

Curriculum at a Glance
AP United States Government & Politics
Grade 12 / AP United States Government & Politics

AP US Government & Politics is a one semester, college-level political science course which satisfies State of Connecticut and Darien High School graduation requirements. As a College Board-approved AP course, it follows the curriculum guidelines laid out in the College Board's [most recent \(Fall 2014\) curriculum document](#). Sequence and scope may vary depending on current events (e.g., Presidential elections, significant legislative initiatives, or Supreme Court decisions).

Our overall content and skill goals for the course, in accordance with the College Board's requirements, include the following:

- Know important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to US government and politics
- Understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the components of political behavior, the principles used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures)
- Be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to US government and politics (including data presented in charts, tables, and other formats)
- Be able to critically analyze relevant theories and concepts, apply them appropriately, and develop their connections across the curriculum.

Students are expected to read and analyze (in writing, in discussion, in formal and informal presentations, etc.) news sources and listen to or watch news programming critically. Students will also read and analyze primary source documents including excerpts from the Federalist Papers, US Supreme Court cases, and the US Constitution. Finally, students will read and analyze the scholarly work of political scientists and commentators.

There is obvious overlap between and among the following units of study. Students' ability to make connections across the content, provide analysis of the patterns, theories, and facts will have a direct correlation with how well they perform. It is

not enough to memorize terms. Effectively contextualizing and analyzing the material are the most important keys to success.

Unit Name	Essential Content
Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will study and analyze the nature of power, authority, and legitimacy, the relationship between liberty and order, important principles of the US Constitution, elite versus pluralist theories of government, and federalism
Political Beliefs and Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will study and analyze US political culture, political socialization, the “culture wars,” conservative vs. liberal ideologies, public opinion polling, and factors that influence political attitudes. They will also discuss and analyze how citizens’ voting behavior is influenced by the media and other factors.
Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will study and analyze the two major parties, minor parties, primaries, campaign and election reform, presidential elections, electoral system, interest group influence, media and the political process.
Institutions of National Government (Congress, Executive and Judicial branches, plus Bureaucracy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will study and analyze the power dynamics between and among the branches of government and the bureaucracy, and explore the roles of Congress (including committees, membership and makeup of Congress, etc.), the evolution of the power of the Presidency (including executive privilege and executive orders, etc.), the exercise of the Judicial branch’s powers (interpreting the Constitution and making “case law,” etc.), the interaction of the branches and the bureaucracy, as well as concepts of divided government and gridlock, and discretionary power, etc..
Public Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will study the use of Keynesian economic vs. laissez faire approaches to economic policy, concepts of deficit vs. debt, the role of the federal budget and the debates going into its construction, and concepts of isolationism, containment, preemption, military policy, welfare, social security, education policy , and regulatory policy, etc..
Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will study the Bill of Rights, 14th Amendment, due process, habeas corpus, ex post facto, de

	<p>jure vs. de facto segregation, women's rights, age discrimination, Americans with Disability Act, current issues about marriage, civil unions, immigration, surveillance, etc..</p>
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