



SAMPLE SYLLABUS #2

AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Curricular Requirements

CR1	The teacher and students have access to a college-level U.S. government and politics textbook and news media sources from multiple perspectives.	<i>See page:</i> 2
CR2	The course includes the required foundational documents and required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP Course and Exam Description.	<i>See page:</i> 3
CR3	The course is structured to incorporate the big ideas and required content outlined in each of the units described in the AP Course and Exam Description.	<i>See page:</i> 2
CR4	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Skill Category 1: Concept Application—apply political concepts.	<i>See page:</i> 7
CR5	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Skill Category 2: SCOTUS Application—apply Supreme Court decisions.	<i>See page:</i> 9
CR6	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Skill Category 3: Data Analysis—analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics.	<i>See page:</i> 11
CR7	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the text-based analysis skills in Skill Category 4: Source Analysis—read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents.	<i>See page:</i> 6
CR8	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the visual source analysis skills in Skill Category 4: Source Analysis—read, analyze, and interpret visual sources.	<i>See page:</i> 4
CR9	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Skill Category 5: Argumentation—develop an argument in essay format.	<i>See page:</i> 11
CR10	Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP Course and Exam Description that culminates in a presentation of findings.	<i>See page:</i> 11

Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics Sample Syllabus #2

Instructional Schedule

U.S. Government and Politics is taught in one semester using a traditional school day schedule. Each class period is 47 minutes long. There are approximately 79 instructional days in each semester.

Course Units **CR3**

- **Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy** – 15 days (Big Idea: Constitutionalism)
- **Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government** – 22 days (Big Idea: Competing Policymaking Interests)
- **Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights** – 10 days (Big Idea: Liberty and Order)
- **Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs** – 10 days (Big Idea: Participation in a Representative Democracy)
- **Unit 5: Political Participation** – 17 days (Big Idea: Participation in a Representative Democracy)

*Big Idea: Methods of Political Analysis will be covered throughout the course.

There are five days unaccounted for to allow for flexibility in the schedule.

Primary Textbook

Edwards, George C., et al. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*. 2012 Election Edition ed., Boston, Pearson, 2014. **CR1**

Supplemental Resources

- Abernathy, Scott and Karen Waples. *Document Reader for American Government: Stories of a Nation: For the AP® Course*. New York, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2019.
- Serow, Ann Gostyn, and Everett Carl Ladd. *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*. Lanahan Publishers, 2016.
- Khan Academy®

Sources for Quantitative and Qualitative Stimuli **CR1**

- *The New York Times*
- The Pew Research Center
- BBC News
- *The Week* (for political cartoons)
- *The Washington Post*
- *The Economist*
- *The Wall Street Journal*

CR3

The syllabus must include an outline of course content by unit title or topic using any organizational approach to demonstrate the inclusion of required course content and associated big ideas. All five big ideas must be included.

CR1

The syllabus must cite the title, author, and publication date of a college-level U.S. government and politics textbook.

CR1

The syllabus must include examples of news media sources from multiple perspectives.

The following required foundational documents are incorporated throughout the course: **CR2**

- The Declaration of Independence
- The Articles of Confederation
- *Federalist No. 10*
- *Brutus No. 1*
- *Federalist No. 51*
- The Constitution of the United States
- *Federalist No. 70*
- *Federalist No. 78*
- “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

CR2

The syllabus must list the required foundational documents and Supreme Court cases even when readers are used.

The following required Supreme Court cases are incorporated throughout the course: **CR2**

- *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819)
- *Lopez v. United States* (1995)
- *Marbury v. Madison* (1803)
- *Engel v. Vitale* (1962)
- *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972)
- *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969)
- *New York Times Company v. United States* (1971)
- *Schenck v. United States* (1919)
- *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963)
- *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010)
- *Brown v. Board of Education, I* (1954)
- *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC)* (2010)
- *Baker v. Carr* (1962)
- *Shaw v. Reno* (1993)

Major Class Activities

- Current events presentations
 - ♦ Students, individually or as a pair, will prepare a current events presentation that they will share with the class at the start of their assigned week. The presentation must include at least one story that links one or more of the big ideas to each of the five units in the AP U.S. Government and Politics curriculum. The current events presentation also must include at least one relevant visual source (political cartoon, quantitative data, or infographic) for each story with a caption that explains its connection to the big idea and/or unit that story covers.
- Analytical paper assignment
 - ♦ Students will be required to write three analytical papers about important topics in United States government and politics. These papers will be due on various dates throughout semester. Each paper must be no more than four pages in length. In each paper, the students must briefly summarize the assigned readings, connect the readings to the current unit of study (how they do this will vary depending on the resources provided for each paper and the unit of study in which it is due), and make a connection between the readings and a current political issue. One to two analytical paper assignments will require students to also examine how the assigned article and a required case/foundational document corroborate or contradict one another.

