

AP U.S. Government and Politics

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level year-long course that not only seeks to prepare students for success on the AP Exam in May, but also provides students with the political knowledge and reasoning processes to participate meaningfully and thoughtfully in discussions and debates that are currently shaping American politics and society. It is important to note that this course is not a history course; it is a political science course that studies the interconnectedness of the different parts of the American political system and the behaviors and attitudes that shape this system and are the byproduct of this system.

AP U.S. Government and Politics accomplishes these goals by framing the acquisition of political knowledge around enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics that can be applied to a set of disciplinary practices through the use of a set of reasoning processes. Through the development of this set of political knowledge, disciplinary practices, and reasoning processes, by the end of the course, students will be able to analyze current and historical political events like a political scientist and develop factually accurate, well reasoned, thoughtful arguments and opinions that acknowledge and grapple with alternative political perspectives.

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Unit 5: Political Participation

The course also consists of:

- A progress check within each unit to gauge student achievement
- A test at the end of each unit that will target essential content and skills
- Two weeks of review for the AP Exam prior to the exam date
- A civic engagement project presentation at the end of the course
- Regular discussion, analysis, and connection of current events

Overview of the AP Exam

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will be comprised of the following sections:

Multiple Choice Questions	Percentage of Total Exam: 50%
55 Questions	1 hour and 20 minutes
You will be asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe, explain, and compare political concepts and processes• Apply Supreme Court decisions in real-life scenarios• Analyze data in graphs, charts, tables, maps, or infographics• Read and analyze foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources	

Free-Response Questions	Percentage of Total Exam: 50%
4 Questions	1 hour and 40 minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Application: Describe and explain the effects of a political institution, behavior, or process, and apply concepts in a new situation. • Quantitative Analysis: Analyze data in the form of a table, graph, map, or infographic to find patterns and trends and reach a conclusion. • SCOTUS Comparison: Compare a nonrequired Supreme Court case with a required one, explaining how information from the required case is relevant to the nonrequired one. • Argument Essay: You'll write an evidence-based essay supporting a claim or thesis. 	

Tip: Each free-response question is worth 12.5% of the exam. Spend about 20 minutes on each question.

Course Content and Big Ideas

The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics. The big ideas that connect the content in the course units include:

- Constitutionalism
- Liberty and Order
- Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy
- Competing Policy-Making Interests
- Methods of Political Analysis

Reasoning Processes

The reasoning processes are the thought processes that will facilitate connection-making and analysis in the pursuit of effectively executing the disciplinary practices in the course. In other words, the reasoning processes form the cognitive bridge between the course content and disciplinary practices. The reasoning processes in this course include:

- Definition/Classification: Demonstrating knowledge of course concepts
- Process: Explaining political processes
- Causation: Explaining the causes and effects of political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors
- Comparison: Explaining similarities and differences among political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors

Tip: You will use these processes when you are writing the “reasoning” section of the Argument Essay.

Disciplinary Practices

The disciplinary practices are the tasks students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices gives students the tools to analyze political information, regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The disciplinary practices in this course include:

1. Concept Application: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context
2. SCOTUS Application: Apply Supreme Court decisions
3. Data Analysis: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics
4. Source Analysis: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources
5. Argumentation: Develop an argument in essay format

Every AP Exam question fuses course content, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices. Thus, in-class and outside of class assignments will focus on the acquisition of course content and the application of course content to disciplinary practices using reasoning skills.

Overview of Required Course Texts

Each student will check out a copy of the following textbook at the beginning of the course:

O'Connor, K., & Sabato, L. (2018). *American government: Roots and reform*. Pearson Higher Education.

Additionally, students will have access to the following free online resources:

- Oyez: This online database provides succinct and accessible overviews for all Supreme Court cases.
- The National Constitution Center's Interactive Constitution: This online resource is an annotated U.S. Constitution that includes essays from multiple perspectives that frame the debates underlying key clauses and provisions of the U.S. Constitution.
- AP Classroom: This online system of resources will help students tackle content and skills for the AP exam and provide progress checks with actionable feedback so students can see how they are performing.

