

American Government
Social Studies
Curriculum Framework

Revised 2006

Course Title: American Government
 Course/Unit Credit: 0.5
 Course Number:
 Teacher Licensure: Secondary Social Studies
 Grades: 9-12

American Government

American Government is a social studies elective, one-semester in length. The course deals with the theoretical concepts relating to the foundations of our government and with the practical application of these concepts as they relate to our system of American federalism, to political participation and influence, to foreign policy, to civil liberties, to civil rights, and to our national government. This course stresses application, problem-solving, higher-order thinking skills, and use of classroom performance-based/open-ended assessments with rubrics. Civics or Civics/American Government is a pre-requisite for this course. Arkansas Department of Education approval is not required.

Strand	Standards
Political Philosophy	1. Students shall examine the political philosophies and the documents that shaped United States Constitutional Government.
	2. Students shall examine the Declaration of Independence.
United States Constitution	3. Students shall analyze the United States Constitution.
	4. Students shall explore the federal system of government defined by the United States Constitution.
	5. Students shall analyze civil liberties and civil rights.
	6. Students shall investigate the structure, organization, and process of the legislative branch.
	7. Students shall examine the role, organization, and function of the executive branch.
	8. Students shall investigate the organization, process, and role of the judiciary branch.
Elections	9. Students shall examine the election process in federal, state, and local elections.
State and Local Government	10. Students shall examine state and local government in Arkansas.

Strand: Political Philosophy

Content Standard 1: Students shall examine the political philosophies and the documents that shaped United States Constitutional government.

PP.1.AG.1	Investigate the contributions of ancient Greece and Rome to United States' government
PP.1.AG.2	Analyze ideas of limited government and the rule of law: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Magna Carta• Petition of Rights• English Bill of Rights• Mayflower Compact
PP.1.AG.3	Discuss the contributions of the Enlightenment philosophers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baron de Montesquieu• Voltaire
PP.1.AG.4	Discuss the <i>Social Contract Theory</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thomas Hobbes• John Locke• Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Strand: Political Philosophy

Content Standard 2: Students shall examine the Declaration of Independence.

PP.2.AG.1	Investigate the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence
PP.2.AG.2	Compare and contrast the Declaration of Independence and <i>Social Contract Theory</i>
PP.2.AG.3	Evaluate the Declaration of Independence as a persuasive argument justifying revolution

Strand: United States Constitution
Content Standard 3: Students shall analyze the United States Constitution.

USC.3.AG.1	Examine the purpose of constitutions
USC.3.AG.2	Analyze the purpose of government stated in the Preamble to the United States Constitution
USC.3.AG.3	Analyze the effect the following fundamental principles have upon the United States government: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>popular sovereignty</i>• <i>separation of powers</i>• <i>checks and balances</i>• <i>Federalism</i>
USC.3.AG.4	Contrast the arguments expressed in the debate over ratification of the United States Constitution
USC.3.AG.5	Investigate the amendment process (e.g., role of states legislatures, role of conventions, role of public opinion)
USC.3.AG.6	Examine the purpose of each of the constitutional amendments

Strand: United States Constitution

Content Standard 4: Students shall explore the federal system of government defined by the United States Constitution.

USC.4.AG.1	Examine the relationship between federal and state government
USC.4.AG.2	Research the key powers granted to Congress by the United States Constitution
USC.4.AG.3	Compare and contrast enumerated and implied powers
USC.4.AG.4	Compare and contrast delegated, concurrent, and reserved powers
USC.4.AG.5	Analyze Article IV which established the United States Constitution as the Supreme Law of the Land

Strand: United States Constitution

Content Standard 5: Students shall analyze civil liberties and civil rights.

USC.5.AG.1	Compare and contrast the <i>Federalist</i> and <i>Anti-Federalist</i> arguments over ratification of the United States Constitution: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Bill of Rights</i>• state's rights
USC.5.AG.2	Analyze fundamental rights of individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• civil liberties• <i>due process</i>• equal protection

Strand: United States Constitution

Content Standard 6: Students shall investigate the structure, organization, and process of the legislative branch.

USC.6.AG.1	Compare and contrast the House of Representatives and the Senate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• organization• terms of office• qualifications• powers
USC.6.AG.2	Describe the role of committees in the legislative process (e.g., standing, special, joint)
USC.6.AG.3	Examine the importance of the seniority system and political parties in the legislative process
USC.6.AG.4	Explain the influence of lobbyists and special interest groups on the legislative process
USC.6.AG.5	Research the development and passage of a bill using available technology

Strand: United States Constitution

Content Standard 7: Students shall examine the role, organization, and function of the executive branch.

USC.7.AG.1	Explain the qualifications for becoming President of the United States
USC.7.AG.2	Analyze the roles of the presidency
USC.7.AG.3	Explain the justification and function of executive orders
USC.7.AG.4	Explain the function of departments and agencies within the <i>bureaucracy</i> of the federal government
USC.7.AG.5	Investigate regulatory agencies, government corporations, and independent agencies

Strand: United States Constitution

Content Standard 8: Students shall investigate the organization, process, and role of the judicial branch.

USC.8.AG.1	Compare and contrast the jurisdiction of federal courts and state courts
USC.8.AG.2	Compare and contrast the process of selecting and confirming federal and state judges
USC.8.AG.3	Explain the process by which the Supreme Court selects and decides cases
USC.8.AG.4	Analyze the concept of judicial review as established by <u>Marbury v. Madison</u>
USC.8.AG.5	Examine Supreme Court cases which have altered the interpretation of the United States Constitution: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Roe v. Wade</u>• <u>Dred Scott v. Sanford</u>• <u>Brown v. Board of Education</u>• <u>Plessy v. Ferguson</u>• <u>Miranda v. Arizona</u>• <u>New York Times v. Sullivan</u>• <u>Wisconsin v. Yoder</u>• <u>Tinker v. Des Moines</u>• <u>Texas v. Johnson</u>• <u>Furman v. Georgia</u>

Strand: Elections

Content Standard 9: Students shall evaluate the election process in federal, state, and local elections.

E.9.AG.1	Analyze the election process in the federal, state, and local governments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• campaign finance• campaign strategies• voter registration• factors affecting election turn-out
E.9.AG.2	Compare and contrast arguments for and against the electoral college
E.9.AG.3	Describe the role of political parties in federal, state, and local elections
E.9.AG.4	Describe components of campaigns for federal, state, and local elective offices: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nomination process• campaign funding and spending• influence of media• polling• reappointment• redistricting
E.9.AG.5	Examine the complexities of vote tabulation and certifying elections

Strand: State and Local Government

Content Standard 10: Students shall examine state and local government in Arkansas.

SLG.10.AG.1	Explain the powers of state and local governments in Arkansas
SLG.10.AG.2	Discuss the sources of revenue received by each level of government in Arkansas
SLG.10.AG.3	Examine the services provided by state and local government in Arkansas

Appendix

Glossary for American Government

Anti-Federalist	A person who opposed the adoption of the United States Constitution in the late 1780's
Bill of Rights	The first ten amendments to the United States Constitution concerning basic individual liberties
Bureaucracy	A government or other organization with many different departments and complex rules and procedures
Checks and balances	A system in which each branch of government is able to limit the power of the other branches
Due Process	Constitutional requirement government may not arbitrarily or unfairly deprive a person of rights or property
Federalism	Power divided between a central government and individual state
Federalists	A group of people who supported the adoption of the United States Constitution and a strong national government
Popular sovereignty	Government created by and subject to will of the people
Separation of powers	Dividing government powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches
Social Contract Theory	Theory of society in which government is a contract between government and governed to provide protection