



# American Government: Teacher's Introduction and Guide for Classroom Integration

## **Contents of this Guide**

This guide contains much of the same information that can be found online in the Course Introduction and Syllabus. However, it also contains a more detailed course outline listing every feature for every chapter, discusses the true importance of the course objectives, and offers suggestions for integrating these online lessons into classroom activities. Most importantly, it will help you understand in what ways this course can make your teaching easier, and identify which of your responsibilities it will not address. For example, while it offers writing assignments that will challenge and engage students' analytical skills, you will still have to grade the assignments and assess and improve the development of those skills.

Perhaps the best aspect of this online course is the opportunity for students to learn from multimedia presentations. This caters to students who are auditory learners or are more engaged by multimedia. In addition to the multimedia presentations, there are extra sections that cover sub-topics or help students learn to analyze graphs and maps. Underlying all these features is the belief that a course on American Government is responsible not only for conveying factual information, but also for equipping young citizens with critical thinking and writing skills.

## **Table of Contents**

- **Course Objectives**
- **Course Format**
- **Course Outline**
- **Suggestions for Integration with Classroom Work**
- **Additional Resources**
- **Screen Shots**

## Course Objectives

This course will not only build students' knowledge of the structure and processes of American government, it will also help them understand the beliefs and historical developments that shape them. However, this course is not merely an online textbook. It can also be used to develop students' analytical and writing abilities.

**Knowledge:** Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Explain the **foundations and underpinnings** of democratic government.
- Demonstrate **comprehension** of documents essential to American government and politics.
- Evaluate the importance of federalism in the political operation of the nation.
- Describe the nature of American political parties and their role in the election process.
- **Analyze the patterns** of voter behavior.
- Describe the functions and workings of policy making institutions (Congress, the Presidency, the Courts, and the Bureaucracy).
- Analyze the major developments in civil rights and civil liberties in America

In addition to understanding key elements of American government, students will also practice skills that are essential to the practice of political science, as well as to other disciplines and to future college studies and professional careers.

**Skills:** Students will be able to:

- **Express ideas** clearly in writing.
- Work individually and with classmates to **research** political issues.
- **Interpret and apply data** from **original documents** such as court cases and bills.
- **Write to persuade** with evidence.
- Develop essay responses that include a clear, defensible **thesis** statement and **supporting evidence**.
- Raise and explore questions about **policies, institutions, beliefs, and actions in a political science context**.
- Evaluate secondary materials, such as **scholarly works** or **statistical analyses**.

## Course Format

This course has 11 chapters. Each chapter features:

- A list of **objectives** and a list of key **terms**, as well as a glossary
- One or two **Lessons**: the lecture – the information – these can typically be completed in an hour. There is text as well as a multimedia presentation. The course is aligned with several textbooks and each lesson indicates which book chapters correspond with the online lecture.
- Assignments**: There is a **writing assignment** and a **discussion question** provided for each chapter. The successful completion and tracking of these assignments has to be done by the teacher to ensure that students are learning to think and write analytically.
- Resources**: There are **supplemental readings** and links to helpful **web sites** to provide students with more information about the topic covered in the chapter.
- **Chapter Assessments**: A multiple choice assessment at the end of each chapter can be used to assess learning of facts. This can be used to help students prepare for in-class exams. An answer key is provided.

## Course Outline

- I. **Unit 1: Underpinnings and Documents of American Government**
  - A. Chapter 1: Constitutional Beginnings
    1. Lesson 1: American Democracy
      - a. Topic 1: The Nature of Governments
        - I. Extra: Monetary Policy and Inflation Graph
      - b. Topic 2: Theories of Democracy
        - I. Extra: Map Explaining New England Town Meetings
        - II. Extra: Military Spending Trends Graph
        - III. Extra: Excerpts from Federalist Papers
      - c. Topic 3: The Policy-Making Cycle
        - I. Extra: Roll-over Policy-Making Cycle
    2. Lesson 2: English and Enlightenment Traditions
      - a. Topic 1: English Documents and Democracy
      - b. Topic 2: Enlightenment Political Philosophies
  - B. Chapter 2: American Documents
    1. Lesson 3: Documents from the Revolution and Beyond
      - a. Topic 1: Thomas Paine's "Common Sense"
      - b. Topic 2: Declaration of Independence

