covering Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, the courts, and the system of checks and balances.

Duration: 0 hrs 20 mins Scoring: 30 points

Test (TS): Interaction Among Branches of Government

Take a 40-minute test covering Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, the courts, and the system of checks and balances.

Duration: 0 hrs 40 mins Scoring: 70 points

Project: Civics Engagement Project Task 2

Students who chose option 1, the media literacy guide, apply effective research practices to identify works of professional journalism among the sources they compiled in the previous stage of their project. They compare and contrast these sources, identifying possible signs of bias. Students who chose option 2, the group presentation, meet in groups to select a single political practice from their list that they can most easily conceive replacing with an alternative practice. Students brainstorm proposals and collaborate to establish how their group will address the problem.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 40 points

UNIT 3: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS

LESSON 1: CIVIL LIBERTIES

Study: First Amendment Civil Liberties

Explore civil liberties and selective incorporation, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Study: Rights of the Accused

Examine the concepts of unreasonable search and seizure, the right to remain silent, the right to an attorney, and capital punishment.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Explore: Civil Liberties Cases

Research 19 landmark Supreme Court cases related to civil liberties. Complete a worksheet identifying the issue and principle established in each case, as well as the decision of the Court and the significance of that decision.

Duration: 2 hrs

Practice: Rights of Criminal Defendants

Read about two famous Supreme Court cases. In an essay, explain whether you think the Supreme Court went too far in protecting the rights of the criminal defendants involved in these cases.

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Quiz: Civil Liberties

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 2: CIVIL RIGHTS

Study: Civil Rights in America

Explore the process of defining civil rights, the movement from slavery to separate but equal, the history of school desegregation, the civil rights movement, and affirmative action.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Read: Letter from Birmingham Jail

Read *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. Explain King's approach to civil rights and its relationship to the Fourteenth Amendment.

Duration: 1 hr

Explore: Civil Rights Cases

Research 13 landmark civil rights court cases. Complete a worksheet identifying the issue and principle established in each case, as well as the decision of the Court and the significance of that decision.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

Discuss: Affirmative Action

Read excerpts from the *Lanahan* reader and discuss whether you think affirmative action is still necessary.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 25 points

Study: Rights for Women

Examine the history of women's rights, women in the political arena, women in the economic arena, and the politics of rights.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Explore: Gender Equality in the Workplace

Conduct web research on contemporary women's issues. Answer a series of questions focusing on both feminist and anti-feminist views of workplace equality and wage discrimination.

Duration: 1 hr

Quiz: Civil Rights

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 3: WRAP-UP: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Review: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Review your studies about civil liberties and civil rights. Complete a question-outlining exercise.

Duration: 2 hrs

Quiz: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

Test (CS): Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Take a 20-minute test covering civil liberties and civil rights.

Duration: 0 hrs 20 mins Scoring: 30 points

Test (TS): Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Take a 40-minute test covering civil liberties and civil rights.

Duration: 0 hrs 40 mins Scoring: 70 points

Project: Civics Engagement Project Task 3

Students who chose option 1, the media literacy guide, outline their guide, taking each requirement of the assignment description into account, and also draft a portion of it. Students who chose option 2, the group presentation, apply effective research practices to gather information about their proposed solutions. They then meet to compare research and reach consensus about which political principles are most important and which proposal most effectively serves those principles, based on their research.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 40 points

UNIT 4: AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND BELIEFS

LESSON 1: PUBLIC OPINION IN AMERICA

Study: What Is Public Opinion?

Explore public opinion and how it's measured, the nature of the public, and the results of studying public opinion.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: Public Opinion Polls

Using data from the PewResearch.org and RoperCenter.cornell.edu, students examine and interpret poll results on a variety of issues and then write an essay assessing the advantages and disadvantages of using polls to gauge public opinion.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 50 points

Discuss: Public Involvement in Politics

Support your opinion about what role public opinion should play in our political system.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 25 points

Quiz: Public Opinion in America

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 2: POLITICAL CULTURE

Study: Political Culture

Examine political culture, political ideology, and political socialization.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: Liberal and Conservative Views

Identify liberal and conservative positions on a range of issues. Explain how you characterize your own views on these issues.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 50 points

Discuss: Ideological Positions

Take an ideological test. Discuss your findings. (How did you rate? Were you surprised?)

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 25 points

Read: Liberty, Equality, and Globalization

Answer a series of questions about the impacts of liberty, equality, and globalization on American political culture.

Duration: 1 hr

Quiz: Political Culture

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 3: DOMESTIC POLICY

Study: Public Policymaking

Examine the policy cycle and the three types of policies, and consider a case study of tobacco policy.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Explore: Implementing Public Policy

Research the techniques the government employs to ensure compliance with public policy.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

Study: Distributive Policies

Look at distributive policies and politics and consider two examples: agricultural policy and defense policy.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Study: Redistributive Policies

Examine redistributive policies and politics and consider two examples: welfare policy and tax policy.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: Government Involvement in the Economy

Discuss and support your opinions about the government's involvement in the economy.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 25 points

Study: Regulatory Policies

Explore regulatory policies and politics and consider two examples: business regulation and environmental policy.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Quiz: Domestic Policy

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 4: WRAP-UP: AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND BELIEFS

Review: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Review your studies about political culture public opinion and public policy in America. Complete a question-outlining exercise.

Duration: 2 hrs

Quiz: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

Test (CS): American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Take a 20-minute test covering political values in America the process of political socialization liberals conservatives public opinion polls and public policy.

Duration: 0 hrs 20 mins Scoring: 30 points

Test (TS): American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Take a 40-minute test covering political values in America the process of political socialization liberals conservatives public opinion polls and public policy.

