



School District of Marshfield

Course Syllabus

Course Name: U.S. History & American Government

Length of Course: Year

Credits: 1

Grade Level: Freshman Standing

Course Description:

History of American Government first semester primarily explores the U.S. Constitution and its application in today's society. Students will become active participants in the study of ideology, federalism, voter behaviors, political parties, elections/campaigns, interest groups, mass media, civil liberties and civil rights. Second semester geared toward exploring the historical origins of the Constitution and its impact on the United States up through westward expansion and the Industrial Revolution.

Learning Targets:

- Analyze and interpret primary and secondary resource documents. (Primary Sources)
- Compose written responses with a thesis that establishes an argument that can be supported with evidence. (Writing)
- Interpret visual sources including charts, graphs, political cartoons, and period art work. (Visual Sources)

Quarter 1

1. Political Ideology (15 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Students will be able to describe the idea of a political spectrum.
- B. Students will be able to identify the key issues that help define ideology and where liberals and conservatives stand on the issues.
- C. Students will be able to identify the main factors that influence a persons political ideology.
- D. Students will understand the relationship that ideology has to political parties.
- E. Students will be able to evaluate short readings and political cartoons for bias.
- F. Students will understand the implications that ideology has on policy making.

2. Legislative Branch (15 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Compare and contrast the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- B. Demonstrate and understanding of how a bill becomes a law
- C. Apply an understanding of the powers of Congress to real-life scenarios.

- D. Evaluate political cartoons as they apply to Congressional power.
- E. Differentiate between implied and expressed powers of Congress.
- F. Demonstrate an understanding of the elastic clause and its effects on government.
- G. Understand the principle of checks and balances as it applies to the Congress.
- H. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the census including redistricting, reapportionment, and gerrymandering.
- I. Know the importance and effects of pork barrel legislation.

3. Executive Branch (10 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Know the formal and informal requirements for becoming president.
- B. Demonstrate an understanding of the Electoral College.
- C. Apply an understanding of the roles of the president as they apply to real-world situations.
- D. Know the job of and importance of the vice-president.
- E. Know the order of presidential succession up to the Speaker of the House.
- F. Analyze political cartoons focusing on the powers of the president.
- G. Understand the importance of the cabinet and executive office of the president.
- H. Understand the principle of checks and balances as it pertains to the executive branch.

Quarter 2

4. Judicial Branch (10 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Describe the structure and jurisdiction of the federal court system
- B. Differentiate between state and federal courts.
- C. Explain the decision making process of federal courts.
- D. Summarize the process of selecting Supreme Court justices.
- E. Discuss the role of the Supreme Court in the federal system.
- F. Understand the method by which cases come to be heard by the Supreme Court.
- G. Understand the principle of checks and balances as it pertains to the judicial branch.

5. Constitutional Rights and Liberties (10 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Know and understand the Bill of Rights and amendment fourteen.
- B. Apply understanding of rights to real-life scenarios.
- C. Define civil liberties and civil rights.
- D. Summarize the significance of selective incorporation.

6. Federalism (5 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Know definitions and examples of federalism
- B. Differentiate between enumerated, concurrent, and reserved powers
- C. Understand the federal government's relationship with the states has evolved throughout history
- D. Evaluate current events related to federalism

7. Political Behavior/Secondary Institutions (15 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Evaluate the origin and effects of the two-party system on American politics.
- B. Chart the structure of political parties.
- C. Know the history and current status of voting rights in America.
- D. Understand the types of elections in the U.S.
- E. Identify influences on voter behaviors and their influence on campaigns.
- F. Know the structure of a campaign.
- G. Understand the history of campaign finance and implications for modern campaigns.
- H. Understand public opinion and how it's measured and influenced.
- I. Evaluate the effects of interest groups on modern politics.
- J. Know the role of mass media in the U.S. political system.

8. Public Policy (15 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Explain the role of government in managing the economy.
- B. Know the components of the federal budget.
- C. Construct a federal budget using personal ideology and an understanding of the needs of the U.S.
- D. Understand the challenges faced in balancing the budget.
- E. Understand the roots of social welfare policy.
- F. Analyze the current social security system and offer solutions for the future.
- G. Understand the effects of foreign policy on the U.S. and other countries.
- H. Know how foreign policy is affected by the separation of powers

Quarter 3

9. Exploration and Settlement (15 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Know the status of Native Americans prior to European settlement.
- B. Know the exploration and settlement patterns of the Spanish.
- C. Analyze the effects of early exploration and settlement
- D. Compare and contrast the early settlement patterns of the English, Dutch, French and Spanish
- E. Compare and contrast different world views regarding Native Americans

10. Colonization and Regionalism (20 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Know the origins of English settlement in North America.
- B. Compare and contrast the regional economic, social, and political differences between the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies as they develop.
- C. Understand the social and economic relationship between England and her colonies.
- D. Track the evolution/development of the American colonies prior to the Revolution.

11. The American Revolution (20 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Identify the causes and effects of the French and Indian War and the growing discontent in the American colonies.
- B. Sequence the events leading up to the first battles of the American Revolution.
- C. Identify examples of political and social unity prior to the war.
- D. Summarize the evolution of revolutionary thought leading up to the war.
- E. Analyze the Declaration of Independence as an Enlightenment document.
- F. Discuss the Revolutionary War in terms of armies, strategies, social and financial peril.
- G. Know the social, political, and economic effects of the Revolutionary War.

Quarter 4

12. A New Nation—1781 to 1812 (10 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Understand the challenges facing the nation under the Articles of Confederation
- B. Evaluate the Articles of Confederation in terms of its ability to effectively deal with post-revolutionary challenges.
- C. Summarize the sequence of events leading up to the Constitutional Convention.
- D. Explain the challenges and compromises that led to ratification of the Constitution.
- E. Understand the domestic and foreign relations challenges faced by a young U.S.
- F. Evaluate the causes and outcomes of the War of 1812

13. Economic and Social Change—1812 to 1850 (20 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Understand the origins of the Industrial Revolution and its growth in the U.S.
- B. Evaluate the social and economic effects of the Industrial Revolution in the U.S.
- C. Analyze the motives for westward expansion

- D. Evaluate the effects of westward expansion on native peoples and the Mexicans.
- E. Understand the political responses to westward expansion and the Industrial Revolution
- F. Identify patterns that emerge in nationalism and sectionalism

14. Social and Cultural Challenges (5 days)

Learning Targets:

- A. Identify the root causes of reform movements in the mid-1800s.
- B. Evaluate the effects reform movements would have on women, blacks, mentally ill, incarcerated, and workers.
- C. Understand the potential reforms, westward expansion, and industrialization would have for future conflict.

Required Core Resources:

- The Americans,
- United States Government: Our Democracy, McGraw Hill c. 2016