

New Paltz Central School District

Advanced Placement US Government and Politics

Time	Essential Questions	Content	Assessments
January – February	<p><u>Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings of the United States Government</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is democracy? • What influence did other documents and philosophers have on the formulation and adoption of the Constitution? • How could the delegates to the Constitutional Convention be seen as an “assembly of demigods” (Jefferson)? • In what ways does the Constitution attempt to limit abuse of governmental powers? • Why federalism? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution • Separation of powers • Federalism • Theories of democratic government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay • Community service • Article critiques • Unit test • Meeting attendance
February	<p><u>UNIT 2: Institutions of National Government: The Congress, The Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts</u></p> <p>The Congress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is Congress referred to as the “People’s Branch”? • Is Congress effective? • How does Congress organize itself to do the work of making laws and representing the people? • Is impeachment a tool for Congressional exercise of power or is it a part of the carefully constructed system of checks and balances the founders intended as protection against abuse of power? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of powers • Relationships among those four institutions • Links between those institutions and political parties, interest groups, the media, sub national governments, and public opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze a congressman/senator (research assignment) • Case Study: Clinton Impeachment • Community service • Article critiques • Unit test • Meeting attendance

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	<p>The Presidency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why does the President need a working relationship with Congress to be effective?• What are the President’s sources of influence in Congress?• Why is the presidency a unique, necessary, but potentially dangerous office? <p>The Bureaucracy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is our bureaucracy and its methods stifling innovation, productivity, and common sense?• To whom should bureaucrats be accountable?• Why do presidents like to reorganize the bureaucracy? <p>The Federal Courts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is the Supreme Court both an interpreter of the Constitution and a shaper of public policy?• Is the Supreme Court a democratic institution?• Do judges make law?• How independent is the judiciary?		

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	<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the three branches of government a true balance of power in American society? • Does the enlarged role of the presidency under today's circumstances undermine some of the fundamental checks and balances in our constitutional democracy? • In what ways does the separation of powers contribute to government deadlock? • Does the separation of powers still work? 		
March	<p><u>Unit 3: Political Beliefs and Behaviors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do we learn the American political culture? • How do voters reach their political decisions? • How does/doesn't the US government reflect the needs of our diverse country? • How can a citizen participate in government other than voting? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders • Processes by which citizens learn about politics • The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion • The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life • Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service • Article critiques • Meeting attendance

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March – April	<p><u>Unit 4: Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are political parties essential to democracy? • Is the era of a two-party system over? • Is our system of electing the president still effective in today’s society? • How do interest groups influence the political process? • Why is campaign finance reform such a controversial issue? • How does the media influence politics? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political parties and elections (including their functions, organization, historical development, and effects on the political process) • Interest groups (PACs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The range of interests that are or are not represented ○ The activities of interest groups ○ The effects of interest groups on the political process ○ The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process • The mass media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The functions and structures of the media ○ The impact of media on politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay: Why do incumbent members of Congress usually win? (Consider political parties, interest groups, and the mass media) • Community service • Article critiques • Meeting attendance

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April – May	<p><u>Unit 5: Public Policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What factors influence the formation of the national policy agenda? • How do we make and implement public policy? • Should the federal government be responsible for closing the income gap? • How do political factors make it difficult for the federal government to enact public policy? • Why do we have regulation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy making in a federal system • The formation of policy agendas • The role of institutions in the enactment of policy • The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation • Link ages between policy processes and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Political institutions and federalism ○ Political parties ○ Interest groups ○ Public opinion ○ Elections ○ Policy network ○ Supranational organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public policy project • Community service • Article critiques • Meeting attendance
May	<p><u>Unit 6: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is freedom of speech fundamentally important to democracy? • Is affirmative action constitutional? • Why are civil liberties important in a society that values freedom? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of civil rights by judicial interpretation • Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties • The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service • Article critiques • Meeting attendance • Final

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How just is our system of justice?• How are individual rights defined and balanced against the rights of other citizens and against the interests of society at large (e.g., flag burning, censorship of art, pornography, abortion rights, civil disobedience)?• Why is it that many scholars have argued that the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution has become the single most important act in all of US politics?		