- c. Topic 3: The Policy-Making Cycle
    - 2. Lesson 4: Constitution Building
      - a. Topic 1: The Articles of Confederation
      - b. Topic 2: The State Constitutions
      - c. Topic 3: The U.S. Constitution
    - 3. Lesson 5: The Constitution
      - a. Topic 1: Constitutional Principles
      - b. Topic 2: Structure of the Constitution
    - 4. Lesson 6: The Bill of Rights
      - a. Topic 1: The Purpose and Intent of the Founders
      - b. Topic 2: The Bill of Rights
      - c. Topic 3: Amendments After the Bill of Rights
  - C. Chapter 3: American Federalism
    - 1. Lesson 7: Layer Cake Federalism
      - a. Topic 1: Defining Federalism
      - b. Topic 2: Separation of National and State Governments
    - 2. Lesson 8: Evolution of Federalism
      - a. Topic 1: Cooperative Federalism
      - b. Topic 2: Fiscal Federalism
- II. Unit 2: Political Beliefs, Behaviors in Parties, Campaigns, and Elections**
- A. Chapter 4: Political Parties and Voting Behavior
    - 1. Lesson 9: Political Parties
      - a. Topic 1: Political Party Eras
      - b. Topic 2: Third Parties
    - 2. Lesson 10: Party Function and Structure
      - a. Topic 1: The Function of Parties in America
      - b. Topic 2: Organization of Parties
    - 3. Lesson 11: Party Identification
      - a. Topic 1: Factors that Lead to Party Identification
      - b. Topic 2: Realignment and Dealignment
    - 4. Lesson 12: Voting Behavior and Intensity
      - a. Topic 1: Demographics
      - b. Topic 2: Intensity
  - B. Chapter 5: Elections
    - 1. Lesson 13: Financial Participation in Elections
      - a. Topic 1: Cost of Elections
      - b. Topic 2: Interest Groups and Political Action Committees
      - c. Topic 3: Campaign Finance Reform
    - 2. Lesson 14: Congressional Elections
      - a. Topic 1: Incumbency
      - b. Topic 2: House and Senate Elections
    - 3. Lesson 15: Presidential Elections
      - a. Topic 1: The Electoral College

- b. Topic 2: Primaries, Caucuses, and Conventions
- c. Topic 3: General Elections

### III. **Unit 3: The Institutions of Government**

- A. Chapter 6: The Legislative Branch
  - 1. Lesson 16: Structure of the House of Representatives
    - a. Topic 1: Composition of the House
    - b. Topic 2: Committees and the Iron Triangle
  - 2. Lesson 17: Structure of the Senate
    - a. Topic 1: Composition of the Senate
    - b. Topic 2: Power, Committees, and Debates
  - 3. Lesson 18: Passage of a Bill
    - a. Topic 1: Route of a Bill through Congress
    - b. Topic 2: Veto Power and Judicial Review
- B. Chapter 7: The Executive Branch
  - 1. Lesson 19: The Nature of a President
    - a. Topic 1: Qualifications and Qualities
    - b. Topic 2: Rules and Contingencies
  - 2. Lesson 20: Presidential Roles
    - a. Topic 1: Express Roles
    - b. Topic 2: Traditional Roles and Special Powers
  - 3. Lesson 21: The White House
    - a. Topic 1: Executive Offices and Staff
    - b. Topic 2: Presidential Management Models
  - 4. Lesson 22: Presidential Politics, Polls, and the Press
    - a. Topic 1: Approval Ratings and Public Perception
    - b. Topic 2: Polls and Polling
    - c. Topic 3: Media and Press Coverage
  - 5. Lesson 23: The Budget
    - a. Topic 1: The Office of Management and Budget
    - b. Topic 2: Surpluses, Deficits, and the National Debt
    - c. Topic 3: Budget Timetable
- C. Chapter 8: The Bureaucracy
  - 1. Lesson 24: The Nature of the Bureaucracy
    - a. Topic 1: Perceptions of the Bureaucracy
    - b. Topic 2: Organization of the Federal Bureaucracy
    - c. Topic 3: Bureaucratic reform
  - 2. Lesson 25: The Cabinet
    - a. Topic 1: The Origins of the Cabinet
    - b. Topic 2: The Modern Cabinet
    - c. Topic 3: The Cabinet Practice
  - 3. Lesson 26: Other Bureaucratic Bodies
    - a. Topic 1: Regulatory Agencies
    - b. Topic 2: Government Corporations
  - 4. Lesson 27: Checks on the Bureaucracy
    - a. Topic 1: Legislative and Executive Constraints
    - b. Topic 2: Congressional and Judicial Constraints

- D. Chapter 9: The Judiciary
  - 1. Lesson 28: The Federal Court System
    - a. Topic 1: Constitutional and Legislative Courts
    - b. Topic 2: The United States Supreme Court
  - 2. Lesson 29: Historical Supreme Courts
    - a. Topic 1: John Marshall and Roger Taney
    - b. Topic 2: Earl Warren
    - c. Topic 3: Warren Burger
  - 3. Lesson 30: The Nature of the Supreme Court
    - a. Topic 1: Judicial Activism and Restraint
    - b. Topic 2: Judicial Review and Construction
  - 4. Lesson 31: The Modern Supreme Court
    - a. Topic 1: The Selection Process
    - b. Topic 2: The Confirmation Process
- IV. **Unit 4: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**
  - A. Chapter 10: Civil Liberties: The Bill of Rights Today
    - 1. Lesson 32: Incorporation
      - a. Topic 1: Unalienable Rights
      - b. Topic 2: Selective Incorporation
    - 2. Lesson 33: The Establishment Clause
      - a. Topic 1: Wall of Separation
      - b. Topic 2: The Establishment Clause in Court
    - 3. Lesson 34: The Free Exercise Clause
      - a. Topic 1: Free Exercise of Religion
      - b. Topic 2: The Free Exercise Clause in Court
    - 4. Lesson 35: Freedom of Speech
      - a. Topic 1: Significance of Free Speech
      - b. Topic 2: Rights and Limitations of Free Speech
    - 5. Lesson 36: Freedom of the Press
      - a. Topic 1: Free Press History
      - b. Topic 2: Rights and Limitations on Free Press
    - 6. Lesson 37: The Fourth Amendment
      - a. Topic 1: Reasonable Searches and Seizures
      - b. Topic 2: The Exclusionary Rule
    - 7. Lesson 38: Due Process and Criminal Rights
      - a. Topic 1: Self-Incrimination
      - b. Topic 2: Speedy and Public Trials
      - c. Topic 3: The Right to Counsel
      - d. Topic 4: Capital Punishment
  - B. Chapter 11: Civil Rights
    - 1. Lesson 39: Civil War Amendments and the Civil Rights Movement
      - a. Topic 1: Civil War Amendments
      - b. Topic 2: The Civil Rights Movement
    - 2. Lesson 40: Post WW II Civil Rights Legislation
      - a. Topic 1: The Truman Era

