

## **a-g American Government**

### **TRANSCRIPT TITLE/ COURSE CODE:**

a-g Am Government 4E1001

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Students will develop an understanding of how the government works including an understanding of the Constitution and how the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches function. The concepts of checks and balances and individual rights and responsibilities of citizens will be examined. Decision-making skills necessary to address the critical issues in their local communities, California and the United States, as well as in the global society at large will be developed. American government philosophical foundations and current applications will be addressed. Students will examine and compare political, legal, and social systems. Students will develop an understanding of the relationship America has to current global issues, examine the complexities of international relations and study American foreign policy to understand its impact on the international world today. Research techniques are taught. Position papers are required of all students.

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:** UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT - DEMOCRACY IN ACTION; 2008; Glencoe McGraw-Hill

**SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:** Primary source documents will be required.

### **COURSE PURPOSE**

#### **STUDENTS WILL**

- master the California State History-Social Science Principles of American Government Standards.
- pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government.
- compare systems of government in the world today and analyze the history and changing interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government.
- comprehend the political process and understand the structures, operations, and relationships of the governments in the United States.
- be productive, self-directed learners
- further develop their reading, writing, communication, technology, and analysis skills through assignments and projects.
- become productive, active participants in the political process.
- interpret and apply data from original documents including cartoons, graphs, letters, speeches, etc.
- effectively use analytical skills of evaluation, cause and effect, compare and contrast

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

Unit (CA Grade 12 History-Social Science Principles of American Democracy State Content Standards)  
Chapters/ Sections course content

1. Foundations of American Government (12.1, 12.1.1, 12.1.3, 12.1.4, 12.1.5, 12.1.6, 12.2.1, 12.2, 12.2.1, 12.2.2, 12.2.3, 12.2.4, 12.2.5, 12.3, 12.3.1, 12.3.2, 12.3.4, 12.4, 12.4.1, 12.4.2, 12.4.4, 12.4.5, 12.5, 12.5.1, 12.5.2, 12.5.3, 12.6.4, 12.6.5, 12.7, 12.7.1, 12.7.3, 12.7.4, 12.7.6, 12.7.7, 12.7.8, 12.9, 12.9.1, 12.9.2, 12.9.3, 12.9.5, 12.9.6, 12.9.7, 12.9.8, 12.10 CAST 12.1, 12.1 HREAPOV 12.3 HI 12.3)

- People & government (principles of government, formation of government, types of government, economic theories)

- Origins of American government (the colonial period, uniting for independence, the Articles of the Confederation, the constitutional Convention)

- The Constitution (Structure and principles, three branches of government, amending the Constitution, the amendments)

- The Federal System (national and state powers, relations among the states, developing federalism, federalism and politics)

2. The Legislative Branch (12.1.4, 12.1.5, 12.2.2, 12.4, 12.4.1, 12.4.2, 12.4.3, 12.4.4, 12.5, 12.6.6, 12.7, 12.7.5, 12.7.6, 12.7.8, 12.9.2 HREAPOV 12.3, 12.4 CAST 12.3)

- The Organization of Congress (Congressional membership, the House of Representatives, the Senate, congressional committees, staff and supporting agencies)

- Development of Congressional Powers (Constitutional powers, investigations and oversight, congress and the president)

- Congress at Work (How a bill becomes a law, taxing and spending bills, influencing congress, helping constituents)

3. The Executive Branch (12.2.3, 12.2.4, 12.4, 12.4.4, 12.5, 12.5.1, 12.5.3, 12.6.4, 12.6.6, 12.7, 12.7.5, 12.7.6, 12.7.8, 12.8.3)

- The Presidency (President and Vice Presidents, electing the president, the cabinet, the executive office)

- Presidential Leadership (Presidential powers, roles of the president, styles of leadership)

- The Federal Bureaucracy (Bureaucratic organization, the civil service system, the bureaucracy at work)

4. The Judicial Branch (12.1.5, 12.4, 12.2.5, 12.3.5, 12.3.6, 12.4, 12.4.5, 12.4.6, 12.5, 12.5.1, 12.5.2, 12.5.3, 12.5.4, 12.6, 12.7.1, 12.7.5, 12.7.6, 12.7.7 CAST 12.2, 12.3, HREAPOV 12-3, 12-4, HI 12-4)

- The Federal Court System (Powers of the federal courts, lower federal courts, the Supreme Court)

- Supreme court Decision Making (The Supreme Court at work, shaping public policy, influencing court decisions)

