

US Government

Social Science

Grade(s) 12th, Duration 1 Semester, .5 Credits
Required Course

Course Overview

This class will take the general social studies concepts and historical events learned in Foundations of Social Studies and US History, and apply them to the themes of governance, authority, and power as they impact the politics and current events of the United States and the world. A global perspective and a look at international affairs will highlight this course.

Students will be expected to complete basic core assignments as well as several extensions that will add depth and understanding to various topics. In addition, students will be expected to attend one School Board or Town Council meeting each quarter. Participation in the development of higher level learning activities such as class discussion will be strongly encouraged.

The integrated nature of this class will result in the incorporation of a variety of creative and interactive exchanges.

| Timeframe | Unit | Scope And Sequence | |
|-----------|----------------------------|---|--|
| | | Instructional Topics | |
| 3 Week(s) | Introduction to Government | 1. Comparative Governments 2. Principles of Government 3. Forms of Government | |
| 3 Week(s) | The U.S. Constitution | 1. Basic Principles 2. Making changes 3. Civil liberties and civil rights | |
| 3 Week(s) | The Legislative Branch | 1. Congress and the legislative process. | |
| 3 Week(s) | The Executive Branch | 1. Duties and powers of the President | |
| 2 Week(s) | The Judicial Branch | 1. Organization and function of the Judicial branch | |

Prerequisites

PREREQUISITE: Foundations of Social Studies & US History.

Course Details

Unit: Introduction to Government

Duration: 3 Week(s)

Unit Overview

Students will address selected topics including principles of government, forms of government, basic concepts of government, comparative political analysis, and economic policies.

Materials and Resources

Textbook chapters 1, 2, 3

Academic Vocabulary

Government, public policies, legislative power, executive power, judicial power, constitution, dictatorship, democracy, state, sovereign, autocracy, oligarchy, unitary government, federal government, division of powers, confederation, presidential government, parliamentary government, majority rule, compromise, free enterprise system, capitalism, factors of production, capital, free enterprise system, free market, monopoly, laissez-faire theory, socialism, communism, welfare state, command economy,

Summative Assessment

Text and teacher driven tests.

Topic: Comparative Governments

Duration: 4 Day(s)

Topic Overview

Students will learn differences between governments views on organization and economics.

Learning Targets

Students will learn how governments develop.

Students will identify the characteristics and theories of the origins of states.

Topic: Principles of Government

Duration: 2 Day(s)

Topic Overview

Students will define the various topics that define different types of Government

Learning Targets

Students will learn about different types of Government.

Students will define various forms of government, including democracies and dictatorships.

Topic: Forms of Government

Duration: 3 Day(s)

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Topic Overview

Students will learn differences in different forms of government.

Learning Targets

Students will analyze differences in Governments.

Students will learn, discuss, and compare several forms of government including democracy and dictatorship.

Unit: The U.S. Constitution

Duration: 3 Week(s)

Unit Overview

Students will focus on the basics of understanding the US Constitution, including the following: basic principles, amendments, civil liberties, and civil rights.

Materials and Resources

Text Book
Chapter 3, and 4.1

Academic Vocabulary

Popular sovereignty, limited government, constitutionalism, rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances, veto, judicial review, unconstitutional, federalism, amendment, ratification, formal amendment, Bill of Rights, executive agreement, treaty, electoral college, Cabinet, senatorial courtesy, delegated powers, expressed powers, implied powers, inherent powers, reserved powers, concurrent powers, Supremacy Clause

Summative Assessment

Text and teacher driven test.

Topic: Basic Principles

Duration: 1 Week(s)

Topic Overview

Students will learn the common mechanism that all governments use including forms of power.

Learning Targets

Students will define the six basic principles on which the Constitution is based.

Learning will take place through notes and discussion.

Topic: Making changes

Duration: 1 Week(s)

Topic Overview

Students will learn details of individual Amendments and how they have been applied.

Learning Targets

Amendments to the Constitution

Students will summarize and compare the 27 amendments to the Constitution.

Topic: Civil liberties and civil rights

Duration: 1 Week(s)

Topic Overview

Students will learn about the civil liberties and protections enjoyed by all citizens.

Learning Targets

Students will learn about civil liberties and civil rights.

How does the Constitution protect the rights of individuals?

Unit: The Legislative Branch

Duration: 3 Week(s)

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Unit Overview

Students will learn the fundamentals of the U.S. Legislative Branch and the importance they have as part of our American democracy. This includes the organization and powers of Congress, and an overview of the legislative process.

