

“Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one’s thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world.”

--Johann von Goethe

## *AP Government and Politics 2018-2019*

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from 7:30AM-8:00AM or by appointment.

AP Government is equivalent to an introductory college-level American Government course. Therefore, the demands of the course are rigorous. In AP Government, students will engage in an in-depth study of the make-up and functions of the United States’ Government and the American political system. It is important to note that although your previous knowledge of U.S. History will be a benefit, this is not a history course. Throughout the course, current political events and trends will be connected and analyzed using the learning from the course. Various instructional methods, including traditional instruction, research, analysis and interpretation of graphs and data, and group and individual problem solving and writing activities, will be employed. The goal of the course will be twofold: first, to prepare students to take the United States Government and Politics Advanced Placement exam in May, and secondly, to provide students with a working knowledge and skill at American politics to create civic minded adults for our community.

### **COURSE UNITS:**

- I. Foundations of American Democracy
- II. Interactions Among Branches of the Government
- III. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
- IV. American Political Ideologies and Beliefs
- V. Political Participation

The course also consists of:

Test preparation and review days; A unit exam at the end of each unit and quizzes throughout each unit; AP writing practice; A civic engagement project due at the end of the year.

### **Main Class Textbook:**

*Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*. 17th Edition, AP Edition by Edwards, Wattenberg & Howell. Pearson Publishing Co.  
**ISBN: 9780134586571/9781323488713**

### **Primary and Secondary Sources:**

Mr. Russell will provide electronic and hard copies of many primary and secondary sources relevant to class discussions, lectures, and activities. These sources include the 15 required Supreme Court cases (see list later in syllabus); Current event articles and viewings of debates currently taking place; The required Foundational Documents (will be supplied in hard copy and/or electronic form – these required documents include:

The Declaration of Independence, The Articles of Confederation, *Federalist No. 10*, *Brutus No. 1*, *Federalist No. 51*, *Federalist No. 70*, *Federalist No. 78*, The Constitution of the United States, and “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

### **Course Content and Big Ideas:**

Essential Political Knowledge synthesized in the following big ideas:

- Constitutionalism
- Liberty and Order
- Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy
- Competing Policy-Making Interests
- Methods of Political Analysis

### **Reasoning Processes:**

Practice in the following skill based thought processes:

- Definition/ Classification
- Explain a Process
- Explain Causation
- Explain Comparison
- Explain/Analyze a Position

### **Disciplinary Practices:**

Tasks students will practice using the reasoning processes:

- Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context
- Apply Supreme Court decisions
- Analyze and interpret quantitative data in a variety of sources
- Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text based and visual sources
- Develop and argument in essay format

Grading and Attendance:

The semester grade will be determined by a continuous accumulation of scores over the 18 -week semester (there will also be separate grades for each 9 weeks). Student grades are based on accuracy, completion, rigor, and presentation quality of all work. NOTE:: Those students receiving a D or F first semester will be dropped from AP second semester.

Grading Scale:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	60-69	0-59

Assignments will be given point values based on the time required and expectations of the assignment. Work must be turned in on time. **LATE HOMEWORK WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR 50% CREDIT UP TO 48 HOURS. LARGER ASSIGNMENTS (PAPERS, PROJECTS...) WILL BE ACCEPTED LATE UP TO ONE WEEK, BUT WILL LOSE 10% OF THE GRADE EVERY DAY IT IS LATE (THIS IS COUNTED BY DAYS NOT CLASS PERIODS WE MEET).** After the late deadline cutoff, I am happy to accept and comment on work, but it will not count as a grade for the course.

Makeup work from excused absences must be completed within two days of your return to school. It is YOUR responsibility to find out what work you missed if you were absent. You can find this information out on my class website or coming in to see me during office hours. Makeup work will NOT be accepted for unexcused absences.

\*\*\*\*\*COMMUNICATE WITH ME AHEAD OF TIME IF YOU NEED HELP OR MORE TIME TO GET SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS OR PROJECTS FINISHED. Coming to me on the day assignments are due (or after) with excuses will do no good-please plan ahead. I am happy to negotiate due dates ahead of time, as long as it is not a regular occurrence.

**IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT GRADING!**

It is important to me that your written work is given the consideration it deserves. Please be patient with me, I want to be able to read and think about what you have to say- not just skim!

Progress Monitoring:

- Grades in Infinite Campus will be updated once a week (usually on Friday or Monday). Longer papers will take a bit longer to update.
- Every week, IC Messenger will send notices regarding failing *assignments* and missing assignments. Failure notices are for *assignments* that earned a failing grade (less than 59%). To verify a student's class *grade*, you will need to check IC in more detail.