Duration: 0 hrs 40 mins Scoring: 70 points

Project: Civic Engagement Project Task 4

Students who chose option 1, the media literacy guide, draft the portion of their media guide that describes media literacy and provides criteria by which readers themselves can evaluate sources. Students who chose option 2, the group presentation, outline and draft a script for their presentation.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 40 points

UNIT 5: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LESSON 1: POLITICAL PARTIES

Study: Political Parties

Explore the history of American political parties, their organization, how they work, and the changing nature of party

identification.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: Party Differences

Conduct research on the modern Republican and Democratic parties. Explain how both parties are changing, why they're changing, and whether you think there remains much of a difference between the two.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 25 points

Practice: Decline of Political Parties

Review data and then compose an essay about whether the role of political parties is in serious decline.

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Discuss: Third Parties

Conduct research on several third parties. Discuss the impact of those parties, with particular focus on the Green and Libertarian Parties in the 2016 election.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 25 points

Quiz: Political Parties

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 2: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Study: Elections and Voter Turnout

Examine what elections mean to Americans. In addition, explore how the factors associated with political protections, ideology, efficacy, structural barriers, and demographics influence the nature and degree of political participation.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: Voter Behavior

Examine data to compare the opinions of people you know to the behavior of most American voters.

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Study: Electoral Systems

Look at the plurality, majority, and plurality runoff electoral methods. Examine proportional voting systems, and consider our controversial electoral college system.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Discuss: Alternative Voting Systems

After researching voting issues and electoral methods discuss whether you think low voter turnout is a problem and what you think might be done to increase turnout.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 25 points

Study: Campaigns and Voting

Examine the process of running for office. Consider the role and function of primaries, caucuses, and conventions, and look at how voting behavior is analyzed.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Explore: Campaign Finance

Analyze data on congressional candidates, read about evolving federal campaign finance laws, and answer a series of questions about the role of money in the electoral process.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

Quiz: Campaigns and Elections

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 3: INTEREST GROUPS

Study: Interest Groups

Explore the roles of interest groups, why they form, participation in interest groups, and the types of interest groups.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Read: Interest Groups and the Democratic Process

After reading about the role of interest groups on our democracy, answer questions about the impact of contemporary interest groups.

Duration: 1 hr

Study: Interest Group Strategies

Examine the direct and indirect techniques used by interest groups and political action committees in the democratic process.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: Interest Group Research

Conduct web research on two political interest groups. Report on what their missions are, what techniques they use, how large their budgets are, who their target audiences are, and whether they have a PAC. Conclude with your assessment of which group you think is the most effective.

Duration: 2 hrs Scoring: 50 points

Quiz: Interest Groups

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 4: THE MEDIA

Study: The Media

See the development of a free press in the United States, the rise of print and broadcast media, government regulation of broadcast media, and the media's effect on government.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Study: The Media and Politics

Examine the national media's interest in political campaigns and political leaders' interest in the media.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Read: The Media and Campaigning

After reading about the media's role in campaigning (Sabato), comment on the following: Should the media's notion of "a marketplace of ideas" include everything, or are there subjects the media should avoid?

Duration: 1 hr

Study: The Media and Campaigns

Examine media coverage of presidential campaigns and evaluate the media's role in the same.

Duration: 0 hrs 45 mins

Practice: The Media and Voter Education

Answer the following question: Does the mass media do a sufficient job of educating voters during campaigns?

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 50 points

Explore: Comparing Media Coverage

Locate three articles from the mainstream media and three articles from alternative media sources covering a topic of your choice. Compare coverage of the topic.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

Quiz: The Media

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

LESSON 5: WRAP-UP: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Review: Political Participation

Review your studies of political parties, elections, interest groups, and the media. Complete a question-outlining exercise.

Duration: 3 hrs

Quiz: Political Participation

Answer questions to assess your understanding of the content.

Duration: 0 hrs 30 mins Scoring: 20 points

Test (CS): Political Participation

Take a 20-minute test covering political parties, elections, interest groups, and the media.

Duration: 0 hrs 20 mins Scoring: 30 points

Test (TS): Political Participation

Take a 40-minute test covering political parties, elections, interest groups, and the media.

Duration: 0 hrs 40 mins Scoring: 70 points

Project: Civic Engagement Project Task 5

Students who chose option 1, the media literacy guide, combine the drafts from previous phases of the project, using their outline as a guide. Students then revise and edit the guide for coherence and professionalism. Finally, they refine the content with visual aids and signposts, such as a section headings. Students who chose option 2, the group presentation, find and implement visual (or audible) aids to clarify the information they provide in their script. Students then give, record, or publish their presentation — depending on the choice of medium, the technology available, and the classroom situation.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins Scoring: 40 points

UNIT 6: SEMESTER WRAP-UP

LESSON 1: PRACTICE AP EXAMS

Checkpoint: AP Exam Practice 1

Practice AP-style, multiple-choice questions.

Duration: 1 hr 20 mins

Checkpoint: AP Exam Practice 2

Practice AP-style, free-response questions.

Duration: 1 hr 40 mins

LESSON 2: FINAL COURSE EXAM

Review: AP U.S. Government and Politics

Review this information to help you prepare for the exam.

Duration: 1 hr Scoring: 0 points

Exam: Final Course Exam

Take the Final Exam for U.S. Government.

Duration: 1 hr 20 mins Scoring: 110 points

Final Exam: Final Course Exam

Take the Final Exam for U.S. Government.

Duration: 1 hr 40 mins Scoring: 120 points