- Monster vocabulary exam
 - ♦ Using the course framework, I have created a list of important political science and government terms such as *political culture*, etc. At the start of the semester, each student will be assigned two or more terms. Students will use their assigned terms to create a study presentation, such as a Google Slides presentation, a Quizlet presentation, or a Kahoot! quiz that can be used by the entire class as a study aid. At a later date, students will take an exam over these terms. On this exam, they must score a 90% or better in order to earn credit. They can take the exam up to three times in order to earn credit.
- Debates
 - ♦ Students, in teams of three, will compete in a debate about a current public policy or issue in American government and politics. Each team will get a five-minute opening statement, a five-minute cross-examination period, and a five-minute closing statement. Students must also have a visual that helps support their main arguments. This visual can be a chart, graph, table, political cartoon, or infographic. Finally, each team is responsible for providing an annotated works cited page of the resources used to develop their arguments and questions.
- Thinglink assignment for required court cases
 - ♦ In pairs, students will create a Thinglink interactive presentation for one of the required court cases. Their interactive presentation must include a summary of the constitutional issue involved in the case, a summary of the holding of the case, any significant dissents in the case, and connections to at least two similar cases (acting as precedent or overturning the original decision). In addition to the previous requirements, each student’s Thinglink should contain relevant visuals, such as political cartoons, photographs, or tables/charts and a caption that explains their relevance to the case. **(Skill 4: Source Analysis) CR8**
- Any time there is a lecture that involves one of the required foundational documents, students are required to read the document ahead of time. As part of their reading, students are required to annotate the document and write a one paragraph summary of the document.

CR8

The syllabus must provide a brief description of at least one assignment/activity in which students analyze a visual source.

The syllabus must identify the source used for the assignment/activity. Visual sources may include maps, images, cartoons, or information graphics. The assignments/activities must be labeled with “Skill 4: Source Analysis.”

AP U.S. Government and Politics Course Plan

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy—15 Days

Essential Questions

- How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty while also promoting public order and safety?
- How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the U.S. Constitutional system?
- How does development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact U.S. citizens?

Key Terms

Natural rights	Philadelphia Convention
Popular sovereignty	Participatory democracy
Republicanism	Pluralist democracy
Social contract	Elite democracy
Declaration of Independence	Shays’ Rebellion

Great (Connecticut) Compromise	Exclusive powers/Enumerated
Electoral College	Implied powers
Three-fifths Compromise	Concurrent powers
Importation (slavery) compromise	Categorical grants
Separation of powers	Block grants
Checks and balances	Mandates (unfunded)
Federalism	Commerce clause

Readings

Chapters 1–3 in Edwards’s “Government in America”

Federalist No. 10

Brutus No. 1

Federalist No. 51

The Articles of Confederation

The Declaration of Independence

The Constitution of the United States (Articles I–VII, Tenth and Fourteenth Amendments)

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

Lopez v. United States (1995)

Rauch, Jonathan. “How American Politics Went Insane.” *The Atlantic*, July/August, 2016. Accessed 12 Dec. 2017.

Toobin, Jeffrey. “Our Broken Constitution.” *The New Yorker*, 9 Dec. 2013. Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.

Primary Lecture Topics

- The philosophical foundations and documents of American democracy, including the Declaration of Independence, social contract theory, republicanism, types of democracy, and the tension between individual liberty and order/safety
- How the Articles of Confederation failed to adequately balance individual liberty and public order/safety, and how the framers wrestled with these questions in drafting the Constitution
- The compromises reached at the Constitutional Convention and the debate between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists during the ratification debate
- The evolving relationship between the national and state governments, including the grant process, policy issues (ADA, Medicaid, marijuana), and the idea of devolution

Instructional Activities for Unit 1

- 3-2-1 activity/seminar. Using the 3-2-1 seminar protocol, students will discuss the article “How American Politics Went Insane” from *The Atlantic*. This will allow students to connect the current state of politics to important Unit 1 concepts such as popular sovereignty, republicanism, and social contract theory of government. This is a high interest article that will help “hook” students at the start of the semester.

