



SAMPLE SYLLABUS #1

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> 4
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> 5
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 and processes to scenarios in context.	<i>See page:</i> 11
CR5	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Skill Category 2: SCOTUS Application—apply Supreme Court decisions.	<i>See page:</i> 6
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> 15
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> 9
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> 10
CR9	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Skill Category 5: Argumentation—develop an argument in essay format.	<i>See page:</i> 13
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> 7

Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics Sample Syllabus #1

Section 1: Overview of the Course and the AP Exam

Introduction to AP U.S. Government and Politics

AP[®] U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level yearlong course that not only seeks to prepare students for success on the AP Exam in May, but also provide students with the political knowledge and skills 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 as well as 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 big ideas about American government and politics that can be applied to a set of course skills. Through the development of this set of political knowledge and course skills, 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.

This yearlong course will meet for 48 minutes daily.

The course will be organized around the following units of study: **CR3**

- **Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy** (19 days)
 - ♦ (big ideas: Constitutionalism, Liberty and Order, Methods of Political Analysis)
- **Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government** (34 days)
 - ♦ (big ideas: Competing Policymaking Interests, Methods of Political Analysis)
- **Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights** (18 days)
 - ♦ (big ideas: Liberty and Order, Methods of Political Analysis)
- **Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs** (13 days)
 - ♦ (big ideas: Civic Participation in Representative Democracy, Methods of Political Analysis)
- **Unit 5: Political Participation** (26 days)
 - ♦ (big ideas: Civic Participation in Representative Democracy, Methods of Political Analysis)

The political knowledge and big ideas acquired and developed in each unit will be applied to the course skills outlined below.

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.

Throughout each unit, **Topic Questions** will be provided to help students check their understanding. The **Topic Questions** are especially useful for confirming understanding of difficult or foundational topics before moving on to new content or skills that build upon prior topics. **Topic Questions** can be assigned before, during, or after a lesson, and as in-class work or homework. Students will get rationales for each **Topic Question** that will help them understand why an answer is correct or incorrect, and their results will reveal misunderstandings to help them target the content and skills needed for additional practice.

At the end of each unit or at key points within a unit, **Progress Checks** will be provided in class or as homework assignments in AP Classroom. Students will get a personal report with feedback on every topic, skill, and question that they can use to chart their progress, and their results will come with rationales that explain every question's answer. One to two class periods are set aside to reteach skills based on the results of the **Progress Checks**.

The course also consists of:

- Unit reviews based on data gathered from Progress Checks in the AP Classroom and other methods of formative assessment.
- A unit exam at the end of each unit that administered over two class periods.
- Applied civics project through Inspire2Vote that will span the school year and culminate in the planning and execution of voter registration assembly before the May primary registration deadline. A fall peer-to-peer registration drive will target students eligible to vote in the November general election.
- Two weeks of review for the AP Exam at the end of the course.

Overview of the AP Exam and Keys to AP Exam Success

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

Multiple-Choice Questions:

Number of Questions: 55

Structure – The questions on the multiple-choice section will ask students to:

- Analyze and compare political concepts
- Analyze and interpret quantitative, text-based, and visual sources
- Apply course concepts, foundational documents, and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of contexts and to real-world scenarios.

Timing: 1 hour and 20 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

Free-Response Questions:

Number of Questions: 4

Structure – The four questions on the free-response section will ask students to:

- Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios
- Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
- Analyze quantitative data and the implications of that data
- Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence

Timing: 1 hour and 40 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

As the breakdown of the AP Exam highlights, success in this course and on the AP Exam requires far more than the memorization of political knowledge. Success in this course and on the AP Exam requires connection-making with the aim of being able to analyze political information regardless of the format in which the information is presented, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned opinion regarding this information. These skills are scaffolded throughout the course through teacher modeling, explicit instruction, and multiple opportunities for practice in reading and writing that reflects the work that political scientists do.

The different pieces of the course fit together in pursuit of this aim through course content and big ideas, and course skills.

Course Content and Big Ideas

The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of 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 Policymaking Interests
- Methods of Political Analysis

It should be noted that the big ideas are not relegated to one unit of study but woven throughout the course.

Course Skills

The course skills are the tasks students will apply to the course content. Becoming proficient in these course skills 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 course skills in this course include:

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

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

Overview of Required Course Texts and Additional Resources

Textbook and Ancillary Resources

Course Text: O'Connor, K., Sabato, L. J., & Yanus, A. B. (2016). *American Government: Roots and Reform, AP Edition*. Boston: Pearson. **CR1**

CR1

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

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

- AP Classroom is a free resource available to all students. Students will complete, as homework or in class, Progress Checks for each of the five units. Both multiple-choice and free-response prompts are available to measure student progress.
- AP U.S. Government and Politics: Analytical Reading Activities—This resource contains all of the required foundational documents, along with close reading and discussion prompts/questions and activities. Most of the foundational documents are paired with a non-required text so students can engage in building source analysis and other critical skills like evaluating arguments. This resource is also available on the AP Classroom.
- 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 “Matters of Debate” essays that include the common understanding and opposing perspectives of key clauses and provisions of the U.S. Constitution. The National Constitution Center also has a blog that applies constitutional principles to current events.
- The National Constitution Center also has lesson plans for use in Unit 1 (“Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment”) and in Unit 3 (“The Development and Application of the First Amendment”)
- Pew Research Center. This nonpartisan website will be accessed frequently by students for multiple uses including analyzing and interpreting public opinion polling and practicing analyzing and interpreting quantitative data in tables, charts, and graphs.
- Political cartoon, maps, and infographics websites—Students will need instruction and practice in analyzing qualitative visual resources like political cartoons, maps, and infographics.
- A variety of news sources and websites across the political spectrum such as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal* will also be accessed throughout the course often with the aim of building the skill of concept application while deepening content knowledge. Public policy and current events are woven throughout the course, especially as they reflect the course concepts in a given unit. **CR1**

Required Supreme Court Cases **CR2**

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 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)
- *Shaw v. Reno* (1993)
- *United States v. Lopez* (1995)
- *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010)
- *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC)* (2010)

CR1

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

CR2

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

For each of these cases, lessons are available on the Street Law website. Additionally, the facts, issues, holdings, and reasoning underlying the majority opinions can also be found through the Oyez database online. Students will be required to complete multiple assignments analyzing and comparing these cases with other non-required cases (Skill 2: SCOTUS Application). Examples of activities or assignments include but are not limited to:

- Working in pairs, students will compare the U.S. Supreme Court’s majority opinion in *Gonzales v. Raich* (2005) with the unanimous opinion in *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819). Based on these opinions, students will describe the 2-3 factors they consider to be the strongest reasons why the Supreme Court majority ruled the way that it did.
- Students will compare the U.S. Supreme Court holdings in *Heart of Atlanta Motels v. United States* (1964) and *United States v. Lopez* (1995). Based on this comparison, students will explain why the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the United States in one, but not both cases.

Students may analyze how course concepts, such as the principle of checks and balances, are illustrated in foundational documents as well as required and non-required U.S. Supreme Court cases. For example, students can examine Federalist 51 and learn about *Clinton v. City of New York* in the Analytical Reading Activities found under More Resources for Topic 1.6—Principles of American Government in AP Classroom. Once the students complete this activity, they will be able to analyze how the holding in *Marbury v. Madison* reflected the arguments in Federalist 51 and influenced the decision in *Clinton v. City of New York* (Skill 2: SCOTUS Application) **CR5**

Required Foundational Documents **CR2**

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of 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 a Birmingham Jail”

To aid in the analysis of these foundational documents, students will also have access to the AP United States Government and Politics: Analytical Reading Activities. This online reader contains strategies for analyzing the required foundational documents and a sampling of related readings, including:

- Excerpts from Locke’s *Second Treatise of Civil Government* to go along with the analysis of the Declaration of Independence
- “Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republican I” to go along with the analysis of the Articles of Confederation
- Essays from the National Constitution Center’s “Matters of Debate” series (Interactive Constitution resource) to go along with the analysis of the Tenth Amendment

To help students see the connections of the nine foundational documents and the required Supreme Court cases, students will construct an **interactive notebook** containing these items. In effect, students will create another course text for them to add to as each document or case is introduced and when connections are made in other units or companion texts assigned. These connections may also come in the form of current event articles on public policy and politics. Students can refer to their interactive notebook in preparation for unit tests and the AP Exam.

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, reasoning, holding, 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.”

CR2

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

Section 2: Applied Civics Project **CR10**

Students will work in teams in a peer-to-peer voter registration drive targeting high school students eligible to vote in the fall and spring elections. This project is done in partnership with INSPIRE US and the [State] Department of State. As a result, the work on the project begins early in the course and ends with a late March/early April assembly.

Students will be expected to:

- Create and deliver well-constructed arguments about the need to register and vote that include:
 - ♦ a set of talking points that includes voter statistics across age groups
 - ♦ information on policies that have an impact on younger Americans
- Be well-versed in [State's] closed primary system and the deadlines to register before the fall and spring elections
- Communicate the difference between general and primary elections
- Communicate what offices are up for election in any given year
- Visit classrooms in the fall to deliver a persuasive speech or lead a discussion on the importance of voting and register eligible students for the general election
- Assist high school students in registering to vote online or using the paper option
- Have a plan to track and target those students eligible to vote
- Organize an assembly with invited speakers from the community that may include elected representatives or party officials from both political parties or from the [County] League of Women Voters to deliver a message on the importance of voting and political engagement
- Reach our goal of registering at least 85% of eligible students (criteria to earn the Governor's Civic Engagement Award)
- Submit a reflection paper on contributions to the project and its impact on its audience. Each student will also reflect on how the project changed them and how they view the role of young people in our political system.
- Using what was learned from the discussions during the classroom visits and the assembly on political engagement, students will create a poster that encourages young people to turn out to vote. The posters will be displayed and reviewed in a gallery-walk assignment.

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.

Section 3: Course Outline

This section provides a breakdown of each of the course's five units. Included in each breakdown are the essential questions, connections to the required foundational documents, and required Supreme Court cases and sample activities that align to the learning objectives.

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy – 19 instructional 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 the development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact citizens and residents of the U.S.?

Foundational Documents: The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, excerpts from *Federalist No. 10*, excerpts from *Brutus No. 1*, excerpts from the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution of the United States, and excerpts from *Federalist No. 51*

Required Cases: *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), *United States v. Lopez* (1995)

Topics and Skills

- 1.1 Ideals of Democracy - Skill 1.D
- 1.2 Types of Democracy - Skill 4.A
- 1.3 Government Power and Individual Rights - Skill 1.A
- 1.4 Challenges of the Articles of Confederation - Skill 4.B
- 1.5 Ratification of the U.S. Constitution - Skill 1.E
- 1.6 Principles of American Government - Skill 4.B
- 1.7 Relationship Between States and the National Government - Skill 5.A
- 1.8 Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism - Skill 2.A
- 1.9 Federalism in Action - Skill 5.B

Skills

In this unit, we will be introducing the Skills of Concept Application, Source Analysis, SCOTUS Application, and Argumentation. These skills will be assessed in both the topic questions and the end of unit Progress Check questions. The questions increase in difficulty with each unit; be sure you address the skill and knowledge targets for each topic in order to most successfully prepare for the end of unit Progress Check questions and the final summative assessment.

Note:

Topic 1.7 can be especially challenging because skill 5.A requires students to articulate a defensible claim or thesis. This is the first time they will encounter this skill. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Topic 1.8 can be especially difficult because skill 2.A requires students to describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, and decision of the majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Sample Activities for Unit 1

Resources—AP U.S. Government and Politics: Analytical Reading Activities, and Interactive Notebook

Framing Question: How was the Declaration of Independence shaped by the political philosophy of the Enlightenment Period?

Students will read the pairings for the foundational documents in this unit from the interactive reader. The first selection (Declaration of Independence paired with excerpts from Locke’s Second Treatise) will be done in class. Students will explore what they already know together and then we will sort through what is important in a history class v. political science course. The reading will begin with a teacher model with the first paragraph of the Declaration. The reading will then be turned over to pairs to do a reciprocal think aloud.

We will use what we did to make sense of the first set of texts to begin building our class Reading Strategies List.

Students will finish what remains at the end of class for homework. They will be directed to notice the skills being explicitly highlighted in the reading. We will notice and note the organization of the interactive reader, including the big idea, and course skills reflected in the text.

The questions in the margin will be used to formatively assess student understanding. We will establish that these questions will be the starting point for the next day’s homework routine.

*Students will begin building their required docs/SCOTUS cases interactive notebook with the Declaration of Independence. In this unit, they will also add the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution (having read selections of it), *Brutus I*, *Federalist Papers 10 & 51*, and SCOTUS cases *McCulloch v. Maryland* and *United States v. Lopez*.

The above is representative of the work that will continue throughout the course. The AP U.S. Government and Politics: Analytical Reading Activities will be utilized for all the required foundational documents.

Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment—A lesson from the National Constitution Center.

Framing Question: How do constitutional provisions related to national and state powers impact the way government functions and policies are developed or enforced?

In this lesson, students will consider the role that each level of government plays in different policy areas. They will read selections of the Constitution, interpret political cartoons, and read and analyze Article I, Section 8, the enumerated powers using the “Matters of Debate” tool on the interactive Constitution. Students will drill into the common interpretation and then opposing interpretations of the Commerce Clause and the Tenth Amendment. Students will also read about three Supreme Court cases, one of them the required case of *United States v. Lopez* to explore the arguments and implications of different interpretations of constitutional provisions connected to the concept of federalism. This is a high leverage lesson that delivers on both content and course skills. (Skill 4: Source Analysis) **CR7**

Public Policy Connection Lesson

Framing Question: What are the implications of federalism on public policy?

We will do a classroom jigsaw activity creating expert groups on legalization of marijuana, public school funding, state death penalty laws, and gun control laws. Students will take individual time to read their visual and explain how it reflects the concept of federalism. In expert groups, they will share out their thoughts and what they believe are the key

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.”

takeaways from the graphics, including the illustration and implications of our federal system each provides. Online sources include Vox, United States Census Bureau, and Death Penalty Information Center.

Students will go to their “home” groups and share their graphics and discuss how they reflect federalism. Each student will have a copy of all four graphics to annotate as they listen to “experts.”

Whole Group Debrief: Lead a discussion where students share what they said or heard about each graphic and identify where the graphics can be placed in the interactive notebooks?

These issues will be revisited as we move through the units. For example, the death penalty reflects the issue of federalism (state crimes à state court systems) but the federal courts have carved out exceptions to the death penalty, restricting state control). Remind students of the recursive nature of this course. We can and will spiral back to what we have learned and applied in Unit 1. (Skills: Data Analysis and Visual Analysis) **CR8**

Assessment

After each topic, students will practice their knowledge and skills using the **Topic Questions** in AP Classroom.

At the end of Unit 1, students will practice their knowledge and skills by completing the MCQ, FRQ Part A, and FRQ Part B **Progress Check** questions in AP Classroom.

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government – 34 instructional 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?

Foundational Documents: The Constitution of the United States, *Federalist No. 70*, *Federalist No. 78*, and *Federalist No. 51*

Required Cases: *Baker v. Carr* (1961), *Shaw v. Reno* (1993), *Marbury v Madison* (1803)

Topics and Skills

- 2.1 Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives - Skill 1.C
- 2.2 Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress - Skill 3.A
- 2.3 Congressional Behavior - Skill 2.A
- 2.4 Roles and Powers of the President - Skill 3.B
- 2.5 Checks on the Presidency - Skill 1.E
- 2.6 Expansion of Presidential Power - Skill 4.A
- 2.7 Presidential Communication - Skill 1.E
- 2.8 The Judicial Branch - Skill 2.B
- 2.9 The Role of the Judicial Branch - Skill 1.D
- 2.10 The Court in Action - Skill 2.C
- 2.11 Checks on the Judicial Branch - Skill 1.D
- 2.12 The Bureaucracy - Skill 4.B
- 2.13 Discretionary and Rulemaking Authority - Skill 1.D
- 2.14 Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable - Skill 2.C
- 2.15 Policy and the Branches of Government - Skill 3.D

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.”

Skills

In this unit, we will be continuing to develop the skill of Concept Application, SCOTUS Application, and Source Analysis as well as introducing the skill of Data Analysis. These skills will be assessed in both the topic questions and the end of unit Progress Check questions. The questions increase in difficulty with each unit; be sure you address the skill and knowledge targets for each topic on order to most successfully prepare for the end of unit Progress Check questions and the final summative assessment.

Note:

Topic 2.2 can be especially challenging because skill 3.A requires students to describe the data presented in a chart or diagram. This is the first time they will encounter this skill. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Topic 2.8 can be especially difficult because skill 2.B requires students to explain how a required Supreme Court Cases relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Sample Activities for Unit 2

Students will do a fuller reading *Federalist No. 70 & Federalist No. 78* after having read excerpts of both in Unit 2 and a reread of *Marbury v. Madison* coupled with qualitative visual resources and public opinion data on the SCOTUS from the Pew Research Center. Students will add to their understanding of *Federalist No. 51* (introduced in Unit 1) by connecting separation of powers and checks and balances to current events. Students will read *Federalist No. 78* and *Brutus XV* and construct an argument about which essay is more convincing.

Additional text to be analyzed will be two political cartoons, one on page 70 in their text and from the Landmark Cases of the U.S. Supreme Court website. (Skill 4: Visual Analysis)

Students will add their analysis of the cartoons to the interactive notebook and draw their own cartoon. Be sure to include a point of view on the power of judicial review and/or “good behavior” as the term for federal judges. The cartoon will include at least three elements or “look-fors” of political cartoons. loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/activities/political-cartoon/lm_cart_analysis_guide.pdf

Students will add the additional required documents and *Marbury v. Madison* to their interactive notebooks.

*The sample activities above are illustrative of how the AP U.S. Government and Politics: Analytical Reading Activities will be used throughout the course in conjunction with the interactive notebook.

Framing Questions: To what extent has the committee system benefited or limited the legislative process, specifically regarding its role as being an authentic representation of the will of the people?

Does the committee system encourage or stifle the spirit of democracy in our political system?

Students will watch video clips on the types of committees in Congress. Students will research the standing committees in both chambers and identify what they believe, given current issues and debates, are the top five committees ranked in importance. Students will need to justify their rankings. Students will then engage in a mock committee hearing that features a bill that is currently or recently before one or both chambers of Congress. (Skill 1: Concept Application) **CR4**

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.”

Bureaucracy Bingo: Students will work in groups to find evidence of the bureaucracy throughout the school and then identify what department, agency, or commission is responsible for the implementation of the affected laws.

Assessment

After each topic, students will practice their knowledge and skills using the **Topic Questions** in AP Classroom.

At the end of Unit 2, students will take a formative assessment by completing the MCQ, MCQ Part B, and FRQ Part A **Progress Check** questions in AP Classroom.

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights – 18 instructional 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?

Foundational Documents: The Constitution of the United States and “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Required Cases: *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969), *Schenck v. United States* (1919), *New York Times Company v. United States* (1971), *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010), *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963), and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

Topics and Skills

- 3.1 The Bill of Rights - Skill 1.D
- 3.2 First Amendment: Freedom of Religion - Skill 2.A
- 3.3 First Amendment: Freedom of Speech - Skill 5.A
- 3.4 First Amendment: Freedom of the Press - Skill 4.D
- 3.5 Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms - Skill 4.A
- 3.6 Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety - Skill 5.B
- 3.7 Selective Incorporation - Skill 2.B
- 3.8 Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused - Skill 5.C
- 3.9 Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy - Skill 2.A
- 3.10 Social Movements and Equal Protection - Skill 4.C
- 3.11 Government Responses to Social Movements - Skill 2.B
- 3.12 Balancing Minority and Majority Rights - Skill 2.C
- 3.13 Affirmative Action - Skill 1.E

Skills

In this unit, we will be continuing to develop the skill of Concept Application, SCOTUS Application, and Source Analysis. These skills will be assessed in both the topic questions and the end of unit Progress Check questions. The questions increase in difficulty with each unit; be sure you address the skill and knowledge targets for each topic in order to most successfully prepare for the end of unit Progress Check questions and the final summative assessment.

Note:

Topic 3.4 can be especially challenging because skill 4.D requires students to explain how the visual elements of the source (cartoon, map, or infographic) illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. This is the first time they will encounter this skill. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Topic 3.8 can be especially difficult because skill 5.C requires students to use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Sample Activities and Assignments for Unit 3

Argument and Discussion – Who Is Most Responsible for Advancing Civil Rights Since the 1950s?

Framing Question: Argue whether Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, or social movements are most responsible for the advancement of civil rights since the 1950s.

Activity Summary: First, students will analyze the role of specific laws, U.S. Supreme Court rulings, and social movements in either advancing or hindering civil rights since the 1950s. U.S. Supreme Court cases students could analyze and use as evidence include: *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), *Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc. v. United States* (1964), *Shaw v. Reno* (1993), *Craig v. Boren* (1976), and *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965).

Congressional actions that students could analyze and use include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the Twenty-Fourth Amendment, and the Equal Rights Amendment.

Students will analyze the African American Civil Rights Movement, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (this analysis will include excerpts from “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”) and the National Organization for Women. After explaining the role of congressional actions, U.S. Supreme Court rulings, and social movements in advancing civil rights since the 1950s, students will be divided into groups, and each group will be assigned to argue on behalf of Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, or social movements.

At the conclusion of the discussion in which each group represents their assigned perspective, students will individually write an argument essay addressing the question of who is most responsible for advancing civil rights since the 1950s. The student will first state a claim supported by evidence, then use reasoning to support the claim and respond to an alternate perspective, as modeled after the free-response question type 4. (Skill 5: Argumentation) **CR9**

Assessment

After each topic, students will practice their knowledge and skills using the **Topic Questions** in AP Classroom.

At the end of Unit 3, students will take a formative assessment by completing the MCQ, FRQ Part A, FRQ Part B, and FRQ Part C **Progress Check** questions in AP Classroom.

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.”

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs – 13 instructional 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?

Topics and Skills

- 4.1 American Attitudes About Government and Politics - Skill 1.D
- 4.2 Political Socialization - Skill 3.A
- 4.3 Changes in Ideology - Skill 3.B
- 4.4 Influence of Political Events on Ideology - Skill 4.B
- 4.5 Measuring Public Opinion - Skill 3.C
- 4.6 Evaluating Public Opinion Data - Skill 3.D
- 4.7 Ideologies of Political Parties - Skill 1.E
- 4.8 Ideology and Policymaking - Skill 4.D
- 4.9 Ideology and Economic Policy - Skill 3.E
- 4.10 Ideology and Social Policy - Skill 4.C

Skills

In this unit, we will be continuing to develop the skill of Concept Application, Source Analysis, and Data Analysis. These skills will be assessed in both the topic questions and the end of unit Progress Check questions. The questions increase in difficulty with each unit; be sure you address the skill and knowledge targets for each topic in order to most successfully prepare for the end of unit Progress Check questions and the final summative assessment.

Note:

Topic **4.3** can be especially challenging because skill **3.B** requires students to describe patterns and trends in data. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Topic **4.10** can be especially difficult because skill **4.C** requires students to explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Sample Activities and Assignments for Unit 4

Political Culture and Political Ideology Party Platform Analysis

Framing Question: Which force will ultimately prevail—the core values that unite us, or the attitudes and ideological beliefs that divide us?

Activity Summary: Students will first explain how excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* help to describe core American political values such as individualism, equality of opportunity, free enterprise, rule of law, limited government, and popular sovereignty.

Students will then analyze excerpts from the most recent Republican Party platform and Democratic Party platform and explain how excerpts from both party platforms connect to these core American political values.

Next, students will compare the attitudes and ideological beliefs of both parties with respect to these core values before answering and discussing the framing question, using their understanding of their policy from the civic engagement process and data on political polarization and public opinion with regards to core American political values as additional evidence in answering the question. (Skill 3: Data Analysis) **CR6**

Sources:

- 2016 Republican Party Platform
- 2016 Democratic Party Platform, Data on Political Polarization (“Political Polarization in the American Public.” Pew Research Center, June 12, 2014)
- Public Opinion Data (“**Republicans less likely than Democrats to see major role for govt on health care, poverty assistance.**” Pew Research Center, November 20, 2015, people-press.org/2015/11/23/3-views-of-governments-performance-and-role-in-specific-areas/role-and-performance-5)
- “**Political Polarization, 1994-2017 Interactive**” (people-press.org/interactives/political-polarization-1994-2017)

Political Poll Analysis

Framing Questions: What makes a high-quality poll? What are polling pitfalls? What effect do opinion polls have on the democratic process?

After completing the activities in the [KQED lesson plan \(kqed.org/lowdown/24072/video-how-accurate-are-election-polls-with-lesson-plan\)](http://kqed.org/lowdown/24072/video-how-accurate-are-election-polls-with-lesson-plan), students will select a poll from a nonpartisan polling organization. Using the criteria covered in this unit, they will evaluate the reliability of the information provided by the poll. Additionally, they will also highlight the limitations of the poll.

Additional Resource: FiveThirtyEight’s Pollster Ratings

Assessment

After each topic, students will practice their knowledge and skills using the **Topic Questions** in AP Classroom.

At the end of Unit 4, students will take a formative assessment by completing the MCQ and FRQ **Personal Progress Check** questions in AP Classroom.

Unit 5: Political Participation – 26 instructional 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?

Foundational Documents: The Constitution of the United States

Required Case: *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010)

Topics and Skills

- 5.1 Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior - Skill 1.D
- 5.2 Voter Turnout - Skill 3.C
- 5.3 Political Parties - Skill 1.B
- 5.4 How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt - Skill 4.B
- 5.5 Third-Party Politics - Skill 3.D
- 5.6 Interest Groups Influencing Policymaking - Skill 3.F

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.”

- 5.7 Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes - Skill 1.E
- 5.8 Electing a President - Skill 5.A
- 5.9 Congressional Elections - Skill 5.B
- 5.10 Modern Campaigns - Skill 5.C
- 5.11 Campaign Finance - Skill 2.B
- 5.12 The Media - Skill 5.D
- 5.13 Changing Media - Skill 2.D

Skills

By the end of this unit, student should have developed mastery over each of the identified skills. These skills will be assessed in both the topic questions and the end of unit Progress Check questions. The questions increase in difficulty with each unit; be sure you address the skill and knowledge targets for each topic on order to most successfully prepare for the end of unit Progress Check questions and the final summative assessment.

Note:

Topic **5.10** can be especially difficult because skill **5.C** requires students to use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Topic **5.12** can be especially challenging because skill **5.D** requires students to respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Sample Activities and Assignments for Unit 5

Creating a Policy or Strategy to Increase Voter Turnout:

Framing Question: Why do so many eligible voters find it “irrational” to vote, and what could either the national government, state governments, or linkage institutions do to make the benefits of voting outweigh the costs for more voters?

Activity Summary: This activity frames the potential problem of low voter turnout through the lens of economic rationality. Students first consider the different factors that influence an individual’s decision to vote (attitudinal factors, government requirements, and institutional forces) and how these factors impact either the costs of voting or the benefits of voting. Then, in small groups, students either take on the role of an interest group or political party planning a “get out the vote” drive, or the role of a state or national government elected official (or staffer) looking to craft a policy to increase voter turnout (e.g., the “Motor Voter Act” of 1993). Students will design a policy or strategy, explaining how their plan will either raise the benefits or lower the costs of voting for more voters and whether the proposed plan is constitutional.

The first part of the activity will culminate in students presenting their policy or plan to the class. Students will then consider the implications of higher voter turnout in terms of changes in election outcomes and policies by considering what would happen if the U.S. adopted compulsory voting laws or policies similar to the ones designed by the students.

Additional Sources: Map and data on photo ID laws across different states (“Voter Identification Requirements.” National Conference of State Legislatures, June 5, 2017), and map on the relationship between same-day registration and voter turnout (“Interactive map: Does same-day registration affect voter turnout in the U.S.?” PBS, October 4, 2015).

Media Bias Assignment

Framing Question: What is confirmation bias and how does it contribute to selective exposure and narrowcasting? How do the viewing habits of different groups of American contribute to political polarization?

The lesson will begin with students gathering evidence from the TED Talk, “Free Yourself from Your Filter Bubbles” which features the founder of All Sides.

Students will select a recent story and follow it on the AllSides website and note and notice the similarities and differences on how that news item is covered from the right, left, and center. Students will construct a well-reasoned essay evaluating the coverage.

The lesson will conclude with a discussion of the video clip, “Why Our Brains Love Fake News” from PBS. Students will document responses to the viewer guide in preparation for a fishbowl conversation on this topic. Ultimately, students will evaluate the role of the media as a linkage institution and propose solutions to the problems that surfaced during the lesson.

Assessment

After each topic, students will practice their knowledge and skills using the **Topic Questions** in AP Classroom.

At the end of Unit 5, students will take a formative assessment by completing the MCQ, FRQ Part A, and FRQ Part B **Progress Check** questions in AP Classroom.