



School District of Horicon

Course Outline

Learning Targets

American Government

UNIT: Principles of Government

- List the characteristics of states (nations).
- Explain the different theories about government.
- Explain the duties of government.
- Describe some causes of political conflict.
- Explain the different ways in which political authority is divided.
- Describe the different forms of political leadership.
- Describe the rights that Americans have as individuals.
- List four basic political ideals about American government.
- Explain how American citizenship is defined.
- Understand and demonstrate responsibility of American citizens.
- Explain how a person can gain or lose American citizenship.

UNIT: Origins of American Government

- Explain why the English influence on American politics was dominant.
- Describe what cornerstones of American political thought originated in England.
- Explain how England's American colonies were governed.
- Explain how England's policy toward the colonies changed during the 1760s.
- Describe how the new English policy affected the colonies.
- Describe the structure of the Declaration of Independence.
- Explain how the Confederation government was put together and the problems it faced.
- List the delegates and their contribution to the Constitutional Convention.
- Explain how the process of compromise led to agreement on the new Constitution.
- Describe the debate over ratification of the Constitution.

UNIT: The Constitution

- List and explain the six basic principles of the Constitution.
- Describe the methods of proposing constitutional amendments.
- Describe the methods of ratifying amendments.
- Explain why some proposed amendments are ratified and others are rejected.
- Explain the difference between fundamental law and statutory law.
- Describe the informal changes that have been made in the United States government.

UNIT: Civil Liberties-The First Amendment Freedoms

- Describe how the First Amendment prevents the government from supporting specific religions.

- Explain how the “free exercise” clause has been interpreted.
- Explain the three categories of free speech identified by the Supreme Court.
- Explain the importance of freedom of the press in a democracy.
- Distinguish between the protections given to the printed press and those given to radio and television.
- Describe the kinds of assembly given First Amendment protection.
- Describe the limits of freedom of assembly

UNIT: Civil Liberties-Due Process of Law

- Describe the rights protected by the Second and Third Amendments.
- Explain the importance of “due process of law”.
- Explain how the Fourth Amendment limits searches and seizures.
- Describe how the exclusionary rule can conflict with the need for evidence.
- Describe the limits on electronic surveillance.
- Detail the limits set on the legal system’s ability to charge a suspect.
- Describe the Fifth Amendment’s protection from self-incrimination.
- List the Sixth Amendment’s requirements for a fair trial.
- Describe the Eighth Amendment guarantee of fair treatment for those convicted of crimes.
- Describe U.S. Supreme Court rulings regulating capital punishment.
- Determine the constitutional basis for the right to privacy.

UNIT: Congress-Its Powers, Structure, and Members

- Identify the lawmaking and non-law-making powers of Congress.
- Explain how membership in the House and Senate is determined.
- List the qualifications for Congress.
- Explain the rules governing the operation of Congress.
- Explain how the leadership of Congress is organized.
- Describe the support services that Congress has.
- Identify the different kinds of committees in Congress.
- Explain how the members of the committees are chosen.
- Explain how a bill gets to be voted on by the entire legislative chamber.
- Describe what happens once a bill reaches the floor of one of the chambers.

UNIT: The Law-Making Process

- Identify the different kinds of committees in Congress.
- Explain how the members of the committees are chosen.
- Explain how a bill gets to be voted on by the entire legislative chamber.
- Describe what happens once a bill reaches the floor of one of the chambers.

UNIT: The Office of President

- Distinguish between the President’s role as chief executive and chief of state.
- Identify the written and unwritten qualifications for holding the office of President.

- Explain how tradition, acts of Congress, and constitutional amendments have affected the President's term, succession to the presidency, and procedures for removing the President from office.
- Explain the origin and history of the Electoral College and evaluate proposals for reforming the Electoral College.

UNIT: The Powers of the President

- Identify the powers Presidents exercise in domestic affairs.
- Describe the limits the Constitution places on the President's power to make domestic policy.
- Distinguish between treaties and executive agreements.
- Describe the President's military powers.

UNIT: The Supreme Court

- Detail the different kinds and jurisdictions of federal courts.
- Describe the structure of the federal court system.
- Detail the rules governing the impeachment and the salaries of federal judges.
- Explain how cases reach the Supreme Court.
- Describe the typical procedure for a Supreme Court case.
- Describe the factors that influence Supreme Court decisions.

UNIT: Law and the Legal Process

- Describe the sources of American law.
- Distinguish between private law and public law.
- Describe the function and organization of the Justice Department.
- List and explain the steps in a typical trial.

Students will be able to meet the learning targets above as evidenced by formative and summative classroom assessments.