- Have the students brainstorm a list of things they believe government should do by asking the question, “What should government do?” Make a list of student responses on the board. Use this list to facilitate a discussion about order, liberty, and equality. Then share the Preamble to the Constitution and have students link their list to the language in the Preamble.
- Assign ThingLink Court cases assignment. See description in the “Major Class Activities” section on page 4.
- Assign monster vocabulary terms. See description in the “Major Class Activities” section on page 4.
- Debate. Two teams of three students each will debate the resolution, “States have exceeded their authority in legalizing recreational marijuana use, and the federal government should reassert its national supremacy over drug policy.”
- Analytical paper “Our Broken Constitution” due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow the students to examine criticisms of the how the U.S. Constitution operates in modern America. Student papers must connect the issues the author explores to arguments made by the Anti-Federalists—in particular, what they read in *Brutus No. 1*. (Skill 4: Source Analysis) **CR7**
- Students will engage in a deliberative discussion using *Federalist No. 51* and *Brutus No. 1*.
- Checks and balances graphic organizer. During class lectures and their reading of the U.S. Constitution, students will create a graphic organizer detailing the system of checks and balances. In addition to the basic checks and balances system, students will annotate their organizer with a list of Court cases and public policies that gave one or more branches the opportunity to check another.
- Free-Response Question (FRQ). Students will respond to a textual, qualitative-based FRQ comparing the *McCulloch* and the *Lopez* decisions. The FRQ will include an excerpt from the *McCulloch* and/or the *Lopez* decision. The FRQ will require the students to understand and make connections to the concepts of enumerated powers, implied powers, and federalism.
- FRQ: Students will respond to an argument FRQ regarding federalism using the Constitution and select amendments.

CR7

The syllabus must provide a brief description of at least one assignment/activity in which students analyze text from a primary and/or secondary source to explain how it relates to political principles, institutions, processes, or behaviors.

The syllabus must identify the source used for the assignment/activity. The assignments/activities must be labeled with “Skill 4: Source Analysis.”

Unit 2: Interaction Among the Branches—22 Days

Essential Questions

- How do the branches of the national government compete and cooperate in order to govern?
- To what extent have changes in the powers of each branch affected how responsive and accountable the national government is in the 21st century?

Key Terms

Enumerated powers	Filibuster
Implied powers	Cloture Holds
Necessary and proper clause	Rules Committee
Checks and balances	Committee of the Whole
Bicameralism	Discharge petitions
Speaker of the House	Discretionary spending
President of the Senate	Mandatory spending
Senate Majority leader	Pork barrel legislation/ logrolling

Partisanship	Treaty negotiation and ratification
Gridlock	22nd Amendment
Gerrymandering	Bully pulpit
Divided government	Judicial review
Trustee	Precedent/ <i>Stare Decisis</i>
Delegate	Judicial activism
Politico	Judicial Restraint
Veto (including pocket veto)	Patronage
Commander in Chief	Civil service
Executive order	Iron triangles/Issue networks
Signing statements	Congressional oversight
Nomination and confirmation	

Readings

Chapters 11–15 in Edwards’s “Government in America”

The Constitution of the United States (Articles I–III) *Baker v. Carr* (1962)

Shaw v. Reno (1993)

Federalist No. 70

Federalist No. 78

Marbury v. Madison

Moe, Terry M., and William G. Howell. “Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory.”

Presidential Studies Quarterly, vol. 29, no. 4, Dec. 1999, pp. 850–73. Accessed 13 Dec. 2017.

Primary Lecture Topics

- Structure of Congress, including significant differences between the chambers regarding organization, leadership, incumbency, and powers
- Congressional representation and gerrymandering
- The president’s formal and informal powers
- Judicial independence, *Federalist No. 78*, *Marbury v. Madison*, and judicial decision making
- How the bureaucracy operates and its place in the checks and balances system
- The future of entitlement spending in the United States

Instructional Activities for Unit 2

- Budget simulation and class discussion. Using “The Debt Fixer” website, students will try to reduce the debt as a percentage of GDP. After completing the online simulation, students will discuss the difficulties they encountered in reducing the size of the national debt. During this discussion students should link the budget process to important concepts such as entitlement spending and the political nature of the budget. **(Skill 1: Concept Application) CR4**
- Debate. Two teams of three students each will debate the resolution, “Congress has abandoned its role in the checks and balances system.”

