

Course Title:	Advanced Placement U.S. Government & Politics
Grade(s):	10-12

Course Description
Advanced Placement U.S. Government & Politics will offer students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. This course will include study of important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to our national governmental system for those interested in a more rigorous examination of politics, government, history, or legal studies at the collegiate level. Throughout the course, students will examine the foundations of American democracy, interactions among the branches of government, civil rights and civil liberties, public opinion and political ideology, and linkage institutions including political parties, campaigns and elections, interest groups, and the mass media. Students who take this college-level course will be prepared and required to take the Advanced Placement examination for which they may receive credits or advanced standing at the college level. Open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors, the course will provide students an excellent foundation for further scholarship in the areas of political science, legal studies, and U.S. History. Successful completion of this course will prepare students for learning at the collegiate level as students will work throughout the year on developing critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity skills.
Approved Curricular Materials/Textbook(s)
<i>American Politics Today</i> (3rd Essentials Edition) <i>The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity</i> (5th Edition)

Unit Title	Unit Description (Include Unit Objectives)	Unit Pacing
Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy	More than 200 years after the U.S. Constitution was ratified, the compromises that were necessary for ratification—which in some instances led to ambiguity—continue to fuel debate and discussion over how best to protect liberty, equality, order, and private property. This first unit sets the foundation for the course by examining how the framers of the Constitution set up a structure of government intended to stand the test of time. Compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises focused on the proper balance between individual freedom, social order, and	8-10 weeks (September - November)

	equality of opportunity. In subsequent units, students will apply their understanding of the Constitution to the institutions of government and people's daily lives.	
Unit 2: Interactions Among the Branches of Government	In this unit, students continue to explore policymaking, focusing on its complexity and the idea that it is a process involving multiple governmental institutions and actors. Students will look at issues or policies from several different perspectives and then apply their knowledge to better understand the complexity of the policymaking process. The Constitution grants specific powers to Congress, the presidency, and the courts, each of which exercises informal powers (developed through political practice, tradition, and legislation). Because power is widely distributed, and checks prevent one branch from overreaching or usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in the position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern.	8-10 weeks (November - January)
Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	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 and civil rights of all Americans, laying the foundation for later discussions about other ways citizens can participate in the government. The U.S. Constitution, primarily through the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment, protects the civil liberties and civil rights of citizens, though the extent of those protections and the need to protect the safety and general welfare of individuals has long been debated. Through social movements, legal challenges, and acts of Congress, citizens have attempted to restrict the government from unduly infringing on individual rights and from denying equal protection under the law.	3-4 weeks (January - February)
Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs	Connecting the application of political science methods to the development of social and economic policies that Americans support, advocate for, and adopt is foundational to understanding the ideologies of political parties and patterns of political participation. American political beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, linkage institutions (i.e., elections, political parties, interest groups,	2-4 weeks (February - March)

	and the media in all its forms), and the changing demographics of citizens. These beliefs about government, politics, and the individual's role in the political system influence the creation of public policies.	
Unit 5: Political Participation	Students should understand the many ways that they can influence policymakers and impact the decisions that will affect their daily lives. The principle of rule by the people is the bedrock of the American political system and requires that citizens engage and participate in the development of policy. 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.	4-6 weeks (March - 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.	4-6 weeks (May-June)