5. Liberty and Justice for All (12.1, 12.1.1, 12.1.3, 12.1.5, 12.1.6, 12.2, 12.2.1, 12.2.2, 12.2.3, 12.2.4, 12.2.5, 12.2.6, 12.3, 12.3.1, 12.3.2, 12.3.3, 12.5, 12.5.1, 12.5.4, 12.6.4, 12.7.4, 12.8.1, 12.8.2, 12.9.1, 12.10 HI 12.1, 12.2, 12.4 CAST 12.1, 12.2 HREAPOV 12.1, 12.2, 12.3)

- Constitutional Freedoms (Constitutional rights: freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly)

- Citizenship and Equal Justice (A nation of immigrants, the basis of citizenship, rights of the accused,

equal protection of the law, challenges for civil liberties)

- Law in America (Sources of American law, civil law, criminal law)

6. Participating in Government (12.1.1, 12.1.2, 12.1.3, 12.1.5, 12.2.4, 12.2.5, 12.3, 12.3.1, 12.3.2, 12.5, 12.6, 12.6.1, 12.6.2, 12.6.3, 12.6.4, 12.6.6, 12.7, 12.7.5, 12.7.6, 12.8, 12.8.1, 12.8.2, 12.8.3, 12.9.4, 12.9.5, 12.9.6 CAST 12.1,12.2 HREAPOV 12.1, 12.2, 12.4 HI 12.1, 12.4)

- Political Parties (Development of parties, party organization, nominating candidates)

- Elections and Voting (Election campaigns, expanding voting rights, influences on voters)

- Interest Groups and Public Opinion (Interest group organization, affecting public policy, shaping public opinion, measuring public opinion)

- The Mass Media (How media impact government, regulating print and broadcast media, the internet and democracy)

7. Public Policies and Services (12.1.5, 12.2.2, 12.2.3, 12.2.4, 12.2.5, 12.3.1, 12.5, 12.6.1, 12.7.5, 12.7.8, 12.9.1, 12.9.4 HI 12.1, 12.2, 12.5, 12.6 HREAPOV 12.3, 12.4)

- Taxing and Spending (Raising money, preparing the federal budget, managing the economy)

- Social and Domestic Policy (Business and labor policy; agriculture and environment; health and public assistance; education, housing and transportation)

- Foreign Policy and Defense (Development of foreign policy, shared foreign policy powers, state and defense departments, foreign policy in action)

8. State and Local Government (12.5, 12.6.5, 12.7, 12.7.2, 12.7.3, 12.7.6, 12.7.7 HI 12.1, 12.2, 12.5 CAST 12.1, 12.3 HREAPOV 12.3, 12.4)

- Structure and Function of State Government (State constitutions, the three branches, state government policy, financing state government)

- Structure and Function of Local Government (structure of local government, serving localities, challenges of urban growth)

9. Political and Economic Systems (12.2.2, 12.3, 12.3.4, 12.5, 12.7.8, 12.9, 12.9.1, 12.9.2, 12.9.3, 12.9.4, 12.9.5, 12.9.6, 12.9.7, 12.9.8 HI 12.1, 12.2, 12.5, 12.6 CAST 12.1, 12.2, 12.4)

- Political Systems in Today's World (Democratic governments, authoritarian governments, international organizations, global issues)

- Development of Economic Systems (Capitalist and mixed systems, emerging economies, major economies in transition, the global economy)

## **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS -**

Students will complete a minimum of one text-based writing assignment for each chapter.

Examples of those writing assignments include:

- Write a speech to present before the United Nations. Assume you are an ambassador from a developing country. Explain the positive and negative effects that global interdependence has had on the people of your nation. (Some effects may include: multinational corporations, trade agreements, economic aid, international communications, and changes in culture and living standards.)

- Research and write a report on Puerto Rico's political status. Address the following questions: What

disadvantages and advantages are there in Puerto Rico becoming a state? Do you predict Puerto Rico will become a state in the future? Why or why not?

- Assume you are a Virginia colonist. Write a letter to relatives back in England explaining how American colonial government is similar to and different from English government.

- Students will answer questions at the end of each chapter/ unit. Writing assignments will include responses to critical thinking questions, political cartoons, primary documents, case studies, etc. (details in Key Assignments)

- Students will read, examine, and write an analysis of a minimum of 2 primary documents. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how the primary documents were important to the period of history that is being studied and their impact on our country today.