Homework:

Being an AP course, the expectation of students will be college level work ethic. The workload for this course is substantial. This is a college level course, so you are expected to keep up with the reading, ask questions when you have them, and work on upgrading your thinking and writing skills to that of a well qualified college student. Plan on homework every night – with a lot of independence on scheduling and prioritizing.

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is a cornerstone of this class. Cheating, including plagiarism is **never** acceptable. Presenting someone else's work as your own, whether the work is from a friend, the Internet, a parent, etc., is cheating. Please review citation formats. If you choose to cheat on an assignment, test, or quiz, you will earn no credit for the assignment, test, or quiz. In addition, a referral will be sent to the administration.

Absences:

Please review DSA's attendance policies and other procedures in the student handbook. Due to the nature of the program, it is helpful for the student to be in attendance in each class every day.

### **Keys to Success in an AP Course:**

- Prepare to take the AP Exam in May.
- Actively participate in class and complete all assignments thoroughly and promptly.
- Attend class daily, arriving on time.
- Keep a well-organized and complete notebook for the entire year; bring to class daily. Use the charts and lecture and reading notes in your notebook to study for tests. Ask for help if your notebook is incomplete, or you need help with an organizational method.
- Form a study group for tests and other large assignments, such as the study cards created to help you master the vocabulary you will encounter in the multiple-choice questions.
- Challenge yourself to work hard and maintain high standards.
- Take advantage of opportunities to redo work for mastery of the content and skills of the course.

### **Assignments:**

**WRITING:** Each unit includes writing assignments designed to develop the skills necessary for creating well-evidenced essays evidencing analysis techniques from FRQ practice to short stimulus response questions students will have practice daily on analysis skills.

**Analytical Paper Assignment:** Students will be required to write several analytical papers about important topics in United States government and politics. These papers will be due on varying dates during the semester. Paper requirements will be discussed in class and take a variety of methods/approaches. In each paper, the students must briefly summarize the assigned readings, connect the readings to the current unit of study (how they do this will vary depending on the resources provided for each paper and the unit of study in which it is due), and make a connection between the readings and a current political issue. One to two analytical paper assignments will require students to also examine how the assigned article and a required case/foundational document corroborate or contradict one another.

**TESTS/QUIZZES:** You will have weekly quizzes over the chapters/readings assigned. You will have a unit test over each unit that will build upon the previous unit with questions from all study.

**PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES:** Throughout the year, students will take part in a variety of projects and activities such as: simulations, Socratic seminars, small research projects and reports, jigsaw activities, and debates. Some activities described below.

**Teaching/Discussion Activity:** Each week, two students will be assigned to report out on the chapter reading and bring in class discussion questions as well as a primary/secondary source or current event related to the weeks reading. Students will present several times throughout the course of the school year.

## **Sample activities (Debates, Simulations, and Thinglink)**

### **Debates:**

Students, in teams of two or three, will participate in a debate about a current public policy or issue in American government and politics. Each team will get a five-minute opening statement, a five-minute cross examination period, and a five-minute closing statement. Students must also have a visual that helps support their main arguments. This visual can be a chart, graph, table, political cartoon, or infographic. Students will analyze the visuals presented by other teams as part of the debate. Finally, each team is responsible for providing an annotated works cited page of the resources used to develop their arguments and questions.

### **Simulations:**

We will take part in some important simulations from Supreme Court cases to a mock congress, so students have an understanding of the process of politics.

### **Thinglink:**

In pairs, students will create a Thinglink interactive presentation for one of the 15 required Supreme Court cases using Thinglink.com. Their interactive presentation must include a summary of the constitutional issue involved in the case, a summary of the holding of the case, any significant dissents in the case, and connections to at least two similar cases (acting as precedent or overturning the original decision). In addition to the previous requirements, each student's Thinglink should contain relevant visuals, such as political cartoons, photographs, or tables/charts and a caption that explains their relevance to the case. A list of the 15 required Supreme Court cases listed on the next page.

