

Course Title:	American Government and Civics (Honors)
Grade(s):	10

Course Description
The success of a democracy depends on the effectiveness of a politically active and informed citizenry. This course is designed to provide students with a theoretical, foundational, and working knowledge of the American governmental system. The purpose of the Civics course is for students to examine the U.S. Constitution, its origins, and how it has evolved over time; providing students with the knowledge, motivation, and capability to become active citizens. Special emphasis will be placed on the concept of “service learning” where students actively research, plan, and potentially act on an issue of particular importance. Students will be provided a framework and develop an understanding of how the political system functions at the local, state, and federal levels as well as develop a sense of their role, the role of the individual citizen, within said system. The honors level of this course, while studying the same concepts and skills as the academic class, challenges students to work at a deeper level and at a faster pace.
Approved Curricular Materials/Textbook(s)
<i>Magruder’s American Government Interactive</i> (Savvas)

Unit Title	Unit Description (Include Unit Objectives)	Unit Pacing
Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy	In the first unit of study, students will analyze the purpose and essential aspects of governmental systems. Topics covered include the origins of American government - Road to Revolution, Declaration of Independence, etc., the failures of the Articles of Confederation, the writing of the Constitution, separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, the Bill of Rights, compromises, and the ratification debate. The unit will conclude with an in-depth analysis of federalism to include key concepts, powers, landmark cases and legislation that have served to shape the balance between the national government and the states throughout the history of the United States.	8-10 weeks (September - November)
Unit 2: Interactions	During this unit, the students will examine the institutions of the American	8-10 weeks

Among the Branches of Government	government and how the branches interact and serve to check and balance power in the United States. Topics covered include the structure, functions, and powers of the Legislative, Executive (including the Federal Bureaucracy) and the Judicial Branches Through formative and summative assessments in this unit, students will assess the evolution of and balance of power between the branches of government.	(November-January)
Unit 3: Civil Liberties	After concluding with the Judicial Branch in Unit II, students will connect the founding principles of our government to the debates over the appropriate balance of liberty and order, noting how citizens and other groups have pursued policy solutions to protect the civil liberties of the American people, laying the foundation for later discussions about other ways citizens can participate in the government. Topics covered will include the Bill of Rights and landmark decisions of the Supreme Court throughout the history of the United States.	2-3 weeks (January-February)
Unit 4: Political Participation	During this unit, students will examine the many ways that they can influence policymakers and impact the decisions that will affect their daily lives. Under our Constitution, governing is achieved directly through citizen participation, although there are institutions (e.g., political parties, interest groups, and mass media) that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policymaking. Topics covered will include linkage institutions such as, campaigns and elections, political parties, the mass media, and interest groups.	8-10 weeks (February-April)
Unit 5: State and Local Government	This mini-unit of study is designed to introduce students to state and local governance in preparation for the final Civic Action Project. Topics covered will include state and local government structures and functions.	1-2 weeks (May)
Unit 6: Civic Action Plan	For the culminating unit, students will identify and research an issue area in the international, national, state, or local areas that requires improvement and devise an actionable plan to affect positive change within an issue area at the state or local capacity that aligns with the curriculum covered and skills developed throughout the academic year. Students will seek out avenues to implement their plan and affect the desired change in the issue area they have identified and researched.	3-5 weeks (May-June)