

AP® UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

DETAILED SYLLABUS

Unit 1 – Constitutional Underpinnings of the Government

Textbook -- Chapter 1: The Study of American Government

Topics -- Power, authority and legitimacy in government
Theories on who makes the decisions in government

Textbook -- Chapter 2: The Constitution

Appendix pages A-4 – A-20 (text of Constitution)

Topics -- The Enlightenment and the Revolution
The Articles of Confederation and the Ideas for Change
The Constitutional Convention and Competing Views
The Federalist Papers
Provisions of the Constitution: The Congress
Provisions of the Constitution: Executive and Judiciary
Provisions of the Constitution: Supremacy Clause,
Amendments

Textbook -- Chapter 3: Federalism

Topics -- The concept of federalism
National vs. states' rights under the Constitution
The exercise of national power: money and mandates
The devolution revolution

Textbook -- Chapter 16: The Judiciary

Topics -- The federal and state court systems
Factors in selecting federal judges
Strict and loose constructionists
The role of the Supreme Court in history
The current make-up of the Supreme Court

Unit 3 – Political Beliefs and Behaviors

Textbook -- Chapter 4: American Political Culture

Topics -- The factors in America's political culture
Political culture in American history
Comparing America's political culture with that of
other nations

Textbook -- Chapter 7: Public Opinion

Topics -- Factors in creating people's political views
Factors in determining a survey's reliability
Liberals, conservatives and moderates

Textbook -- Chapter 8: Political Participation

Topics -- Methods of political participation
The history of the right to vote
Voter participation in American elections

Textbook -- Chapter 10: Elections and Campaigns

Topics -- Congressional campaigns: logistics and politics
Making a run for the presidency; primaries
General election campaigns for the presidency
Campaign advertising and debates
Campaign finance – rules, concerns and proposals

Unit 4 – Political Parties, Interest Groups & Mass Media

Textbook -- Chapter 9: Political Parties

Topics -- The three definitions of political parties
Political parties in our history; realignments
Third-party political movements
The reduced role of parties in recent years

Textbook -- Chapter 11: Interest Groups

Topics -- The types and importance of interest groups
Various interest groups; groups from movements
How interest groups are funded
How interest groups pursue their aims
Lobbying and other problems with interest groups

Textbook -- Chapter 12: The Media

Topics -- Journalism in American history
Freedom of the press
Roles of the media; use of the media by politicians and
officials
Rules of media coverage
The role of the press in influencing public opinion

Unit 5 – Public Policy

Review Book -- Chapter 14: Policy-Making
(including, also, the definitions and identifications at the end of the Chapter)

Topics -- The factors in determining public policy
Costs and benefits in policy decisions

Factors in determining economic policy
Assessing how the economy is doing
Fiscal policy and monetary policy
Decision-makers in economic policy

The history and purpose of social welfare
The types of social welfare
Social welfare in America vs. other nations
The debates on Social Security and health care

The issues in environmental policy
The costs of environmental policy
Enforcement of environmental laws

The types of foreign policy
Key positions in the foreign policy apparatus
The role of the United Nations
The defense and military apparatus
The defense budget - size and factors
Major current foreign and defense issues

Unit 6 – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Review Book -- Chapter 15: Civil Liberties

Topics -- Key concepts and constitutional provisions
Freedom of speech
Freedom of religion
Rights of the accused – search and seizure
Rights of the accused – 5th, 6th & 8th Amendments

Review Book -- Chapter 16: Civil Rights

Topics -- The 14th Amendment and racial discrimination
Constitutionally-protected classes
Civil rights granted by statute
Affirmative action