## Required Supreme Court Cases

This project and the course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 required Supreme Court cases:

- Marbury v. Madison (1803)
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Schenck v. United States (1919)
- Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
- Baker v. Carr (1961)
- Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)
- Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)
- New York Times Company v. United States (1971)
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)
- Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- United States v. Lopez (1995)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010)

NOTE: The above list is not a complete list. It only includes the 15 required cases; however, we will look at, analyze, and connect many more cases such as:

- Gonzales v. Raich (2005) to go along with the analysis of McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Heart of Atlanta Motels v. United States (1964) to go along with the analysis of United States v. Lopez (1995)
- Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002) to go along with the analysis of Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Morse v. Frederick (2007) to go along with the analysis of Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

## Year Long Project: Civic Engagement – Creating a Strategic Interest Group Plan

The civic engagement project in this course will culminate in students “creating an interest group” and a strategic plan for this interest group that could be used to pursue the enactment and implementation of a solution to a domestic policy problem of interest. Students will create this interest group strategic plan in small groups of two-five, and there will be a research benchmark in each unit of the course that will require students to connect course content to their interest group’s policy solution and plan. At the conclusion of Unit 5, students will present their interest group strategic plan to their peers and a panel of Social Studies teachers and field questions about the viability and effectiveness of their plan. A timeline for this project and the research benchmarks underlying this project are outlined in each unit of the Course Outline.

## Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

### Essential Questions

- How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty, while also promoting public order and safety?
- How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the U.S. constitutional system?
- How does development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact U.S. citizens?

### Readings

- The Declaration of Independence
- *Federalist No. 10*
- *Brutus No. 1*
- *Federalist No. 51*

- The Articles of Confederation
- The Constitution of the United States (Articles I-VII, 10th and 14th Amendments)
- *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819)
- *Lopez v. United States* (1995)
- Rauch, Jonathan. "How American Politics Went Insane." *The Atlantic*, July/August 2016.
- Toobin, Jeffrey. "Our Broken Constitution." *The New Yorker*, December 9, 2013.

### Primary Unit Focus

- The philosophical foundations and documents of American democracy, including the Declaration of Independence, social contract theory, republicanism, types of democracy, and the tension between individual liberty and order/safety.
- How the Articles of Confederation failed to adequately balance individual liberty and public order/safety, and how the framers wrestled with these questions in drafting the Constitution.
- The compromises reached at the Constitutional Convention and the debate between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists during the ratification debate.
- The evolving relationship between the national and state governments, including the grant process, policy issues (ADA, Medicaid, marijuana), and the idea of devolution.

### Instructional Activities for Unit 1

- ✓ 3-2-1 Activity/Seminar. Using the 3-2-1 seminar protocol, students discuss the "How American Politics Went Insane" article from The Atlantic. This will allow students to connect the current state of politics to important Unit 1 concepts such as popular sovereignty, republicanism, and social contract theory of government. This is a high interest article that will help "hook" students at the start of the semester.
- ✓ Students brainstorm a list of things they believe government should do by asking the question, "What should government do?" Make a list of student responses on the board. Use this list to facilitate a discussion about order, liberty, and equality. Then share the Preamble to the Constitution and have students link their list to the language in the Preamble.
- ✓ ThingLink Court cases assignment. See description in the major class activities section above.
- ✓ Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, "States have exceeded their authority in legalizing recreational marijuana use, and the federal government should reassert its national supremacy over drug policy." (EU CON-2)
- ✓ Analytical paper "Our Broken Constitution" due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow the students to examine criticisms of how the U.S. Constitution operates in modern America. Student papers must connect the issues the author explores to arguments made by the Anti-Federalists, in particular, *Brutus No. 1*.
- ✓ Checks and balances graphic organizer. During class lessons and their reading of the Constitution, students create a graphic organizer detailing the system of checks and balances. In addition to the basic checks and balances system, students annotate their organizer with a list of Supreme Court cases and public policies that gave one or more branches the opportunity to check another.
- ✓ Free-Response Question (FRQ). Students respond to a textual, qualitative-based FRQ comparing the *McCulloch* and the *Lopez* decisions. The FRQ will include an excerpt from the *McCulloch* and/or the *Lopez* decision. The FRQ will require the students to understand and make connections to the concepts of enumerated, implied powers, and federalism.

## Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

### Essential Questions

- How do the branches of the national government compete and cooperate in order to govern?

- To what extent have changes in the powers of each branch affected how responsive and accountable the national government is in the 21st century?

### Readings

- The Constitution of the United States (Articles I-III)
- *Baker v. Carr* (1962)
- *Shaw v. Reno* (1993)
- *Federalist No. 70*
- *Federalist No. 78*
- *Marbury v. Madison*
- Moe, Terry M., and William G. Howell. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (December 1999): 850-73.

### Primary Unit Focus [CR2]

- Structure of Congress, including significant differences between the chambers regarding organization, leadership, incumbency, and powers.
- Congressional representation and gerrymandering.
- The president's formal and informal powers.
- Judicial independence, *Federalist No. 78*, *Marbury v. Madison*, and judicial decision-making.
- How the bureaucracy operates and its place in the checks and balances system.
- The future of entitlement spending in the United States.