CR4

The syllabus must provide a brief description of at least one assignment/activity in which students apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context. The description(s) must be labeled with “Skill 1: Concept Application.”

- Analytical paper for “Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory” and *Federalist No. 70* due. The purpose of this paper is for the students to examine the growth of presidential power and how the other two branches may attempt to check presidential power. See description of critical article reviews found above under “Major Class Activities.”
- Checks and balances role play. Using a lesson from the National Constitution Center as a model, students will engage in a simulation in which they have to develop a plan of action to insure the creation/implementation of a policy based on the powers given to their assigned branch of government (legislative, executive, judicial). In addition to developing this plan of action for their own goal, students must develop a plan to either support or oppose another branch’s goal.
- Watch “The Stackhouse Filibuster” (Season 2, Episode 17) from *The West Wing*. Political concepts examined in this episode include the filibuster, the White House staff, the presidential relationship with the press, and how legislation is developed by both the presidency and Congress. *The West Wing* is available on both Netflix and iTunes.
- Students will complete at least two of the scenarios in “The Redistricting Game.” This is an online simulation that allows the students to draw and gerrymander imaginary congressional districts. The simulation has four different scenarios, each with a different take on the process of redistricting and gerrymandering. As students complete each of the scenarios (all students have to do scenario 1—a straight redistricting scenario—then the second scenario is up to them), they will respond to a set of questions about the process and the difficulties they encountered. In addition to completing two of the scenarios, students will read about proposed changes to the redistricting process and respond to these proposals.
- FRQ. Students will respond to a quantitative data FRQ regarding presidential vetoes and the interaction between the president and Congress.
- FRQ. Students will respond to a concept application FRQ examining how the bureaucracy operates and its interactions with the presidency, Congress, and the courts.
- FRQ. Students will respond to an argumentation FRQ regarding the balance of power between Congress and the president using the U.S. Constitution, *Brutus No. 1*, and *Federalist No. 51*.
- FRQ. Students will respond to an argumentation FRQ regarding Congressional representation using the U.S. Constitution, *Brutus No. 1*, and the Declaration of Independence.

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights—10 Days

Essential Questions

- To what extent do the U.S. Constitution and its amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from invidious discrimination?
- How have U.S. Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?

Key Terms

Civil liberties	Free exercise clause
Civil rights	Symbolic speech
Bill of Rights	“Clear and present danger”
Judicial review	Due process clause
Selective incorporation	Miranda Rights
Establishment clause	Patriot Act

Exclusionary rule	Voting Rights Act 1965
Equal protection clause	Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972
National Organization for Women	“Separate but equal”
Civil Rights Act 1964	

Readings

Chapters 4–5 in Edwards’s “Government in America”

The Bill of Rights

The Fourteenth Amendment’s Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses

Engel v. Vitale (1962)

Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)

Schenck v. United States (1919)

New York Times Company v. United States (1971)

McDonald v. Chicago (2010) *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963)

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Bentele, Keith G., and Erin E. O’Brien. “Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies.” *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 11, no. 4, Dec. 2013, pp.1088–1116. Accessed 15 Dec. 2017.

Primary Lecture Topics

- The role of the courts, the due process, and equal protection clauses in the expansion of civil liberties and civil rights, including the idea of selective incorporation
- The expansion of the liberties protected by the First and Second Amendments
- The development of the right to privacy and its implications for Fourth Amendment protections
- A history of civil rights issues, including “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” and how historically disadvantaged groups in American society have achieved greater quality and equitable treatment in society

Instructional Activities for Unit 3

- Bill of Rights scenarios: After reading the Bill of Rights, students will write five hypothetical scenarios regarding civil liberties. Each scenario should be clearly tied one of the amendments found in the Bill of Rights. Students must also create a “key” for their scenarios. In their key, students must identify the amendment the scenario involves, the required Supreme Court case that incorporated or clarified the application of the amendment in question, and finally the students must link the required case to a different case that deals with the same constitutional issue. **(Skill 2: SCOTUS Application) CR5**
- Debate. Two teams of three students each will debate the resolution, “Affirmative action programs are necessary to safeguard equal opportunity in both education and employment for minorities.”

CR5

The syllabus must include a brief description of at least one assignment/activity in which students explain how one or more elements of a required Supreme Court case (facts, issue, holding, reasoning, and decision of the majority opinion) relate to:

- a **non-required case addressing a similar issue**. Corresponding activities must be labeled with “Skill 2: SCOTUS Application.”
AND
- a **foundational document or another primary or secondary source**. Corresponding activities must be labeled with “Skill 2: SCOTUS Application.”

