



Greenwich Public Schools Curriculum Overview

AP United States Government and Politics

Personalized learning is achieved through standards-based, rigorous and relevant curriculum that is aligned to digital tools and resources.

Note: Teachers retain professional discretion in how the learning is presented based on the needs and interests of their students.

Course Description

As outlined by College Board: “AP U.S. Government and Politics provides a college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. Students will study U.S. foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals to gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behaviors. They will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, they will complete a political science research or applied civics project.”

Unit Pacing Guide

- Unit I: Foundations of American Democracy (approx. 2-3 Weeks)
- Unit II: Interactions Among Branches of Government (approx. 3-4 Weeks)
- Unit III: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (approx. 2-3 Weeks)
- Unit IV: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (approx. 2-3 Weeks)
- Unit V: Political Participation (approx. 2-3 Weeks)

Enduring Understandings for the Course

The U.S. Constitution arose out of important historical and philosophical ideas and it establishes a framework for American government. Civic engagement calls on the citizenry to become involved through various means of participation and this is the foundation of a democratic society.

Enduring Understandings By Unit

- **Unit I: Foundations of American Democracy**

Students will understand that...

- a. LOR-1 A: A balance between governmental power and individual rights has been a hallmark of American political development.
- b. CON-1: The Constitution emerged from the debate about the weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation as a blueprint for limited government.
- c. PMI-1: The Constitution created a competitive policy-making process to ensure the people's will is represented and that freedom is preserved.
- d. CON-2: Federalism reflects the dynamic distribution of power between national and state governments.

- **Unit II: Interactions Among Branches of Government**

Students will understand that...

- a. CON-3: The republican ideal in the US is manifested in the structure and operation of the legislative branch.
- b. CON-4: The presidency has been enhanced beyond its expressed constitutional powers.
- c. CON-5: The design of the judicial branch protects the Supreme Court's independence as a branch of government, and the emergence and use of judicial review remains a powerful judicial practice.
- d. PMI-2: The federal bureaucracy is a powerful institution implementing federal policies with sometimes questionable accountability.

- **Unit III: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights**

Students will understand that...

- a. LOR-2: Provisions of the US Constitution's Bill of Rights are continually being interpreted to balance the power of government and the civil liberties of individuals.
- b. LOR-3: Protections of the Bill of Rights have been selectively incorporated by way of the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause to prevent state infringement of basic liberties.
- c. PRD-1: The Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause as well as other constitutional provisions have often been used to support the advancement of equality.
- d. PMI-3: Public policy promoting civil rights is influenced by citizen-state interactions and constitutional interpretation over time.
- e. CON-6: The Supreme Court's interpretation of the US Constitution is influenced by the composition of the Court and citizen-state interactions. At times, it has restricted minority rights and, at others, protected them.

- **Unit IV: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs**

Students will understand that...

- a. MPA-1: Citizen beliefs about government are shaped by the intersection of demographics, political culture, and dynamic social change
- b. MPA-2: Public opinion is measured through scientific polling, and the results of public opinion polls influence public policies and institutions.

- c. PMI-4: Widely held political ideologies shape policy debates and choices in American policies.
- **Unit V: Political Participation**
Students will understand that...
 - a. MPA-3: Factors associated with political ideology, efficacy, structural barriers, and demographics influence the nature and degree of political participation.
 - b. PMI-5: Political parties, interest groups, and social movements provide opportunities for participation and influence how people relate to government and policy-makers.
 - c. PRD-2: The impact of federal policies on campaigning and electoral rules continues to be contested by both sides of the political spectrum.
 - d. PRD-3: The various forms of media provide citizens with political information and influence the ways in which they participate politically.

Standards

Connecticut Core Standards

Adopted in 2010 | English Language Arts Standards, History/Social Studies, Grade 11-12 at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/>

Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks

Adopted in February 2015 | Pages 101 through 110 at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Social-Studies/ssframeworks.pdf>

DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRY

- INQ 9–12.1 Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.
- INQ 9–12.2 Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.
- INQ 9–12.3 Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a supporting question.
- INQ 9–12.4 Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge. INQ 9–12.5 Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS AND TOOLS

(See below, beginning with “Civic and Political Institutions”)

DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE

- INQ 9–12.6 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

- INQ 9–12.7 Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the sources.
- INQ 9–12.8 Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantially from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.
- INQ 9–12.9 Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.

DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION

- INQ 9–12.10 Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.
- INQ 9–12.11 Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical)
- INQ 9–12.12 Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- INQ 9–12.13 Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.
- INQ 9–12.14 Critique the use of the reasoning, sequencing, and supporting details of explanations.
- INQ 9–12.15 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.
- INQ 9–12.16 Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.
- INQ 9–12.17 Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school civic contexts.