### Instructional Activities for Unit 2

- ✓ Budget simulation and class discussion. Using the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget's *The Debt Fixer* website and the quantitative data therein, students try to reduce the debt as a percentage of GDP. After completing the online simulation, students discuss the difficulties they encountered in reducing the size of the national debt. During this discussion students should link the budget process to important concepts such as entitlement spending and the political nature of the budget.
- ✓ Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, "Congress has abandoned its role in the checks and balances system."
- ✓ Analytical paper for "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory" and *Federalist No. 70* due. The purpose of this paper is for the students to examine the growth of presidential power and how the other two branches may attempt to check presidential power. See description of critical article reviews found above under major class activities.
- ✓ Checks and balances role-play. Using a lesson from the National Constitution Center's Separation of Powers Lesson Plan as a model, students engage in a simulation in which they develop a plan of action to ensure the creation/implementation of a policy based on the powers given to their assigned branch of government (legislative, executive, judicial). In addition to developing this plan of action for their own goal, students must develop a plan to either support or oppose another branch's goal.
- ✓ Watch "The Stackhouse Filibuster" (Season 2, Episode 17) from *The West Wing*. Political concepts examined in this episode include the filibuster, the White House Staff, the presidential relationship with the press, and how legislation is developed by both the presidency and Congress. *The West Wing* is available on both Netflix and iTunes.
- ✓ Students complete at least two of the scenarios in The Redistricting Game found online. This is an online simulation that allows the students to draw and gerrymander imaginary congressional districts. The simulation has four different scenarios, each with a different take on the process of redistricting and gerrymandering. As students complete each of the scenarios, they respond to a set of questions about the process and the difficulties they encountered. All students must do scenario 1, a straight redistricting scenario. The second scenario is up to them. In addition to completing two of the scenarios, students read about proposed changes to the redistricting process and respond to these proposals.
- ✓ Students respond to a quantitative data FRQ regarding presidential vetoes and the interaction between the president and Congress.
- ✓ Students respond to a scenario-based FRQ examining how the bureaucracy operates and its interactions with the presidency, Congress, and the courts.

## Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

### Essential Questions

- To what extent do the U.S. Constitution and its amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from invidious discrimination?
- How have U.S. Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?

### Readings

- The Bill of Rights
- The 14th Amendment's due process and equal protection clauses
- Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
- Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)
- Schenck v. United States (1919)
- New York Times Co. v. United States (1971)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)
- Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka Kansas (1954)
- "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- Bentele, Keith G., and Erin E. O'Brien. "Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies." *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 4 (December 2013): 1088-1116.

### Primary Unit Focus

- The role of the courts, and the due process and equal protection clauses in the expansion of civil liberties and civil rights, including the idea of selective incorporation.
- The expansion of the liberties protected by the 1st and 2nd Amendments.
- The development of the right to privacy and its implications for reproductive rights and 4th Amendment protections.
- A history of civil rights issues and how historically disadvantaged groups in American society have achieved greater equality and equitable treatment in society.

### Instructional Activities for Unit 3

- ✓ Bill of Rights scenarios. Students write five hypothetical scenarios regarding civil liberties. Each scenario should be clearly tied to one of the amendments found in the Bill of Rights. Students must also create a "key" for their scenarios. In their key, students must identify the amendment the scenario involves, the required Supreme Court case that incorporated or clarified the application of the amendment in question, and finally the students must link the required case to a different case that deals with the same constitutional issue.
- ✓ Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, "History has proven that affirmative action programs are necessary to safeguard equal opportunity in both education and employment for minorities."
- ✓ Analytical paper "Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies" due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow students to explore the recent actions by many states that may have a negative impact on the right to vote in those states. In this analytical paper, students write a thesis and defend it with information from the article, the course, and recent political and social events.
- ✓ Students respond to a textual FRQ that uses one of the required Supreme Court cases and a non-required case. The FRQ will require students to examine the Court's decision in both cases and apply the Court's reasoning to a related course concept.

## Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

### Essential Questions

- How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time?
- How do political ideology and core values influence government policy making?

### Readings

- The Monkey Cage series on political polarization in America found at *The Washington Post*.
- "Political Polarization in the American Public." *Pew Research Center*, June 12, 2014.
- Abramowitz, Alan I., and Morris P. Fiorina. "Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong with Our Politics, Anyway?" *The American Interest*, March 11, 2013.
- Fiorina, Morris P. "America's Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight." *The American Interest* 8, no. 4, February 12, 2013.

