

Orange Unified School District
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Semester Course

GRADE LEVEL: 12

PREREQUISITES: None

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT:

In this course students apply knowledge gained in previous years of study to pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government. They analyze the history and changing interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the current state of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of the government. Students will understand the differences between unitary, confederal and federal systems of government. An emphasis is placed on analyzing the relationship among federal, state, and local governments, with particular attention paid to important historical documents. This course should be viewed as the culmination of the civic literacy strand that prepares students to vote, to reflect on the responsibilities of citizenship, and to participate in community activities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

(Principles of American Democracy Content Standards denoted)

BY THE END OF THE COURSE THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:

Demonstrate an understanding of the Constitution's principles and concepts, drawing from the Federalist Papers (either actual essays or, where necessary, paraphrases) for information and discussion. (Standard 12.1)

Describe the role of the courts as a major element in the government process. (Standard 12.5)

Describe the respective powers, roles, and workings of the legislative and executive branches. (Standards 12.4, 12.7)

Show an understanding of the principles of federalism (division of power among federal, state, and local governments) and key issues related to them. (Standards 12.1, 12.4, 12.7)

Understand the responsibilities of citizenship and the importance of the individual as the basis for civil society in a constitutional republic, with particular attention paid to important historical documents. (Standards 12.2, 12.3)

Explain the fundamental differences between representative democracies and authoritarian governments. (Standards 12.3, 12.9)

Analyze contemporary issues, as it affects American democracy. (Standard 12.10)

Evaluate issues regarding campaigns and elections for national, state, and local offices. (Standard 12.6)

Evaluate, take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life. (Standard 12.8)

COURSE OVERVIEW AND APPROXIMATE UNIT TIME ALLOTMENTS:

SEMESTER

WEEKS

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| I. | Understanding of the Constitutional Underpinnings
(Standards 12.1, 12.9.1, 12.9.2, 12.9.3) | 3-4 |
| | A. The beginnings of self-government from Jamestown through the Articles of Confederation (Standards 12.1.1, 12.1.2, 12.1.3, 12.1.4) | |
| | B. Separation of powers and checks and balance system (Standard 12.1.5) | |
| | C. The main points of debate between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists (Standards 12.1.4, 12.1.6, 12.10) | |
| | D. The Federalist Papers and the Constitution (Standards 12.1.4, 12.1.5, 12.7.1) | |
| | E. The adoption of a Bill of Rights (Standards 12.1.6, 12.2.1, 12.5.1, 12.2.5) | |
| | F. Political and civil rights of a diverse society (Standard 12.3) | |
| | G. Understanding our System of Federalism (Standards 12.7.2, 12.7.3, 12.7.4) | |

Reference Chapters:

West: 1, 2, 3, 4

Magruder: 1, 2, 3, 4

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| II. | Roles of the Legislative Branches of Government and Political Parties
(Standards 12.4.1, 12.4.3, 12.6.1) | 2-3 |
| | A. Powers of congress and the making of laws (Standard 12.4.1) | |
| | 1. Expressed | |
| | 2. Implied | |
| | 3. Concurrent | |
| | 4. How a bill becomes a law | |
| | B. The structure of Congress (Standard 12.4.1) | |
| | C. Political Parties (Standard 12.6.1) | |

Reference Chapters:

West: 14, 15, 16, 10

Magruder: 5, 10, 11, 12

WEEKS

- III. The Role of the Executive Branch of Government (Standard 12.4.4) 2-3
- A. The presidency in action (Standard 12.7.8)
 - B. The government at work: Bureaucracy (Standards 12.7.5, 12.7.8)
 - C. Foreign policy and national defense (Standards 12.7.8, 12.2.2)
 - D. Financing government (Standard 12.2.3)

Reference Chapters:

West: 17, 18, 19, 23, 26

Magruder: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

- IV. The Role of the Courts in the Governmental Process (Standards 12.4.5, 12.4.6, 12.5) 3-4
- A. Protection of basic rights of citizens (Standards 12.5.1, 12.5.4, 12.5.3)
 - B. Court interpretations of the Bill of Rights (Standards 12.5.1, 12.5.4)
 - C. Controversies over court interpretations (Standard 12.5.2)
 - D. Analyze the Fourteenth Amendment, especially pertaining to due process and equal protection (Standards 12.5.1, 12.5.4, 12.2.6)

Reference Chapters:

West: 20, 5, 6, 7, 8

Magruder: 18, 19, 20, 21

- V. Political Behavior (Standard 12.6) 3-4
- A. Voters and voter behavior (Standards 12.2.4, 12.6.4, 12.6.5)
 - B. The electoral process (Standards 12.6.6, 12.6.3, 12.6.4)
 - C. Mass media, public opinion and interest groups (Standards 12.8, 12.3.2)

Reference Chapters:

West: 13, 11, 12, 9

Magruder: 6, 7, 8, 9

- VI. State and Local Governments (Standard 12.7.7) 1-2
- A. Governing the states (Standards 12.7.7, 12.7.1)
 - B. Local government and finance (Standards 12.7.2, 12.7.3)

Reference Chapters:

West: 24, 25, 26

Magruder: 24, 25

DATE OF CONTENT REVISION: February 2003

DATE OF BOARD APPROVAL: April 24, 2003

Addendum

**THE CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
GRADE 12**

PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

12.1 Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.

1. Analyze the influence of ancient Greek, Roman, English, and leading European political thinkers such as John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Niccolò Machiavelli, and William Blackstone on the development of American government.
2. Discuss the character of American democracy and its promise and perils as articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville.
3. Explain how the U.S. Constitution reflects a balance between the classical republican concern with promotion of the public good and the classical liberal concern with protecting individual rights; and discuss how the basic premises of liberal constitutionalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence as "self-evident truths."
4. Explain how the Founding Fathers' realistic view of human nature led directly to the establishment of a constitutional system that limited the power of the governors and the governed as articulated in the *Federalist Papers*.
5. Describe the systems of separated and shared powers, the role of organized interests (*Federalist Paper Number 10*), checks and balances (*Federalist Paper Number 51*), the importance of an independent judiciary (*Federalist Paper Number 78*), enumerated powers, rule of law, federalism, and civilian control of the military.
6. Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments.

12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).
2. Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society (e.g., the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; right to choose one's work; right to join or not join labor unions; copyright and patent).

3. Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes.
4. Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.
5. Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations; that is, why enjoyment of one's rights entails respect for the rights of others.
6. Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States, including the process of naturalization (e.g., literacy, language, and other requirements).

12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

1. Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.
2. Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.
3. Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity.
4. Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

1. Discuss Article I of the Constitution as it relates to the legislative branch, including eligibility for office and lengths of terms of representatives and senators; election to office; the roles of the House and Senate in impeachment proceedings; the role of the vice president; the enumerated legislative powers; and the process by which a bill becomes a law.
2. Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.
3. Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government.
4. Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.

5. Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
6. Explain the processes of selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices.

12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.

1. Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly) articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal-protection-of-the-law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.
2. Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over the decades (e.g., the Warren and Rehnquist courts).
3. Evaluate the effects of the Court's interpretations of the Constitution in *Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, and *United States v. Nixon*, with emphasis on the arguments espoused by each side in these cases.
4. Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, and *United States v. Virginia (VMI)*.

12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices.

1. Analyze the origin, development, and role of political parties, noting those occasional periods in which there was only one major party or were more than two major parties.
2. Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections.
3. Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding.
4. Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office).
5. Discuss the features of direct democracy in numerous states (e.g., the process of referendums, recall elections).
6. Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.

12.7 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

1. Explain how conflicts between levels of government and branches of government are resolved.
2. Identify the major responsibilities and sources of revenue for state and local governments.
3. Discuss reserved powers and concurrent powers of state governments.
4. Discuss the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government's power.
5. Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders.
6. Compare the processes of lawmaking at each of the three levels of government, including the role of lobbying and the media.
7. Identify the organization and jurisdiction of federal, state, and local (e.g., California) courts and the interrelationships among them.
8. Understand the scope of presidential power and decision-making through examination of case studies such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, passage of Great Society legislation, War Powers Act, Gulf War, and Bosnia.

12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press.
2. Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics.
3. Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.

12.9 Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

1. Explain how the different philosophies and structures of feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies, parliamentary systems, and constitutional liberal democracies influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.
2. Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).

3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.
4. Describe for at least two countries the consequences of conditions that gave rise to tyrannies during certain periods (e.g., Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, Cambodia).
5. Identify the forms of illegitimate power that twentieth-century African, Asian, and Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.
6. Identify the ideologies, causes, stages, and outcomes of major Mexican, Central American, and South American revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
7. Describe the ideologies that give rise to Communism, methods of maintaining control, and the movements to overthrow such governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, including the roles of individuals (e.g., Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel).
8. Identify the successes of relatively new democracies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the ideas, leaders, and general societal conditions that have launched and sustained, or failed to sustain, them.

12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