- Students will write a Position Paper examining one of the major issues of governments addressed in this course. This Position Paper is equivalent to a term paper. In this project, students will defend their hypothesis with solid evidence and provide primary source data to support their position. This project will consist of a 5-7 page narrative, a bibliography including six primary source documents and at least four online resources. As appropriate, a timeline and maps can be included. The rubric for this assignment is to be designed by the student. The rubric and topic of this project must be preapproved by the Education Specialist (ES) and/or Subject Matter Expert (SME).

**KEY ASSIGNMENTS** Key assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Students will read, examine and analyze a minimum of 2 primary source documents representative of the American governmental system and relate to topics covered in the course. Students will complete an analysis of these documents to demonstrate understanding of how these documents were/are important to our government and influence our country today. These documents may also be used in development of their position paper.

- Students will write a Position Paper examining one of the major issues of governments addressed in this course. This Position Paper is equivalent to a term paper. In this project, students will defend their hypothesis with solid evidence and provide primary source data to support their position. This project will consist of a 5-7 page narrative, a bibliography including six primary source documents and at least four online resources. As appropriate, a timeline and maps can be included. The rubric for this assignment is to be designed by the student and must be preapproved by the Education Specialist and Subject Matter Expert.

- Students will complete end-of-chapter review questions/ activities in required textbook.  
(Samples of Chapter 4 activities are included below):

- Reviewing Key terms (implied powers, expressed powers, inherent powers, reserved powers, and elastic clause)

- Recalling Facts (Name the clause of the Constitution that resolves conflicts between state law and national law.; Describe how Congress gained power to regulate farm production, child labor, wages and hours, and criminal conduct.; What is the major source of income for the national government?; How does

the federalist system affect political participation?; Who pays for elections of senators, representatives, and presidential electors?)

- Understanding Concepts (Why does the Tenth Amendment use the term "reserved" to describe the powers that belong to the people and the states?; On what historical basis do state' rights supporters argue that the national government is only an agent of the states?; Experts in government agencies initiate many national laws in health, the environment, energy, welfare, education, and business. Why do these bureaucrats have great influence on legislation and decision making?)

- Critical Thinking (Use a graphic organizer to compare President Ronald Reagan's concept of federalism with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's.; "Federalism helps lessen the risk of one political party gaining a monopoly on political powers." What assumption about does the value of a two-party system does this statement make?)

- Additional activities: Choose one or more of the following textbook provided activities: Read and answer questions about the primary source provided, Interpret the Political Cartoon provided, conduct the "Applying Technology skills" activity provided, complete Supreme Court Case Study Analysis, &/or complete the Participate in Local Government assignment provided.

- Students will complete a minimum of one additional writing assignment for each chapter. (examples provided in Writing Assignments above)

A Unit test or Project will be completed after each unit to demonstrate learning.

- Projects may include, but are not limited to, creating a relevant PowerPoint presentation, debating on a topic of concern, etc. These custom-designed projects must be preapproved by the Education Specialist &/or Subject Matter Expert.

- Unit Tests - examples of Unit 1 test questions follow:

1. Contrast the social contract theory of government with the divine right theory. What type of government would result from each theory?
2. Explain how some features of capitalism tend to promote freedom and democracy.
3. Contrast the social contract theory of government with the force theory. What type of government would result from each theory?
4. How did adding the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution express principles established centuries before in the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights?
5. What compromises made at the Constitutional Convention helped shape the national government?
6. Compare the philosophies of judicial activism and judicial restraint, and explain how each affects the separation of powers.
7. How have the deeds of people from history - specifically Aristotle and John Locke - influenced your life?
8. What are three things the Constitution obliges the national government to do for the states, and how are these obligations met?
9. Explain how federalism makes government more democratic and responsive to the people.
10. The federal government guarantees the states a republican form of government, protection, and territorial integrity. Give examples of how each of these guarantees is carried out.

Students will take a final exam proctored by an Education Specialist (ES). The final exam will include short answer and essay questions.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND/OR STRATEGIES**

Instructional methods include, but are not limited to, the following:

Direct Instruction

Teacher demonstration

Lecture

Guided practice

Discussion

Multimedia presentation

Videos

Reading textbook

Student-directed personal study utilizing text resources and web research

Student presentations

Videos

Regular access to a Subject Matter Expert (SME)

### **ASSESSMENT METHODS AND/OR TOOLS**

Methods by which student progress is assessed will be through a variety and/or combination of methods.

The methods available include, but are not limited to, the following:

Regular review of work by Education Specialist (credentialed teacher),

Portfolios

Observation by Parent facilitator and Education Specialist (ES)

Student demonstrations

Discussion

Student work samples

Written examination

Final projects

Regular access to a Subject Matter Expert (SME)