- Analytical paper for “Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies” due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow students to explore the recent actions by many states that may have a negative impact on the right to vote in those states. In this analytical paper, students will have to write a thesis and defend it with information from the article, the course, and recent political and social events.
- FRQ. Students will respond to a textual FRQ that uses one of the required Supreme Court cases and a non-required case. The FRQ will require students to examine the Court’s decision in both cases and apply the Court’s reasoning to a related course concept.
- FRQ. Students will respond to an argumentation FRQ regarding affirmative action using the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs—10 Days

Essential Questions

- How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time?
- How do political ideology and core values influence government policymaking?

Key Terms

Political ideology	Scientific polling
Demographics	Party platform
Political culture	Liberal ideology
Political socialization	Conservative ideology

Readings

Chapter 6, Edwards’s “Government in America”

The “Monkey Cage” series on political polarization in America found at *The Washington Post*.

“Political Polarization in the American Public.” *Pew Center Research Center*, The Pew Charitable Trusts, 12 June 2014. Accessed 16 Dec. 2017.

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Morris P. Fiorina. “Polarized or Sorted? Just What’s Wrong With Our Politics, Anyway?” *The American Interest*, 11 Mar. 2013. Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.

Fiorina, Morris P. “America’s Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight.” *The American Interest*, vol. 8, no. 4, 12 Feb. 2013. Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.

Primary Lecture Topics

- Elements of a scientific poll, the different types of polls, and how they are used in U.S. government and politics
- The basic tenets of American political culture, the conservative and liberal political ideologies, and how these are acquired (political socialization)

Instructional Activities for Unit 4

- Poll Study. Using Gallup, pollingreport.com, and the Pew Center, students will study different polls regarding a variety of policy issues in the United States. Students will also be provided several examples of polls with questionable reliability. Students must then write a comparison of what makes one poll reliable and another unreliable.
- Students take the Pew Center's Political Typology quiz. This quiz places the students into one of nine political typologies (it divides the traditional left/right spectrum into several subgroups—four on each side of the center and one for non-engaged quiz takers). After the students have completed the quiz, they will write their names on the class political spectrum, as do I. Then as a class discuss how the class does or does not reflect the larger community and what might account for the class's overall political ideology.
- Analytical paper “Polarized or Sorted? Just What’s Wrong with Our Politics, Anyway?” and “America’s Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight” due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow students to compare the competing views on partisan polarization in American political culture. In this paper, students must develop and defend with reasoning and relevant evidence a thesis concerning which argument regarding polarization best reflects the reality in American political culture today. Finally, they must respond to the claims or arguments presented by alternate views of polarization. **(Skill 5: Argumentation) CR9**
- Debate. Two teams of three students each will debate the resolution, “Demographic changes represent a threat to the long-term electoral success of the Republican Party.”
- Class poster presentations of party platforms. Divide the class in half—one half will examine the Democratic Party platform and the other half will examine the Republican Party platform. Within each platform, students will pair to explore a particular topic such as education, defense, entitlement spending, etc. and create a post that explains the party's policy proposals for that particular topic. Students will then present their findings to the class. As a follow-up homework assignment, students then will research public opinion polls on their issue and write a summary of how the American public feels about their issue and evaluate whether or not their assigned party reflects the American public. Finally, students must identify a policy from their assigned platform and determine if it has been implemented and how. **CR10**
- FRQ. Students will respond to a quantitative data FRQ regarding changing demographics in the United States. Students will have to interpret data from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding racial and age composition of the United States and how they are changing. Students will also link these demographic changes to representation in Congress. The final section of the FRQ will require students to assess the potential impacts of these changes on the two political parties. **(Skill 3: Data Analysis) CR6**

CR9

The syllabus must describe at least one assignment/activity in which students develop an argument essay about political systems, principles, institutions, processes, policies, and/or behaviors. An argument essay requires the student to:

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning
- Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence
- Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis
- Respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation

Assignments/activities must be labeled with “Skill 5: Argumentation.”

CR10

The syllabus must describe an opportunity where students engage in a political science research or applied civics project that culminates in a presentation of findings.

CR6

The syllabus must provide a brief description of at least one assignment/activity in which students analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, or infographics.