Required Supreme Court Cases

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 required Supreme Court cases:

- Marbury v. Madison (1803)
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Schenck v. United States (1919)
- Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
- Baker v. Carr (1961)

- Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)
- Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)
- New York Times Company v. United States (1971)
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)
- Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- United States v. Lopez (1995)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010)

The list above is not an exhaustive list of the Supreme Court cases that will be analyzed and discussed in this course. Additionally, students will access information and majority opinion excerpts for cases that complement the required cases, for example: *Gonzales v. Raich* (2005), *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States* (1964), *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002), or *Morse v. Frederick* (2007).

Required Foundational Documents

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of nine required foundational documents to help understand the context and beliefs of the founders and their critics and the debates surrounding the writing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution:

- 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 Birmingham Jail”

Making the Civic Connection: Project

Analyze Public Opinion: Students will develop and implement a survey about a political topic or policy. Students will analyze the data and develop a policy recommendation. They should be prepared to discuss the possible impact of the policy if implemented. Students should have a visual display of the data and prepare to present their findings and recommendations. This will be incorporated into the activity described below.

Develop a Position: Students will research a local, state, or national issue related to a political principle and propose potential options or alternatives. Students will develop an argument that describes the intended outcome of the option, explains how it would be implemented, and refutes opposing arguments. Students

should be prepared to present the issue and proposal to the class, as well as field questions about the viability and effectiveness of their plan.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy (4-5 Weeks)

Ideals of Democracy 1.1

Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

Types of Democracy 1.2

Explain how models of representative democracy are visible in major institutions, policies, events, or debates in the U.S.

Government Power and Individual Rights 1.3

Explain how Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy are reflected in U.S. foundational documents.

Challenges of the Articles of Confederation 1.4

Explain the relationship between key provisions of the Articles of Confederation and the debate over granting the federal government greater power formerly reserved to the states.

Ratification of the U.S. Constitution 1.5

Explain the ongoing impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system.

Principles of American Government 1.6

Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances.

Explain the implications of separation of powers and checks and balances for the U.S. political system.

Relationship Between the States and Federal Government 1.7

Explain how societal needs affect the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments.

Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism 1.8

Explain how the appropriate balance of power between national and state governments has been interpreted differently over time.

Federalism in Action 1.9

Explain how the distribution of powers among three federal branches and between national and state governments impacts policy making.

Skills:

- **Concept Application:** Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors

(1A). Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context (1D). Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context (1E)

- SCOTUS Application: Describe the facts, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases (2A).
- Source Analysis: Describe the author's claim(s), perspective, evidence, and reasoning (4A). Explain how the author's argument or perspective relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (4B).
- Argumentation: Articulate a defensible claim/thesis (5A). Support the argument using relevant evidence (5B)

Required Reading:

Declaration of Independence

Federalist No. 10

Brutus No. 1

Articles of Confederation

Constitution of the United States

Federalist No. 51

McCulloch v. Maryland

United States v. Lopez

Sample Activities:

Close Reading: Students engage in a close reading of Federalist No. 10 and Brutus No. 1. to identify the author, his perspective, and his argument. Students must also identify what evidence and reasoning the authors provide in support of their argument, and highlight relevant words and passages that support the author's claims. Students must connect ideas in these documents to the Federalist and Antifederalist views of how our government was founded.

Socratic Seminar: Different aspects of the U.S. Constitution as well as the debate between Federalist No. 10 and Brutus No. 1 reflect the tension between the broad participatory model and the more filtered participation of the pluralist and elite models. The three models of representative democracy continue to be reflected in contemporary institutions and political behavior. Students will engage in a discussion that addresses these questions: How do these historical arguments influence our government today?

Constitutional Convention: Students reenact the debates that took place in 1787 and defend a position. They must develop the strongest possible case for their assigned position reflecting the values, interests, and attitudes of the delegates. Students should use excerpts from the arguments that were made by the delegates to the Philadelphia convention and be prepared to develop new ideas in the defense of their assigned position.

Case Study: Students review cases involving federalism and identify the facts of the case, majority opinion, and the reasoning (constitutional question) for the majority opinion. Students should focus on the constitutional reasoning behind the Court's decision. Students determine how the balance of power has changed over time based on Supreme Court interpretation in the required cases of *McCulloch v. Maryland* and *U.S. v. Lopez* and the non-required cases of *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. the United States* and *Gonzalez vs. Raich*.

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government (6-7 Weeks)

Congress: The Senate and House of Representatives 2.1

Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.

Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress 2.2

Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policy-making process.

Congressional Behavior 2.3

Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.

Roles and Powers of the President 2.4

Explain how the president can implement a policy agenda.

Checks on the Presidency 2.5

Explain how the president's agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations within Congress.

Expansion of Presidential Power 2.6

Explain how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers.

Presidential Communication 2.7

Explain how communication technology has changed the president's relationship with the national constituency and the other branches.

The Judicial Branch 2.8

Explain the principle of judicial review and how it checks the power of other institutions and state governments.

Legitimacy of the Judicial Branch 2.9

Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life tenure can lead to debate about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court's power.

The Court in Action 2.10

Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life tenure can lead to debate about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court's power.

Checks on the Judicial Branch 2.11

Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life tenure can lead to debate about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court's power.

Explain how other branches in the government can limit the Supreme Court's power.

The Bureaucracy 2.12

Explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government.

Discretionary and Rule-Making Authority 2.13

The federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rule making and implementation.

Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable 2.14

Explain how Congress uses its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch.

Explain how the president ensures that executive branch agencies and departments carry out their responsibilities in concert with the goals of the administration.

Policy and the Branches of Government 2.15

Explain the extent to which governmental branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable given the competing interests of Congress, the president, and the federal courts.

Skills:

- **Concept Application:** Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (1C). Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context (1D). Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context (1E)
- **SCOTUS Application:** Describe the facts, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases (2A). Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources (2B). Compare the reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case to a non-required Supreme Court case (2C).
- **Data Analysis:** Describe the data presented (3A). Describe patterns and trends in data (3B). Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions (3C). Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (3D).
- **Source Analysis:** Describe the author's claim(s), perspective, evidence, and reasoning (4A). Explain how the author's argument or perspective relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (4B).

Required Reading:

Constitution of the United States

Baker v. Carr
Shaw v. Reno
Federalist No. 70
Federalist No. 78
Marbury v. Madison

Sample Activities:

Redistricting Game: Students complete scenarios in the Redistricting Game found online. 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 a scenario, they respond to a set of questions about the process and the difficulties they encountered.

Debate: Have students complete Venn diagrams comparing the structure, functions, and powers of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Students also study and discuss the powers of the president, and how the expanded power of the president has affected the concept of checks and balances. Students then engage in a debate around the question: Which branch is most powerful? The executive or legislative branch?

Court in Action: Students compare the reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case to a non-required Supreme Court case (i.e. Lopez and Heart of Atlanta Motel). Students explain how two similar Supreme Court cases can have different outcomes, and the significance of that difference.

Bureaucracy Presentation: Students will research a bureaucratic agency and develop a presentation arguing whether the agency's budget should be preserved, cut, or expanded by explaining the role of the agency in implementing public policy and creating policy through regulations. Student arguments will have a defensible claim that establishes a line of reasoning, at least two pieces of evidence to support that claim, and explains how the evidence supports their claim.

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (5-6 Weeks)

The Bill of Rights 3.1

Explain how the U.S. Constitution protects individual liberties and rights.

Describe the rights protected in the Bill of Rights.

First Amendment: Freedom of Religion 3.2

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First and Second Amendments reflects a commitment to individual liberty.

First Amendment: Freedom of Speech 3.3

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First and Second Amendments reflects a commitment to individual liberty.

First Amendment: Freedom of the Press 3.4

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First and Second Amendments reflects a commitment to individual liberty.

Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms 3.5

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First and Second Amendments reflects a commitment to individual liberty.

Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety 3.6

Explain how the Supreme Court has attempted to balance claims of individual freedom with laws and enforcement procedures that promote public order and safety.

Selective Incorporation 3.7

Explain the implications of the doctrine of selective incorporation.

Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused 3.8

Explain the extent to which states are limited by the due process clause from infringing upon individual rights.

Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy 3.9

Explain the extent to which states are limited by the due process clause from infringing upon individual rights.

Social Movements and Equal Protection 3.10

Explain how constitutional provisions have supported and motivated social movements.

Government Responses to Social Movements 3.11

Explain how the government has responded to social movements.

Balancing Minority and Majority Rights 3.12

Explain how the Court has at times allowed the restriction of civil rights of minority groups and at other times has protected those rights.

Affirmative Action 3.13

Explain how the Court has at times allowed the restriction of the civil rights of minority groups and at other times has protected those rights.

Skills:

- **Concept Application:** Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context (1D). Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context (1E).
- **SCOTUS Application:** Describe the facts, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases (2A). Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources (2B). Compare the reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case to a non-required Supreme Court case (2C)
- **Source Analysis:** Describe the author's claim(s), perspective, evidence, and reasoning (4A). Explain how the implications of the author's argument or perspective may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (4C). Explain how the visual elements of a cartoon, map, or infographic illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (4D).
- **Argumentation:** Articulate a defensible claim/thesis (5A). Support the argument using relevant evidence (5B). Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify the claim or thesis (5C).

Required Reading:

Constitution of the United States

Engel v. Vitale

Wisconsin v. Yoder

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District

Schenck v. United States

New York Times Co. v. United States

McDonald v. Chicago

Gideon v. Wainwright

Roe v. Wade

Letters from a Birmingham Jail

Brown v. Board of Education

Sample Activities:

Case Comparison: Students compare a required Supreme Court case, such as Engel v. Vitale, and a non-required but similar case, such as Town of Greece, NY v. Galloway. Students identify and describe in detail the similarities and differences in these cases. Students should recognize that both cases were based on the establishment clause from the First Amendment, but that the Supreme Court's decisions were different. They should be able to explain why the Court found differently in these cases (i.e. think about precedent and the makeup of the Court).

Argumentation Activity: Students are given a question such as "Which of the following is most responsible for the expansion of civil rights and liberties: social movements, and activist Supreme Court, or a motivated legislative branch. Small groups of students will write claims and supporting evidence statements using

documents such as “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”, Brown v. Board of Education, or Article I of the Constitution. Groups will grade claims and evidence, revise or modify the claims, match the claims and evidence, and write statements explaining why the evidence supports the claim.

Fishbowl: Ask students to discuss the arguments presented in the “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and to think about the following question: How do the arguments in this document relate to political activism and how citizens can affect our government and its policies? Some students will form an inner circle to discuss how the arguments relate to political activism. The remaining students will form an outer circle to listen, respond, and evaluate.

Moot Court: Students will be assigned to a First Amendment case in which they will either argue as an attorney on opposing sides of a case or serve on a judge panel. Students will be comparing a required case as a key precedent to a nonrequired case through oral argument. Through their attorney/judge preparation, they’ll draw out comparisons between the two cases and decide how the earlier case applies to the new non-required case. Students must support their arguments by citing and explaining the precedents set by previous related cases.

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (4-5 Weeks)

American Attitudes About Government and Politics 4.1

Explain the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government.

Political Socialization 4.2

Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization.

Changes in Ideology 4.3

Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization.

Influence of Political Events on Ideology 4.4

Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization.

Measuring Public Opinion 4.5

Describe the elements of a scientific poll.

Evaluating Public Opinion Data 4.6

Explain the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data.

Ideologies of Political Parties 4.7

Explain how ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates.

Ideology and Policy Making 4.8

Explain how U.S. political culture (i.e. values, attitudes, and beliefs) influences the formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time.

Ideology and Economic Policy 4.9

Describe different political ideologies on the role of government in regulating the marketplace.

Explain how political ideologies vary on the government's role in regulating the marketplace.

Ideology and Social Policy 4.10

Explain how political ideologies vary on the role of the government in addressing social issues.

Skills:

- **Concept Application:** Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context (1D). Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context (1E).
- **Data Analysis:** Describe the data presented (3A). Describe patterns and trends in data (3B). Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions (3C). Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (3D). Explain possible limitations of the data provided (3E)
- **Source Analysis:** Explain how the author's argument or perspective relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (4B). Explain how the implications of the author's argument or perspective may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (4C). Explain how the visual elements of a cartoon, map, or infographic illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (4D)

Sample Activities:

Data Analysis: Students will use data from the Pew Research Center to identify trends and draw conclusions about the data. They should discuss what the data tells them and if there are any problems with the representation of the data. Students should also evaluate responses by political party: Does this information fall in line with or contradict what we know of the ideology of each party? Students should not only look for what the data tells them but also what might be missing and how that might shift the impact of the data.

Discussion Group: Students will engage in an interactive, small group discussion, with assigned roles including questioner, summarizer, facilitator, and evidence keeper. Students will consider a topic, text, or question such as "Which factor plays the biggest role in political attitudes and socialization: demographics, family/peers/school, mass media, cues from leaders/opinion makers, or political knowledge?" Groups must be prepared to present their conclusions on the factors and whether or not their group reached a consensus.

Economic Dilemma: Students must develop a fiscal policy designed to solve an economic problem taking into consideration the demographics of their district and the influence of lobbyists. Students should explain how their plan will work (i.e. detailed plan for taxes and spending), discuss why their plan will work and

provide evidence on how it helps to solve the economic dilemma, and explain why they chose their plan (i.e. how it satisfies relevant lobbyists, benefits and reflects the values of constituents).

Ideological Analysis: Students will analyze excerpts from the Republican and Democratic Party platforms and compare the attitudes and ideological beliefs of both parties with respect to core American political values. Students will compare how different ideological beliefs might influence views on social and economic policy. Students will then be asked to identify which political party would most likely to support various policies (i.e. universal healthcare, charter schools and vouchers, social welfare programs, tax cuts, etc.) and how their values are reflected in those policy initiatives.

Unit 5: Political Participation (4-5 Weeks)

Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior 5.1

Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation.

Describe the different models of voting behavior.

Voter Turnout 5.2

Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections.

Political Parties 5.3

Describe linkage institutions.

Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and government.

How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt 5.4

Explain why and how political parties change and adapt.

Third Party Politics 5.5

Explain how structural barriers impact third-party and independent candidate success.

Interest Groups Influencing Policy Making 5.6

Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest-group influence on elections and policy making.

Explain how variation in types and resources of interest groups affects their ability to influence elections and policy making.

Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes 5.7

Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes.

Electing a President 5.8

Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential election.

Explain how the Electoral College facilitates and/or impedes democracy.

Congressional Elections 5.9

Explain how the different processes work in U.S. congressional elections.

Modern Campaigns 5.10

Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process.

Campaign Finance 5.11

Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaigns affect the election process.

The Media 5.12

Explain the media's role as a linkage institution.

Changing Media 5.13

Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.

Skills:

- **Concept Application:** Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors (1B). Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context (1D). Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context (1E).
- **SCOTUS Application:** Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources (2B). Explain how required Supreme Court cases apply to scenarios in context (2D).
- **Data Analysis:** Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions (3C). Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided (3F).
- **Source Analysis:** Explain how the author's argument or perspective relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. (4B).
- **Argumentation:** Articulate a defensible claim/thesis (5A). Support the argument using relevant evidence (5B). Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify the claim or thesis (5C). Use refutation, concession, or rebuttal in responding to opposing or alternate perspectives (5D).

Required Reading:

Constitution of the United States

Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission

Sample Activities:

Voter Turnout Project: To better understand how state election laws impact voter turnout, students 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 formulate a hypothesis about the impact voter ID laws have on

voter turnout. Students 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 voter ID laws. Students break the data down by major demographic groups, such race, age, and education. Students write a summary of their findings, including an evaluation of their thesis and reasons why their thesis was correct/incorrect

Electoral College Thrash Out: Students will examine the original design of the Electoral College, as well as various proposals to reform the Electoral College. Students will be assigned the question: Does the Electoral College facilitate or impede democracy. Students will hash out their arguments in small groups and prepare to share out the main arguments that came up during their discussion. In the first round, students must defend their argument using evidence from their knowledge of the class. In the second round, students must use evidence from a foundational document, making sure to explain why their evidence supports their claim. In the final round, students must address an alternative perspective from one of the other groups and provide a rebuttal.

Fake News Analysis: After reading "How to Spot Fake News" at [FactCheck.org](https://www.factcheck.org) as homework, students work in groups to identify the fake news stories in their assigned packet (the packet contains both legitimate and fake news stories). Students first develop a list of indicators which they can use to determine if each story is fake news or not and then they conduct a content analysis of each report. Finally, they share the results with the class and assess the extent to which political science research provided in the course can provide guidance for discerning the difference between valid and invalid news stories.

Argument Tournament: Students will write an argument based on the question, "Which of the following factions have the most impact on national elections today: political parties, special interest groups, or the media?" Students should use evidence from Federalist No. 10 to support their claims. Students will perform self and peer revisions of their argument essays so they have the opportunity to review their practice claims, supporting evidence, sourcing, and analysis and reasoning. In a series of several rounds, students will narrow down the responses to those that would score highest and best reflect effective argument writing.