- b. Topic 2: The Eisenhower Era
- c. Topic 3: The Kennedy - Johnson Era
- d. Topic 4: Affirmative Action

## **Suggestions for Integration with Classroom Work**

This online course is not meant to replace classroom discussion or at-home reading. Rather, the course is aligned with several textbooks and is meant to supplement that content as well as in-class activities. Here are some possible ways to use this online course to engage students in new ways.

### **“Highlighting”**

For this homework assignment, have students view an online chapter and copy and paste the ten most essential sentences from that chapter’s online text. They could also copy and paste a list of most interesting new facts they have learned. Using the KWL strategy, they could put five sentences each under the following three columns: what I knew already, what I did not know, what I want to learn about in more depth. If using a class blog or wiki, students could post their top three “most essential” sentences and compare their choices with those of other students.

### **Creating their own Multimedia Presentations**

Using the presentations in this course as a model, students can create their own multimedia presentations of other topics using PowerPoint or one of several new Web 2.0 tools such as VoiceThread. See <http://voicethread.com/about/k12/> for a guide to VoiceThread, a very easy online presentation site that lets students comment on one another’s presentations and promotes discussion. You can also visit <http://www.go2web20.net/#tag:presentation> to explore different Web 2.0 online applications that let students create and share presentations. Students will love the chance to use new tools and incorporate graphics and sounds to demonstrate their learning and make it engaging to their classmates.

You can assign students specific research topics not covered in class. Alternatively, they could each make a presentation about a specific chapter to review at the end of the year.

Please e-mail any suggestions to improve the course, or this guide, to [egrewal@cyberlearning.org](mailto:egrewal@cyberlearning.org)

## Additional Resources

You can create an online community for your students' discussions on <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki#Communities>

Constitution Today: <http://www.teachingmatters.org/constitution.html>

Civil Rights: <http://www.teachingmatters.org/rights.html>

Podcasts: <http://epnweb.org/index.php>

## Sample Assignments and Assessments

### Chapter 1: Constitutional Beginnings

#### Chapter 1 Writing Assignment

Answer the following question in a short essay. You should take approximately 25 minutes to write this essay and it should be approximately 1-2 pages in length. Be sure to be specific, using terms and vocabulary from Chapter One. Also be sure to use specific examples that are relevant to the question.

#### Question:

The theories of contemporary democracy as practiced in the United States vary from the traditional theoretical beliefs of democracy.

- a. Select and define one of the following contemporary theories.
  - o Pluralism
  - o Elitism
  - o Hyper-pluralism
- b. Select one of the following issues and explain how that issue would apply to the theory you selected above. Give one specific example to reinforce your explanation
  - o Military spending
  - o Health care for the elderly
  - o Education

#### Chapter 1 Discussion

The second step in the Policy Making Cycle occurs when linkage institutions become aware of the concerns expressed by the people.

Pick one of the following interest groups:

- The Nature Conservancy
- National Education Association (NEA)
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

For that group:

1. Identify national-level policymaking institutions that group would target.
2. Discuss what resources and/or characteristics this group has to promote this policy agenda change.
3. Discuss how this organization will use this resource and/or characteristics to attempt to make the policy agenda change it desires.

## **Selection from Chapter 1 Assessment**

**1. The institutions that enact policies to govern people within a society are collectively known as:**

- a. political parties
- b. linkage institutions
- c. government
- d. the legislative branch
- e. a nation-state

**2. All governments should provide basic needs for the citizenry. This would include all of the following EXCEPT:**

- a. regulating the economy
- b. socialization of the youth
- c. protecting citizens and maintaining order
- d. ensuring the even distribution of wealth
- e. defending the borders

**3. Which is not necessary for the existence of a nation-state in the modern world?**

- a. territories vast enough to provide free movement of the people and resources for industry
- b. sovereignty from other nations
- c. a government that is both recognized by the people within the nation-state and by other nations of the world
- d. boundaries that are both definite and recognized by the other nations of the world
- e. a cohesive population that is able to compromise and work for the national good