The syllabus must identify the source of the data used for the assignment/activity. The assignments/activities must be labeled with “Skill 3: Data Analysis.”

Unit 5: Political Participation—17 Days

Essential Questions

- How have changes in technology influenced political communication and behavior?
- Why do levels of participation and influence in politics vary?
- How effective are the various methods of political participation in shaping public policies?

Key Terms

Rational choice theory	Primaries (open v. closed)
Retrospective voting	Caucuses
Prospective voting	Party convention
Party-line voting	General election
Political efficacy	The Electoral College
Midterm election	Winner-take-all (Electoral College)
Demographics	Incumbency advantage
Linkage institution	Federal Election Commission
Political party	Federal Elections Campaign Act
Interest group	McCain-Feingold
Critical election	<i>Citizens United v. FEC</i> (2010)
Political realignment	PACs
Proportional electoral system	SuperPACs
Winner-take-all electoral system	Independent Expenditures
Iron triangles	Media
Free rider problem	Social media
Single-issue groups	Watchdog
Participatory democracy	Gatekeeper
Pluralist democracy	Horse race journalism
Elite democracy	“Fake news”

Key Readings

Chapters 7–10 Edwards’s “Government in America”

Federalist No. 10

Desilver, Drew. “U.S. trails most developed countries in voter turnout.” *Pew Research Center*, Pew Charitable Trusts, 15 May 2017.

Citizens United v. FEC (2010)

Gaslowitz, Lea. “How to Spot a Misleading Graph” (video). *TED-Ed*, Ted Conferences. Accessed 21 July 2017. ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-spot-a-misleading-graph-lea-gaslowitz.

Barthel, Michael, and Amy Mitchell. “Americans’ Attitudes About the News Media Deeply Divided Along Partisan Lines.” *Pew Research Center’s Journalism Project*, Pew Research Center, 10 May 2017. Accessed 20 July 2017.

Kiely, Eugene, and Lori Robertson. “How to Spot Fake News.” *FactCheck.org*, Annenberg Public Policy Center, 18 Nov. 2016. Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.

Neale, Thomas H. “The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections.”

The Congressional Research Service, 15 May 2017. Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.

Primary Lectures

- The evolution of voting rights and the current state of voter turnout
- Factors that influence voter choice in elections
- The functions of political parties in the United States and third parties in United States government and politics
- The development of candidate-centered campaigns
- The theory of critical elections
- Interest groups in United States government and politics
- Nominations, campaigns, and elections in United States government and politics
- The media as a linkage institution—including changes in media, such as the growth of social media and partisan media sources

Instructional Activities for Unit 5

- Voter turnout project. To better understand how state election laws impact voter turnout, students will find voter turnout data from a state that has passed a strict voter ID law in the 21st century, such as Wisconsin, Indiana, or Texas. Prior to their research, students will formulate a hypothesis about the impact voter ID laws have on voter turnout. Students will then research voter turnout stats from the presidential election prior to the passage of that state’s voter ID law, and the presidential election immediately after the passage of that voter ID law. Students will break the data down by major demographic groups such as race, age, and education. Students will write a summary of their findings, including an evaluation of their thesis and reasons for why their thesis was correct/incorrect.
- Debate. Two teams of three students each will debate the resolution, “Interest groups have too much influence in the policy process and are detrimental to democracy.”
- Analytical paper “The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections” due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow students to examine how the Electoral College works in modern U.S. politics, with special attention paid to the 2016 election. In this paper, students must examine the various proposals to reform the Electoral College and assess the advantages and disadvantages to each.
- Election classification project. After the lecture regarding the theory of critical elections, students will use presidential election data from the 20th and 21st centuries to classify each election as either a critical election or a deviating election.
- Essay. Students will write an essay with an analytical thesis that incorporates information from a select list of foundational documents that examines the influence of interest groups on the policymaking process in the United States.
- Media analysis assignment. After the lecture on the media as a linkage institution, especially the part about partisan media and social media, students will be assigned to read two articles about a specific policy issue in the United States. One article will be from a conservative source and one from a liberal source. They will then analyze the two sources—making note of the facts provided, the viewpoints expressed in each, and other differences between the two sources. This will also allow students to make a connection to gridlock in the national government.
- Finding Fake News. After reading “How to Spot Fake News” at *FactCheck.org* as homework, students will work in groups to identify the fake news stories in their assigned packet (the packet contains both legitimate and fake news stories).