

## Advanced Placement (AP®) Social Studies Courses

The AP® social studies courses are intended to provide a rigorous college level introduction to the social sciences for high school students. While no official AP® teacher certification is issued by the College Board or by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the College Board recommends that teachers complete an AP® Institute or workshop before teaching an AP® course. Additional information on teacher professional development, recommended texts, the courses, and the AP® exams is available to educators at the College Board website <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>.

AP® teachers can also join a discussion group with other AP® teachers in their discipline by signing up on AP Central. Students can visit [www.collegeboard.com/apstudents](http://www.collegeboard.com/apstudents) for additional information.

With the permission of the College Board, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has created course standards that reflect both the expectations of the College Board and the philosophy and format of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (SCS). However, these course outlines are not intended to replace the extensive guidelines provided by the College Board in AP course description books (often referred to as the *acorn books*) for each subject.

Since the College Board frequently revises recommended topics and required skills, AP® teachers should obtain and follow the current course description for their courses.

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics will provide students an intellectual foundation for observing, analyzing, and understanding national politics in the United States. Using primary and secondary source documents, as well as analysis of specific examples, students will examine and evaluate the institutions of American government, political parties and elections, mass media, political behavior, public policies, and the development of individual rights and liberties and their impact on citizens. The content of this course is the equivalent to that of an introductory college course in U.S. government and politics.

**Strands:** Political Systems, Legal Processes, Responsible Civic Participation, Media Literacy, Critical Thinking

### **COMPETENCY GOAL 1: The learner will examine the constitutional underpinnings of United States government.**

#### **Objectives**

- 1.01 Evaluate the theories and styles of democratic government.
- 1.02 Analyze the philosophy and ideologies that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution.
- 1.03 Investigate the experiences that influenced the beginnings of American government.
- 1.04 Understand the implication(s) of separation of powers as a foundation of American government.
- 1.05 Understand the implication(s) of federalism as a foundation of American government.

### **COMPETENCY GOAL 2: The learner will examine and critique political beliefs and behaviors.**

#### **Objectives**

- 2.01 Investigate the beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders.
- 2.02 Examine and understand the political socialization process.
- 2.03 Analyze the nature, influences, consequences, and measurement of public opinion.
- 2.04 Identify and evaluate the ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life.
- 2.05 Understand and evaluate the demographic factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors.

**COMPETENCY GOAL 3: The learner will analyze political parties, elections, interest groups, and mass media.**

**Objectives**

- 3.01 Trace the development and impact of political parties in the United States.
  - (a) Functions
  - (b) Organization
  - (c) Ideological and demographic differences between the two major parties
  - (d) Implications of the two-party system
  - (e) Impact of third parties
  - (f) Effects on the political process
- 3.02 Understand the operation and evaluate the role of elections in American politics.
  - (a) Current electoral laws including campaign finance
  - (b) Nomination process
  - (c) Constitutional mandates
  - (d) Workings and implications of the electoral college
- 3.03 Investigate the role and effects of interest groups and political action committees.
  - (a) Range of interests represented
  - (b) Activities and appeal of interest groups and lobbyists within certain demographics
  - (c) Ability of interest groups to exert pressure on political institutions to influence policy
  - (d) Unique characteristics and roles of Political Action Committees (PACs) in the political process
- 3.04 Evaluate the role of the mass media in the political system.
  - (a) Functions and structures of the media
  - (b) Impact of the media on public opinion
  - (c) Use of the media by political campaigns

**COMPETENCY GOAL 4: The learner will examine and understand the institutions of national government: the Congress.**

**Objectives**

- 4.01 Examine the Constitutional framework for this institution.
- 4.02 Explain the legislative process.
- 4.03 Evaluate the informal institutional arrangements of power within Congress.
- 4.04 Analyze the linkages between Congress and the following:
  - (a) Public opinion and voters
  - (b) Interest groups
  - (c) Political parties
  - (d) The media
  - (e) State and local governments
- 4.05 Understand the relationship of Congress to the Presidency, Judiciary, and Bureaucracy and their varying balances of power.

**COMPETENCY GOAL 5: The learner will examine and understand the institutions of national government: the Presidency.**

**Objectives**

- 5.01 Examine the Constitutional framework for the Presidency.
- 5.02 Understand the role of the executive branch in formulating and executing public policy.
- 5.03 Evaluate the informal institutional arrangements of power granted to the Presidency.
  - (a) Expansion of Power through Custom and Usage
- 5.04 Analyze the linkages between the Presidency and the following:
  - (a) Public opinion and voters
  - (b) Interest groups
  - (c) Political parties
  - (d) The media
  - (e) State and local governments
- 5.05 Understand the relationship of the Presidency to the other three institutions and their varying balances of power.

**COMPETENCY GOAL 6: The learner will examine and understand the institutions of national government: the Bureaucracy.**

**Objectives**

- 6.01 Examine the Constitutional framework for the Bureaucracy.
- 6.02 Understand the nature and function of bureaucracy.
- 6.03 Evaluate the informal institutional arrangements of power for the Bureaucracy.
- 6.04 Analyze the linkages between the Bureaucracy and the following:
  - (a) Public opinion and voters
  - (b) Interest groups
  - (c) Political parties
  - (d) The media
  - (e) State and local governments
- 6.05 Understand the relationship of the Bureaucracy to the other three institutions and their varying balances of power.

**COMPETENCY GOAL 7: The learner will examine and understand the institutions of national government: the Federal Courts.**

**Objectives**

- 7.01 Examine the Constitutional framework for the Federal Courts.
- 7.02 Understand the judicial process and varying types of jurisdiction.
  - (a) Hierarchy of the system
  - (b) Types of Jurisdiction
  - (c) Judicial decision making

- 7.03 Evaluate the informal institutional arrangements of power for the Federal Courts.
- 7.04 Analyze the linkages between the Federal Courts and the following:
  - (a) Public opinion and voters
  - (b) Interest groups
  - (c) Political parties
  - (d) The media
  - (e) State and local governments (subnational)
- 7.05 Understand the relationship of the Judiciary to the other three institutions and their varying balances of power.

**COMPETENCY GOAL 8: The learner will examine and understand the development and implementation of public policy in the federal system.**

**Objectives**

- 8.01 Investigate the formation of policy agendas.
- 8.02 Evaluate the role of Congress and the President in the enactment of public policy.
- 8.03 Evaluate the role of the Bureaucracy and Judiciary in the implementation and interpretation of public policy.
- 8.04 Analyze the linkages between policy processes and the following:
  - (a) Political institutions and federalism
  - (b) Political parties
  - (c) Interest groups
  - (d) Public opinion
  - (e) Elections
  - (f) Policy networks

**COMPETENCY GOAL 9: The learner will examine and understand the development of civil rights and civil liberties and their impact on citizens.**

**Objectives**

- 9.01 Identify substantive rights and liberties.
- 9.02 Trace and analyze the development of civil liberties and civil rights resulting from legislative enactment.
- 9.03 Trace the development of civil liberties and civil rights resulting from judicial interpretation.
  - (a) Freedom of speech, assembly, and expression
  - (b) Rights of the accused
  - (c) Rights of minority groups and women
- 9.04 Apply and evaluate the impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties.