

AP United States Government and Politics Syllabus

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 (10 days) Unit 5: Political Participation

Primary Textbook Wilson. 13th Edition. United States Government AP Edition. [CR16]

[CR16] — Students and teachers have access to a college-level U.S. government and politics textbook. Supplemental Readings The primary text will be heavily supplemented by outside readings, including the 15 required Supreme Court cases and nine foundational documents which will all be assigned during the course. [CR10: foundational documents] [CR15: Supreme Court cases]

In addition to the required cases and documents, recent articles regarding political science concepts and current political issues will be provided to students to supplement the primary text. Links to the supplemental readings will be posted on the course website or provided to students in hard copy.

[CR10] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret qualitative sources (primary and secondary sources including the nine required foundational documents) to explain how they relate to political concepts.

[CR15] — Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases. Major Class Activities Current events presentations: Students, individually or as a pair, will prepare a current events presentation that they will share with the class at the start of their assigned week. The presentation must include at least one story that links one or more of the big ideas to each of the five units in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework. The current events presentation also must include at least one relevant visual source (photo, political cartoon, or infographic) for each story with a caption that explains its connection to the big idea and/or unit that story covers.

[CR11]

[CR11] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret visual information to explain how the elements of the visual illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

Analytical paper assignment: Students will be required to write three analytical papers about important topics in United States government and politics. These papers will be due on varying dates during the semester. Each paper must be no more than four pages in length. In each paper, the students must briefly summarize the assigned readings, connect the readings to the current unit of study (how they do this will vary depending on the resources provided for each paper and the unit of study in which it is due), and make a connection between the readings and a current political issue. One to two analytical paper assignments will require students to also examine how the assigned article and a required case/foundational document corroborate or contradict one another. [CR7] [CR12]

[CR7] — The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

Debates: Students, in teams of three, will participate in a debate about a current public policy or issue in American government and politics. Each team will get a five-minute opening statement, a five-minute cross examination period, and a five-minute closing statement. Students must also have a visual that helps support their main arguments. This visual can be a chart, graph, table, political cartoon, or infographic. Students will analyze the visuals presented by other teams as part of the debate. Finally, each team is responsible for providing an annotated works cited page of the resources used to develop their arguments and questions. [CR11]

[CR11] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret visual information to explain how the elements of the visual illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

Thinglink assignment for required court cases: In pairs, students will create a Thinglink interactive presentation for one of the 15 required Supreme Court cases using Thinglink.com. Their interactive presentation must include a summary of the constitutional issue involved in the case, a summary of the holding of the case, any significant dissents in the case, and connections to at least two similar cases (acting as precedent or overturning the original decision). In addition to the previous requirements, each student's Thinglink should contain relevant visuals, such as political cartoons, photographs, or tables/charts and a caption that explains their relevance to the case. [CR11] [CR12] [CR15: activity]

[CR11] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret visual information to explain how the elements of the visual illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

[CR15] — Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases.

AP U.S. Government and Politics Course Plan

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

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 development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact U.S. citizens? Readings
- The Declaration of Independence
- *Federalist No. 10*
- *Brutus No. 1*
- *Federalist No. 51*

- The Articles of Confederation
- The Constitution of the United States (Articles I-VII, 10th and 14th Amendments)
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Lopez v. United States (1995)
- Rauch, Jonathan. “How American Politics Went Insane.” The Atlantic, July/August 2016.
 - Toobin, Jeffrey. "Our Broken Constitution." The New Yorker, December 9, 2013. Primary Unit Focus [CR1]

- The philosophical foundations and documents of American democracy, including the Declaration of Independence, social contract theory, republicanism, types of democracy, and the tension between individual liberty and order/safety. (EU LOR-1)
- How the Articles of Confederation failed to adequately balance individual liberty and public order/safety, and how the framers wrestled with these questions in drafting the Constitution. (EU LOR-1)
- The compromises reached at the Constitutional Convention and the debate between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists during the ratification debate. (EU CON-1)
- The evolving relationship between the national and state governments, including the grant process, policy issues (ADA, Medicaid, marijuana), and the idea of devolution. (EU CON-1)

[CR1] — The course includes the Foundations of American Democracy Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs). Instructional Activities for Unit 1 3-2-1 Activity/Seminar. Using the 3-2-1 seminar protocol, students discuss the “How American Politics Went Insane” article from The Atlantic. This will allow students to connect the current state of politics to important Unit 1 concepts such as popular sovereignty, republicanism, and social contract theory of government. This is a high interest article that will help “hook” students at the start of the semester. [CR10: activity] [CR12]

[CR10] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret qualitative sources (primary and secondary sources including the nine required foundational documents) to explain how they relate to political concepts.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

Students brainstorm a list of things they believe government should do by asking the question, “What should government do?” Make a list of student responses on the board. Use this list to facilitate a discussion about order, liberty, and equality. Then share the Preamble to the Constitution and have students link their list to the language in the Preamble. (EU LOR-1)

ThingLink Court cases assignment. See description in the major class activities section above.

Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, “States have exceeded their authority in legalizing recreational marijuana use, and the federal government should reassert its national supremacy over drug policy.” (EU CON-2) [CR6] [CR12]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

Analytical paper “Our Broken Constitution” due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow the students to examine criticisms of how the U.S. Constitution operates in modern America. Student papers must connect the issues the author explores to arguments made by the Anti-Federalists, in particular, Brutus No. 1. (EU CON-1, CON-3, CON-4) [CR10: activity]

[CR10] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret qualitative sources (primary and secondary sources including the nine required foundational documents) to explain how they relate to political concepts.

Students engage in a Deliberative Discussion using Federalist No. 51 and Brutus No. 1. (EU CON-1) [CR10: activity]

[CR10] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret qualitative sources (primary and secondary sources including the nine required foundational documents) to explain how they relate to political concepts.

Checks and balances graphic organizer. During class lessons and their reading of the Constitution, students create a graphic organizer detailing the system of checks and balances. In addition to the basic checks and balances system, students annotate their organizer with a list of Supreme Court cases and public policies that gave one or more branches the opportunity to check another. (EU PMI-1)

Free-Response Question (FRQ). Students respond to a textual, qualitative-based FRQ comparing the McCulloch and the Lopez decisions. The FRQ will include an excerpt from the McCulloch and/or the Lopez decision. The FRQ will require the students to understand and make connections to the concepts of enumerated, implied powers, and federalism. (EU CON-2) [CR8] [CR15: activity]

[CR8] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts.

[CR15] — Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases.

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

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? Readings
- The Constitution of the United States (Articles I-III)
- Baker v. Carr (1962)
- Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- *Federalist No. 70*
- *Federalist No. 78*
- Marbury v. Madison
- Moe, Terry M., and William G. Howell. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (December 1999): 850-73. Primary Unit Focus [CR2]
- Structure of Congress, including significant differences between the chambers regarding organization, leadership, incumbency, and powers. (EU CON-3)

- Congressional representation and gerrymandering. (EU CON-3)
- The president’s formal and informal powers. (EU CON-4)
- Judicial independence, Federalist No. 78, Marbury v. Madison, and judicial decision-making. (EU CON-5)
- How the bureaucracy operates and its place in the checks and balances system. (EU PMI-1, PMI-2)
- The future of entitlement spending in the United States. (EU CON-3)

[CR2] — The course includes the Interactions Among Branches of Government Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs). Instructional Activities for Unit 2 Budget simulation and class discussion. Using the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget’s The Debt Fixer website and the quantitative data therein, students try to reduce the debt as a percentage of GDP. After completing the online simulation, students discuss the difficulties they encountered in reducing the size of the national debt. During this discussion students should link the budget process to important concepts such as entitlement spending and the political nature of the budget. (EU CON-3) [CR9] [CR11] [CR12]

[CR9] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret quantitative data to explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

[CR11] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret visual information to explain how the elements of the visual illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, “Congress has abandoned its role in the checks and balances system.” (EU PMI-1, CON-3, CON-4)

Analytical paper for “Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory” and Federalist No. 70 due. The purpose of this paper is for the students to examine the growth of presidential power and how the other two branches may attempt to check presidential power. See description of critical article reviews found above under major class activities. (EU CON-4) [CR7] [CR8] [CR10: activity] [CR12]

[CR7] — The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

[CR8] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts.

[CR10] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret qualitative sources (primary and secondary sources including the nine required foundational documents) to explain how they relate to political concepts.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

Checks and balances role play. Using a lesson from the National Constitution Center’s Separation of Powers Lesson Plan as a model, students engage in a simulation in which they develop a plan of action to ensure the creation/implementation of a policy based on the powers given to their assigned branch of government (legislative, executive, judicial). In addition to developing this plan of action for their own goal, students must develop a plan to either support or oppose another branch’s goal. (EU PMI-1) [CR7] [CR12]

[CR7] — The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

Watch “The Stackhouse Filibuster” (Season 2, Episode 17) from *The West Wing*. Political concepts examined in this episode include the filibuster, the White House Staff, the presidential relationship with the press, and how legislation is developed by both the presidency and Congress. *The West Wing* is available on both Netflix and iTunes. (EU CON-3, CON-4)

Students complete at least two of the 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 each of the scenarios, they respond to a set of questions about the process and the difficulties they encountered. All students must do scenario 1, a straight redistricting scenario. The second scenario is up to them. In addition to completing two of the scenarios, students read about proposed changes to the redistricting process and respond to these proposals. (EU CON-3) [CR12]

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

Students respond to a quantitative data FRQ regarding presidential vetoes and the interaction between the president and Congress. (EU CON-4) [CR9]

[CR9] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret quantitative data to explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

Students respond to a scenario-based FRQ examining how the bureaucracy operates and its interactions with the presidency, Congress, and the courts. (EU PMI-1, CON-4, CON-5, PMI-2) [CR12]

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

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? Readings
- The Bill of Rights
- The 14th Amendment’s due process and equal protection clauses
- *Engel v. Vitale* (1962)
- *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972)
- *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969)
- *Schenck v. United States* (1919)
- *New York Times Co. v. United States* (1971)
- *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010)
- *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963)
- *Roe v. Wade* (1973)

- Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka Kansas (1954)
- “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- Bentele, Keith G., and Erin E. O’Brien. “Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies.” *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 4 (December 2013): 1088-1116. Primary Unit Focus [CR3]
- The role of the courts, and the due process and equal protection clauses in the expansion of civil liberties and civil rights, including the idea of selective incorporation. (EU LOR-2, CON-5)
- The expansion of the liberties protected by the 1st and 2nd Amendments. (EU LOR-2, CON-5)
- The development of the right to privacy and its implications for reproductive rights and 4th Amendment protections. (EU LOR-3)
- A history of civil rights issues and how historically disadvantaged groups in American society have achieved greater equality and equitable treatment in society. (EU PRD-1, PMI-3)

[CR3] — The course includes the Civil Liberties and Civil Rights Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs). Instructional Activities for Unit 3 Bill of Rights scenarios. Students write five hypothetical scenarios regarding civil liberties. Each scenario should be clearly tied to one of the amendments found in the Bill of Rights. Students must also create a “key” for their scenarios. In their key, students must identify the amendment the scenario involves, the required Supreme Court case that incorporated or clarified the application of the amendment in question, and finally the students must link the required case to a different case that deals with the same constitutional issue. (EU LOR-2) [CR12] [CR15: activity]

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

[CR15] — Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases.

Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, “History has proven that affirmative action programs are necessary to safeguard equal opportunity in both education and employment for minorities.” (EU CON-6, PMI-4) [CR6] [CR7]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR7] — The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

Analytical paper “Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies” due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow students to explore the recent actions by many states that may have a negative impact on the right to vote in those states. In this analytical paper, students write a thesis and defend it with information from the article, the course, and recent political and social events. (EU PRD-1, PMI-3) [CR6] [CR8] [CR12] [CR13]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR8] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

[CR13] — The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant

evidence, about a concept described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework.

Students respond to a textual FRQ that uses one of the required Supreme Court cases and a non-required case. The FRQ will require students to examine the Court's decision in both cases and apply the Court's reasoning to a related course concept. (EU PRD-1, PMI-3) [CR12] [CR15: activity]

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

[CR15] — Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework and connect them to other non-required landmark cases.

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Essential Questions

- How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time?
- How do political ideology and core values influence government policy making? Readings
- The Monkey Cage series on political polarization in America found at The Washington Post.
- "Political Polarization in the American Public." Pew Research Center, June 12, 2014.
- Abramowitz, Alan I., and Morris P. Fiorina. "Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong with Our Politics, Anyway?" *The American Interest*, March 11, 2013.
- Fiorina, Morris P. "America's Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight." *The American Interest* 8, no. 4, February 12, 2013. Primary Unit Focus [CR4]
- Elements of a scientific poll, the different types of polls, and how they are used in U.S. government and politics. (EU MPA-2, PRD-3)
- The basic tenets of American political culture, the conservative and liberal political ideologies, and how these are acquired (political socialization). (EU MPA-1)

[CR4] — The course includes the American Political Ideologies and Beliefs Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs). Instructional Activities for Unit 4 Using Gallup.com, Polling Report.com, and the Pew Research Center, students study different polls regarding a variety of policy issues in the United States. Students are provided several examples of polls with questionable reliability. Students must write a comparison of what makes one poll reliable and another unreliable and explain how public policy is affected by the accuracy and reliability of polls. (EU MPA-2) [CR6] [CR9]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR9] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret quantitative data to explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

Students take the Pew Research Center's Political Typology quiz. This quiz places the students into one of nine political typologies – it divides the traditional left/right spectrum into several subgroups (four on each side of the center and one for non-engaged quiz takers). After the students have completed the quiz, they write their names on the class political spectrum, as does the teacher. Then as a class they discuss how the class does or does not reflect the larger community and what might account for the class's overall political ideology. (EU MPA-1)

Analytical paper "Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong with Our Politics, Anyway?" and "America's Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight" due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow students

to compare the competing views on partisan polarization in American political culture. In this paper, students must evaluate which argument regarding polarization best reflects the reality in American political culture today. (EU PMI-4) [CR10: activity] [CR12] [CR13]

[CR10] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret qualitative sources (primary and secondary sources including the nine required foundational documents) to explain how they relate to political concepts.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

[CR13] — The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant evidence, about a concept described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework.

Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, “Demographic changes represent a threat to the long-term electoral success of the Republican Party.” (EU MPA-1, PMI-4, MPA-3) [CR6]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

Class poster presentations of party platforms. Divide the class in half – one half examines the Democratic Party platform and the other half examines the Republican Party platform. Within each platform, students pair to explore a particular topic, such as education, defense, entitlement spending, etc. and create a post that explains the party’s policy proposals for that particular topic. Students then present their findings to the class. As a follow-up homework assignment, students then research public opinion polls on their issue and write a summary of how the American public feels about their issue and evaluate whether or not their assigned party reflects the American public. Finally, students must identify a policy from their assigned platform and determine if it has been implemented and how. (EU PMI-4, MPA-2) [CR6]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

Students respond to a quantitative data FRQ regarding changing demographics in the United States. Students have to interpret data from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding racial and age composition of the United States and how they are changing. Students also link these demographic changes to representation in Congress. The final section of the FRQ will require students to assess the potential impacts of these changes on the two political parties and the policies each party promotes. (EU PMI-4, MPA-3) [CR6]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

Unit 5: Political Participation

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?

Readings

- *Federalist No. 10*
- Desilver, Drew. "U.S. trails most developed countries in voter turnout." Pew Research Center, May 15, 2017.
- Citizens United v. FEC (2010)
- Gaslowitz, Lea. “How to Spot a Misleading Graph - Lea Gaslowitz.” TED-Ed video, 4:09.

- Barthel, Michael, and Amy Mitchell. "Americans' Attitudes About the News Media Deeply Divided Along Partisan Lines." Pew Research Center, May 10, 2017.
- Kiely, Eugene, and Lori Robertson. "How to Spot Fake News." FactCheck.org, November 18, 2016.
- Neale, Thomas H. "The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections." The Congressional Research Service, May 15, 2017.

Primary Unit Focus [CR5]

- The evolution of voting rights and the current state of voter turnout. (EU MPA-3, PMI-3, PMI-5)
- Factors that influence voter choice in elections. (EU MPA-3, MPA-1)
- The functions of political parties in the United States and third parties in United States government and politics. (EU PMI-5)
- The development of candidate-centered campaigns. (EU PMI-5, PRD-3)
- The theory of critical elections. (EU PMI-5)
- Interest groups in United States government and politics. (EU PMI-5)
- Nominations, campaigns, and elections in United States government and politics. (EU PRD-2)
- The media as a linkage institution, including changes in media, such as the growth of social media and partisan media sources. (EU PRD-3)

[CR5] — The course includes the Political Participation Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs). Instructional Activities for Unit 5 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. (EU MPA-3) [CR6] [CR8] [CR9] [CR13]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR8] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts.

[CR9] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret quantitative data to explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

[CR13] — The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant evidence, about a concept described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework.

Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, "Interest groups have too much influence in the policy process and are detrimental to democracy." (EU PMI-5) [CR6] [CR7] [CR8]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR7] — The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

[CR8] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts.

Analytical paper "The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections" due. The

purpose of this analytical paper is to have students examine the original design and purpose of the Electoral College, and then assess how it works in modern U.S. politics, with special attention paid to the 2016 election. In this paper, students must examine the various proposals to reform the Electoral College and assess the advantages and disadvantages to each, explaining why the current system should either be maintained, revised, or completely eliminated and replaced with election by national popular vote. (EU PRD-2) [CR6] [CR12] [CR13]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR12] — The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

[CR13] — The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant evidence, about a concept described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework.

After the lesson regarding the theory of critical elections, students use presidential election data from the 20th and 21st centuries to classify each election as either a critical election or a deviating election. (EU PMI-5) [CR9]

[CR9] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret quantitative data to explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

Students write an essay, with an analytical thesis, that incorporates information from a select list of foundational documents that examines the influence of interest groups on the policy-making process in the United States. (EU PMI-5, PRD-2) [CR13]

[CR13] — The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant evidence, about a concept described in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework.

After the lesson on the media as a linkage institution, especially the part about partisan media and social media, students complete a media analysis assignment. Students are assigned to read two articles about a specific policy issue in the United States. One article is from a conservative source and one from a liberal source. They then analyze the two sources – making note of the facts provided, the viewpoints expressed in each, and other differences between the two sources. This will also allow students to make a connection to gridlock in the national government. (EU PRD-3, CON-4) [CR6] [CR7] [CR8]

[CR6] — The course integrates public policy within each unit.

[CR7] — The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

[CR8] — The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts.

Political Science Research Project. After reading “How to Spot Fake News” at 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. (EU PRD-3) [CR14]

[CR14] — Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework that culminates in a presentation of findings.