



# AP\*

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

UNITED STATES

A PRACTICAL GUIDE  
FOR TEACHERS

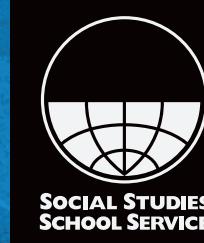
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GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Contains

SECOND EDITION

- Sample Essay Questions
- Writing Guide and Responses
- Lessons on Clinton Impeachment, Differences Between House and Senate, and Homeland Security
- Debate Format and Questions
- Lesson Plans by Unit
- Sample Syllabus and Selected Reading
- Networking Assignments and Simulations



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# How to Use This Guide

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This curriculum guide has been produced to assist both new and experienced instructors in improving their AP Government and Politics: United States courses by increasing the pass rate on the AP Exam. This guide offers some practical suggestions for organizing and teaching AP Government and Politics: United States. It is designed as an idea book. Therefore, you should feel free to adapt and modify the activities to suit your students' needs. It is hoped that the activities and information provided will serve as a springboard for developing new activities. The sections used in this book reflect the author's preference when teaching, and they cover all aspects of the AP Government and Politics: United States course outline provided by the College Board. It is imperative that you start the class with the Unit Introduction on power to establish a base for your students' learning.

This guide is designed with four main objectives:

1. To improve the student's writing style
2. To improve the student's ability to make arguments
3. To enhance the student's ability to critically evaluate scholarly works and methods
4. To enhance the student's ability to synthesize data relating to political science

This curriculum guide is divided into six sections containing handouts, lecture outlines, lessons, and numerous activities. To use this guide effectively, it is imperative that the instructor read the teacher's guide carefully for each activity. The teacher's guide coordinates all of the components and activities of this publication. There is a separate teacher's guide for each section located at the beginning of each section.

# Unit Introduction

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## Teacher's Guide

1. It is imperative to distribute a college-style syllabus on the first day of class. The syllabus must contain the major emphasis of the course, reading assignments, discussion of workload and grades.
2. Modify, personalize and reproduce the Sample Syllabus (page 7–11) for distribution to students.
3. The instructor may consider the following breakdown for grades:
  - A. Exams make up one-third of the student’s grade. Four major exams (two multiple-choice and two essay) occur during a semester.
  - B. Chapter quizzes, essays, networking assignments, and debates make up the second third of the grade.
  - C. Class participation constitutes the last third of the grade. The instructor may use the following grading scale for participation: The student receives the mark of 0 for no participation, 1 point for regular participation, 2 points for an outstanding contribution, and 3 points if he/she conducts the class. Students may conduct seminars in class by leading the discussion of articles as found in Section 6 of this publication. A student receives the mark of -1 if he or she is unprepared. Such grading builds participation and discussions. The instructor should consider allowing the students to view these grades before or after class. Some instructors keep a separate gradebook for participation.
4. The amount of printed materials distributed in the AP Government and Politics: United States course is substantially higher than in a regular class. The student will need access to this material to study for the in-class exams and the AP Exam. A well-organized notebook as described in the syllabus is a necessary element of the course.
5. Reproduce and distribute the outline The Nature and Scope of Political Science (pages 14–15) for each student. This notesheet serves as a general overview of the political science discipline.
6. Selection of textbooks is a crucial decision. An AP course cannot be taught adequately with a high school-level text. Pages 12–13 contain a list of the most popular texts used in this course. A short review of each text accompanies the list.
7. The Skills Chart (page 17) contains the major skills and research techniques needed to master the AP curriculum.

8. A successful AP course is conducted at the upper end of Bloom's taxonomy. A short synopsis of this taxonomy is provided on page 17. This synopsis contains active verbs, student learning examples, description, and sample questions. For a detailed explanation, see *Benjamin Bloom Developing Talent in Young People*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1985.
9. A detailed explanation of the taxonomy for the higher order thinking skills is provided on pages 19–22.

# Syllabus and Reading List

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## Course Description and Goals

The goals of this course are to increase understanding of the American political system, its framework, traditions and values, and to have each student pass the AP Exam. This course is concerned with the nature of the American political systems, its development over the past two hundred years, and how it worked in last years of the twentieth century and in the opening of the new millennium. We will examine in detail the principal processes and institutions through which the political system functions, as well as some of the public policies that these institutions implement.

## Basic Topics by Unit

### Unit Introduction

1. What is politics?
2. What is power and how is it exercised effectively?

### Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings of American Government

1. What are the origins of American government?
2. What type of government was established at the Constitutional Convention of 1789?
3. How was our government shaped by the historical situation at the time and the philosophical tradition that influenced the framers of the constitution?

### Unit 2: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

1. What are the basic civil rights and liberties of Americans?
2. How have significant decisions of the Supreme Court affected our basic rights?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of court decisions as instruments of social change?

### Unit 3: Political Beliefs and Behaviors

1. Why do Americans believe what they do about politics? What role do families, schools, and the media play in the changing or perpetuating of these political beliefs?
2. In what ways do Americans participate in their political system?

3. How does participation vary among racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups in the nation?

## **Unit 4: Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media**

1. Through what mechanisms do citizens organize and communicate their interests to governments?
2. How have political parties developed, how are they organized, and what effect do they have on the political process?
3. What are interest groups, and how do they affect the political process?

## **Unit 5: Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts**

1. What are the institutions and policy-making processes of the national government?
2. What are the links between the branches of the national government, political parties, interest groups, public opinion, the media, and state and local governments?

## **Unit 6: Public Policy**

1. How do the three branches of government interact to create public policy?
2. What role does the bureaucracy play in the creation and implementation of public policy?
3. How do PACs, interest groups, political parties, public opinion, and the media affect public policy?

## **Texts**

George C. Edwards—*Government in America*, 12th Ed.

Peter Woll—*American Government: Readings and Cases (Anthology)*, 16th Ed.

## **Reading Assignments**

## **Introduction**

1. Edwards—*Government in America*, Chapter 1

## **Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings of American Government**

1. Edwards—Chapters 2 & 3
2. John P. Roche—“The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action”

3. Charles A. Beard—"Framing the Constitution"
4. Laurence H. Tribe—"How Not to Read the Constitution"

## **Unit 2: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

1. Edwards—Chapters 4 & 5
2. Anti-Federalist Paper 84 "On the Lack of a bill of Rights"

## **Unit 3: Political Beliefs and Behaviors**

1. Edwards—Chapter 6
2. Larry J. Sabato—"The Rise of Political Consultants"

## **Unit 4: Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media**

1. Edwards—Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11
2. Larry J. Sabato—"The Misplaced Obsession with PACs"
3. James Madison—"Federalist #10"

## **Unit 5: Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts**

1. Edwards—Chapters 12–15

### **Readings on Congress**

2. David Mayhew—"Congress: The Electoral Connection"

### **Readings on the Presidency**

3. Tip O'Neill—"Ronald Reagan" (From *Man of the House*)
4. Tip O'Neill—"The Carter Years" (From *Man of the House*)
5. Clinton Rossiter—"Focus of Leadership"
6. Richard Neustadt—"Presidential Power"

### **Readings on the Judiciary**

7. Antonin Scalia—"A Strict Constructionist's View"
8. Alexander Hamilton—"Federalist #78"

### **Readings on the Federal Bureaucracy**

9. Rochelle Jones—"The Bureaucracy: A Brake on the Presidency"
10. Peter Woll—"Constitutional Democracy & Bureaucratic Power"

## **Unit 6: Public Policy**

1. Edwards Chapters 17 and 20

Students should be encouraged to read and stay abreast of current political issues.