Materials and Resources

Text Book
Chapters 10, 11, 12,

Academic Vocabulary

bicameral, term, session, convene, adjourn, recess, special session, apportion, at-large, gerrymander, incumbent, constituency, delegate, trustee, partisan, politico, bill, floor consideration, oversight function, franking privilege, expressed powers, implied powers, inherent powers, commerce power, tax, public debt, copyright, patent, eminent domain, naturalization, Necessary & Proper Clause, strict constructionist, liberal constructionist, consensus, impeach, acquit, perjury, censure, subpoena, Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, President pro tempore, party caucus, floor leader, majority leader, minority leader, whip, seniority rule, standing committee, select committee, joint committee, conference committee, bill, quorum, pigeonhole, filibuster, cloture, veto, pocket veto

Summative Assessment

Text and Teacher driven.

Topic: Congress and the legislative process.

Duration: 3 Week(s)

Topic Overview

The bicameral legislature and its functions will be explored.

Learning Targets

Why does the Constitution establish a bicameral legislature?

Students will discuss the structure and reasons for a bicameral Congress and consider the benefits and drawbacks.

Unit: The Executive Branch

Duration: 3 Week(s)

Unit Overview

Students will learn of the importance and power held by the Chief Executive of the United States. Consideration of current U.S. Executive Branch Policies will be discussed and compared to various past Presidents.

Academic Vocabulary

Chief of State, chief executive, chief administrator, chief diplomat, commander in chief, chief legislator, chief of party, chief citizen, presidential succession, Presidential succession Act of 1947, balance the ticket, presidential elector, electoral vote, electoral college, presidential primary, winner-take-all, proportional representation, caucus, national convention, platform, keynote address, swing voter, battleground State, district plan, proportional plan, direct popular election, national popular vote plan, Executive Article, Imperial presidency, executive order, ordinance power, executive privilege, treaty, executive agreement, recognition, persona non grata, pocket veto, line-item veto, reprieve, pardon, clemency, commutation, amnesty

Topic: Duties and powers of the President

Duration: 3 Week(s)

Topic Overview

From a historical standpoint, students will come to understand that each of our Presidents has chosen various methods and directions in which to exercise their power.

Learning Targets

The growth of Presidential power.

Brief comparisons of past Presidents with the current President will be made. In light of current political situations, students will understand why Presidents move in certain directions.

Presidential succession

Students will realize the importance of having qualified individuals capable of stepping in and leading the country on a moment's notice.

The electoral process

Students will come to understand how our current "electoral process" has developed from what the framers had in mind. Specific examples will be utilized in selections of certain Presidents.

The Electoral College

Students will be able to accurately be able to describe our current electoral college, how it works and how it compares to other methods of selecting leaders around the world.

Presidential elections today

A special emphasis will be put on "predicting" who will win the current election (used only every 4 years). In addition, the students will be able to describe how each political party selects their candidate through the "primary" or "caucus", or other methods.

Presidential leadership

What are the major roles of the U.S. President? Students will examine the topic of leadership and what it entails.

Executive powers

Topics will include Executive Actions, Appointment Powers, Diplomatic Powers, etc. From a historical standpoint, students will come to understand that each of our Presidents has chosen various methods and directions in which to exercise their power.

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Legislative and judicial powers

Historical examples and comparisons will be made so that students will be able to accurately depict how each President has changed history through the use of these powers.

Unit: The Judicial Branch

Duration: 2 Week(s)

Unit Overview

Students will understand and learn about how our Federal Court system is outlined.

Academic Vocabulary

Inferior courts, jurisdiction, concurrent jurisdiction, plaintiff, defendant, original jurisdiction, appellate jurisdiction, judicial restraint, precedent, judicial activism, criminal case, civil case, docket, record, writ of certiorari, certificate, brief, majority opinion, concurring opinion, dissenting opinion, court-martial, civilian tribunal, redress

Topic: Organization and function of the Judicial branch

Duration: 2 Week(s)

Topic Overview

Students will learn of the jurisdiction and power of each level of court, how cases are appealed, and how the Supreme Court makes decisions. Specific examples of court cases at the highest level will be used and discussed in class.

Learning Targets

Jurisdiction

Students will learn of the jurisdiction and power of each level of court.

The Supreme Court

Students will learn how the Supreme Court makes decisions. Specific examples of court cases at the highest level will be used and discussed in class.
