

# Curriculum Guide

**Course: American Government      Grade 12**

## **Description**

Students in grade twelve pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government. Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of government. An emphasis is placed on analyzing the relationship among federal, state, and local governments, with particular attention paid to the principles of democracy. These standards represent the culmination of civic literacy as students prepare to vote, participate in community activities, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

## **Meets Requirements for:**

SUHSD Graduation – Social Science  
UC & CSU Requirements

## **Length of Course:**

1 Semester

## **Prerequisite:**

12<sup>th</sup> grade status

## **Units**

5

## **Requisite Skills/Concepts:**

- Political thinkers, i.e. Locke, Montesquieu, Machiavelli
- Constitutional interpretations
- Bill of Rights
- Federalist Papers
- Taxes
- Civic issues
- Rights v responsibilities
- Branches of government
- Religious diversity
- Activism
- Changing interpretations of civil rights
- Court system
- Election process
- Electoral College
- Philosophies of government structure, i.e. socialism, fascism, communism
- Relationships of religion & government
- Jurisdictions: federal, state, and local

## **Essential Content and Skills (Standards):**

### **PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY**

**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.**

(12.1.2,3,5, 6)

1. Discuss the character of American democracy and its promise and perils.
2. 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.”
3. Describe the systems of separated and shared powers, the role of organized interests, checks and balances, the importance of an independent judiciary, enumerated powers, rule of law, federalism, and civilian control of the military.
4. Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments.

**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.**

(12.2.1,3,4)

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of the Bill of Rights and how rights are secured by citizens.
2. Discuss the individual’s legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes (citizenship).
3. 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.

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

(12.4.1-6)

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 law.
2. Explain the process through the Constitution can be amended.
3. Identify the student’s 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.

**Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.** (12.5.1,3,4)

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. Evaluate the effects of the Court's interpretations of the Constitution in *Marbury v. Madison* and *McCulloch v. Maryland* with emphasis in the arguments espoused by each side of these cases.
3. Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights and civil liberties; including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Roe v. Wade*, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, *Texas v. Johnson*.

**Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective office.** (12.6.4)

1. 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).

**Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, and local governments.** (12.7.4.8)

1. Discuss the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government's power.
2. Understand the scope of presidential power and decision making through the examination of case studies.

**Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.** (12.8.2,3)

1. Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics and beyond.
2. Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion (propaganda).

## **Suggested Calendar of Instruction**

- I. Foundations of American Government
  - Forms of Government
  - The Constitution
  - Federalism
  
- II. Political Behavior: Government By The People
  - Political Parties
  - Voters and Voter Behavior
  - The Electoral Process
  - Mass Media and Public Opinion (interest groups.)
  
- III. The Legislative Branch
  - Congress
  - Powers of Congress and Congress in Action
  
- IV. The Executive Branch
  - The Presidency
  - The Presidency in Action
  
- V. The Judicial Branch
  - Civil Liberties: First Amendment Freedoms
  - Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Freedom
  - Civil Rights: Equal Justice Under the Law

## **Instructional Resources/Equipment**

Text – Magruder’s *American Government*

# American Government

## Semester Review

### Principles of Government and Federalism

- Democracy-direct and representative
- Sovereignty
- Federalism-federal form of government
- Three branches of government-executive, legislative and judicial
- Presidential and parliamentary government
- Compromise
- Dictatorship
- Division of powers
- Delegated, expressed, implied, reserved and exclusive powers
- Necessary and proper clause
- Supremacy clause
- Extradition clause

### Political Behavior

- Political party-minor and major parties
- Two-party system
- Party affiliation, party identification
- Elections
- Electorate
- Suffrage
- Registration
- Gerrymandering
- Political socialization
- Nomination
- Primaries-open and closed
- Polling Place
- Voting qualifications
- Ballot-Australian and absentee
- Partisan and non-partisan
- Political right vs. civil right
- Public opinion
- Publics
- Interest or pressure groups
- Mass media
- Propaganda and propaganda techniques
- Lobbying and lobbyist

### The Executive Branch

- Presidential Roles
- Presidential succession
- Presidential qualifications
- Presidential powers and limitations
- Cabinet
- Presidential elector
- Electoral College
- Electoral votes
- Platform
- State of the Union address

### The Legislative Branch

- US Congress-House and Senate
- Bicameral
- Congressional Leadership
- Constituents
- Term and Session of Congress
- Roles and voting options-members of Congress
- Seniority rule
- Committees
- Quorum
- Filibuster and cloture
- Veto and Congressional override
- Process of bill to law

### The Judicial Branch and Civil Rights

- US Constitution
- Constitutionalism
- Popular sovereignty
- Limited government
- Bill of Rights
- Majority rule and minority rights
- Separation of powers
- Checks and balances
- Supremacy clause
- Amendments-formal and informal
- US Supreme Court and judicial review
- Jurisdiction-original and appellate
- Opinions-majority, concurring and dissenting
- Civil liberties and civil rights
- First Amendment rights
- Symbolic speech
- Libel and slander
- Fourth Amendment-search and seizure
- Reasonable cause
- Exclusionary rule
- Fifth and Sixth Amendments-Self-incrimination and legal counsel
- Gideon vs. Wainwright (1963)
- Miranda Rule-Miranda vs. Arizona (1966)
- Eighth Amendment-Cruel and unusual punishment
- Segregation and separate-but-equal doctrine
- Capital crimes and punishment
- Discrimination and reverse discrimination
- Double jeopardy
- Marbury vs. Madison (1803)
- McCulloch vs. Maryland (1819)
- Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)

## Social Science Curriculum Guide Planning Worksheet

Time Frame	Content	Standard	Historical & Social Science Analysis Skills*			Resources & Teaching Strategies	Specified Assignments	Assessment
			C/S/T	H/R	H/I			
<b>4 weeks</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. Aug-Sept or 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. January	Foundations of American Government (Unit 1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms of government (Ch. 1)</li> <li>• Origins of American Government (Ch.2)</li> <li>• The Constitution (Ch. 3)</li> <li>• Federalism (Ch. 4)</li> </ul>	12.1 Students explain fundamental principles & moral values of American democracy. 12.2 Students evaluate & take & defend positions on scope & limits of rights & obligations as democratic citizens. 12.4 Students analyze unique roles & responsibilities of the 3 branches of govt.	1 2	3 4	2 3 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook (Ch. 1 - 4)</li> <li>• Lecture/discussion</li> <li>• Vocab &amp; questions (text)</li> <li>• Small group activities/discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “American Experiment/Ideals of Democracy” activity</li> <li>• Supreme Court briefs (selected cases)</li> <li>• Citizenship test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective test</li> <li>• Essays – analytical</li> <li>• Short answer questions</li> </ul>
<b>4 weeks</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. Sept.-Oct. or 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. February	Political Behavior By the People (Unit II): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political Parties (Ch.5)</li> <li>• Voters &amp; Voter Behavior (Ch. 6)</li> <li>• The electoral process (Ch.7)</li> <li>• Mass media &amp; public opinion (Ch. 8)</li> <li>- Interest Groups (Ch.9)</li> </ul>	12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, & local elective offices. 12.8 Students evaluate & take & defend positions on the influence of media on American political life.	2 3	4	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook (Ch. 5-9)</li> <li>• Lecture/discussion</li> <li>• Vocab &amp; questions (text)</li> <li>• Small group activities/discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voters guide – student developed</li> <li>• Political spectrum “test” – in the continuum</li> <li>• Political autobiography – political party selection – reading &amp; creation of p.p. platform</li> <li>• Elections – “Bob Roberts” video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective test</li> <li>• Essays – analytical</li> <li>• Short answer questions</li> </ul>
<b>3 weeks</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. Oct. or 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. March	The Legislative Branch (Unit III): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congress (Ch. 10)</li> <li>• Powers of Congress &amp; Congress in Action (Ch. 11, 12)</li> </ul>	12.1 12.4	1 2 3		4 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook (Ch. 10 - 12)</li> <li>• Lecture/discussion</li> <li>• Vocab &amp; questions (text)</li> <li>• Small group activities/discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senate autobiographies – research senators, issues – write &amp; debate legislation (role play of Senate)</li> <li>• News articles on the roles of the President (current)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective test</li> <li>• Essays – analytical</li> <li>• Short answer questions</li> </ul>
<b>3 weeks</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. Nov. or 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. April-May	The Executive Branch: (Unit IV) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Presidency (Ch. 13)</li> <li>• The Presidency in Action (Ch. 14)</li> <li>- The Bureaucracy (Ch.15)</li> </ul>	12.4 12.7 Students analyze & compare powers & procedures of national, state, tribal & local govts.	1 2 3		1 2 3 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook (Ch. 13-15)</li> <li>• Lecture/discussion</li> <li>• Vocab &amp; questions (text)</li> <li>• Small group activities/discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presidential campaign/ election process (candidates, issues, speeches, commercials &amp; debates)</li> <li>• Presidential satire – “Canadian Bacon” video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective test</li> <li>• Essays – analytical</li> <li>• Short answer questions</li> </ul>

**Social Science Curriculum Guide Planning Worksheet**

Time Frame	Content	Standard	Historical & Social Science Analysis Skills*			Resources & Teaching Strategies	Specified Assignments	Assessment
			C/S/T	H/R	H/I			
<b>3 weeks</b>  2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. Nov.-Dec. or 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. May	The Judicial Branch - Civil Liberties/Rights (Unit V): • First Amendment freedoms (Ch. 18, 19) • Protecting individual freedom (Ch. 20) • Equal justice under the law (Ch. 21)	12.2 12.4 12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution & its amendments.	1 2	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	• Textbook (Ch. 18-21) • Lecture/discussion • Vocab & questions (text) • Small group activities/discussion	• What is constitutional, unconstitutional? • Landmark Supreme Court cases – court briefs/arguing the case	• Objective test • Essays – analytical • Short answer questions

**\*Key:**

- C/S/T** – Chronological and Spatial Thinking
- H/R** – Historical Research, Evidence and Point of View
- H/I** – Historical Interpretation

**Textbook: Magruder’s American Government**