(applicable DIMENSION 2 main concepts are listed below)

Civics

Civic and Political Institutions

- CIV 9–12.1 Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions.

- CIV 9–12.2 Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans' participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present.
- CIV 9–12.3 Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order.
- CIV 9–12.4 Explain how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested.
- CIV 9–12.5 Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.
- CIV 9–12.6 Critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets.

Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles

- CIV 9–12.7 Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with others.
- CIV 9–12.8 Evaluate social and political systems in different contexts, times, and places that promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles.
- CIV 9–12.9 Use appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings.
- CIV 9–12.10 Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

Processes, Rules, and Laws

- CIV 9–12.11 Evaluate multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved.
- CIV 9–12.12 Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.
- CIV 9–12.13 Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.
- CIV 9–12.14 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights

History

Perspectives

- HIST 9–12.1 Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

Economics

Economic Decision-Making

- ECO 9–12.1 Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups.

Exchange and Markets

- ECO 9–12.2 Generate possible explanations for a government role in markets when market inefficiencies exist.
- ECO 9–12.3 Describe the roles of institutions such as clearly defined property rights and the rule of law in a market economy.

Geography

Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movements

- GEO 9–12.1 Evaluate the impact of economic activities and political decisions on spatial patterns within and among urban, suburban, and rural regions.

Greenwich Public Schools Vision of the Graduate

- Pose and pursue substantive questions
 - Students will develop and explore their own research question during a variety of research assignments
- Critically interpret, evaluate, and synthesize information
 - Students will critically interpret, evaluate and synthesize information by analyzing a variety of primary and secondary sources and by conducting research. This source evaluation and research will allow students to gain a variety of perspectives.
- Explore, define, and solve complex problems
 - Students will apply historical knowledge to critically analyze current problems and issues.
- Communicate effectively for a given purpose
 - Students will be evaluated on their ability to communicate effectively through a variety of methods. Through persuasive writing assignments, class discussions and presentations, students will continue to develop and improve their communication skills.
- Advocate for ideas, causes and actions
 - Students will evaluate past advocacy successes and failures and determine when others have chosen to fight for causes and taken action.
- Generate innovative, creative ideas and products
 - Students will demonstrate their mastery of curriculum objectives with innovative projects. Students will explore answers to essential questions through creative and varied assignments with research structured by the use of GPS research process.
- Collaborate with others to produce a unified work and/or heightened understanding
 - Students will learn to collaborate with one another while working in structured groups in a variety of cooperative learning activities in order to create a final product.
- Contribute to community through dialogue, service, and/or leadership
 - Through the study of community outreach, students gain the skills they need to become active citizens. The community service project will give students the opportunity to contribute to the community.

- Conduct themselves in an ethical and responsible manner
 - Current and historical situations will be analyzed so students gain perspective and information in order to conduct themselves in a responsible manner.
- Recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view
 - Through teaching about others' political ideologies, students will recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view. By developing an understanding of and empathy for others, students will appreciate differences and similarities between themselves and others.
- Pursue their unique interests, passions and curiosities
 - Students will have choice in many assignments and will be able to pursue their interests, specifically through the Capstone Community Service Project.
- Respond to failures and successes with reflection and resilience
 - Students will reflect on their writing and group work, in order to analyze what they did well and where they can improve. Frequent and constructive feedback by teachers will be used to ensure continuous reflection and refinement.
- Be responsible for their own mental and physical health
 - Social studies classes will help students develop study skills, and reduce stress through organization and planning.

Resources

Required Textbook: Wilson, *American Government Institutions and Policies*

Recommended Resources

- Declaration of Independence
- Articles of Confederation
- United States Constitution
- Brutus 1
- The Federalist Papers: 10, 51, 70, 78
- *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*
- *Marbury v. Madison* (1803)
- *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819)
- *Schenck v. the United States* (1919)
- *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)
- *Engel v. Vitale* (1962)
- *Baker v. Carr* (1962)
- *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963)
- *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969)
- *New York Times Co. v. United States* (1971)
- *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972)
- *Roe v. Wade* (1973)
- *Shaw v. Reno* (1993)
- *United States v. Lopez* (1995)
- *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010)
- *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010)
- GovTrack.us
- US Census
- OpenSecrets.org
- Congress.gov
- Oyez.org
- LandmarkCases.org
- Current Events and Public Opinion: Pew Research Center, Gallup, Washington Post, New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, Fox News, CNN News, Associated Press, National Public Radio (NPR), USA Today, Reuters, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), etc.
- Greenwich Community Information: Greenwich Time, Greenwich Sentinel, Greenwich Free Press, Greenwich Public Schools website