### Primary Unit Focus

- Elements of a scientific poll, the different types of polls, and how they are used in U.S. government and politics.
- The basic tenets of American political culture, the conservative and liberal political ideologies, and how these are acquired (political socialization).

### Instructional Activities for Unit 4

- ✓ Using Gallup.com, Polling Report.com, and the *Pew Research Center*, students study different polls regarding a variety of policy issues in the United States. Students are provided several examples of polls with questionable reliability. Students must write a comparison of what makes one poll reliable and another unreliable and explain how public policy is affected by the accuracy and reliability of polls.
- ✓ Students take the *Pew Research Center's* Political Typology quiz. This quiz places the students into one of nine political typologies – it divides the traditional left/right spectrum into several subgroups (four on each side of the center and one for non-engaged quiz takers). After the students have completed the quiz, they write their names on the class political spectrum, as does the teacher. Then as a class they discuss how the class does or does not reflect the larger community and what might account for the class's overall political ideology.
- ✓ Analytical paper "Polarized or Sorted? Just What's Wrong with Our Politics, Anyway?" and "America's Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight" due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to allow students to compare the competing views on partisan polarization in American political culture. In this paper, students must evaluate which argument regarding polarization best reflects the reality in American political culture today.
- ✓ Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, "Demographic changes represent a threat to the long-term electoral success of the Republican Party."
- ✓ Class poster presentations of party platforms. Divide the class in half – one half examines the Democratic Party platform and the other half examines the Republican Party platform. Within each platform, students pair to explore a particular topic, such as education, defense, entitlement spending, etc. and create a post that explains the party's policy proposals for that particular topic. Students then present their findings to the class. As a follow-up homework assignment, students then research public opinion polls on their issue and write a summary of how the American public feels about their issue and evaluate whether or not their assigned party reflects the American public. Finally, students must identify a policy from their assigned platform and determine if it has been implemented and how.
- ✓ Students respond to a quantitative data FRQ regarding changing demographics in the United States. Students have to interpret data from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding racial and age composition of the United States and how they are changing. Students also link these demographic changes to representation in Congress. The final section of the FRQ will require students to assess the potential impacts of these changes on the two political parties and the policies each party promotes.

## Unit 5: Political Participation

### Essential Questions

- How have changes in technology influenced political communication and behavior?
- Why do levels of participation and influence in politics vary?
- How effective are the various methods of political participation in shaping public policies?

### Readings

- *Federalist No. 10*
- Desilver, Drew. "U.S. trails most developed countries in voter turnout." *Pew Research Center*, May 15, 2017.
- Citizens United v. FEC (2010)
- Gaslowitz, Lea. "How to Spot a Misleading Graph - Lea Gaslowitz." TED-Ed video, 4:09.
- Barthel, Michael, and Amy Mitchell. "Americans' Attitudes About the News Media Deeply Divided Along Partisan Lines." *Pew Research Center*, May 10, 2017.
- Kiely, Eugene, and Lori Robertson. "How to Spot Fake News." FactCheck.org, November 18, 2016.
- Neale, Thomas H. "The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections." *The Congressional Research Service*, May 15, 2017.

### Primary Unit Focus

- The evolution of voting rights and the current state of voter turnout.
- Factors that influence voter choice in elections.
- The functions of political parties in the United States and third parties in United States government and politics.
- The development of candidate-centered campaigns.
- The theory of critical elections.
- Interest groups in United States government and politics.
- Nominations, campaigns, and elections in United States government and politics.
- The media as a linkage institution, including changes in media, such as the growth of social media and partisan media sources.

### Instructional Activities for Unit 5

- ✓ To better understand how state election laws impact voter turnout, students find voter turnout data from a state that has passed a strict voter ID law in the 21st century, such as Wisconsin, Indiana, or Texas. Prior to their research, students formulate a hypothesis about the impact voter ID laws have on voter turnout. Students then research voter turnout stats from the presidential election prior to the passage of that state's voter ID law, and the presidential election immediately after the passage of voter ID laws. Students break the data down by major demographic groups, such as race, age, and education. Students write a summary of their findings, including an evaluation of their thesis and reasons why their thesis was correct/incorrect.
- ✓ Debate. Two teams of three students each debate the resolution, "Interest groups have too much influence in the policy process and are detrimental to democracy."
- ✓ Analytical paper "The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections" due. The purpose of this analytical paper is to have students examine the original design and purpose of the Electoral College, and then assess how it works in modern U.S. politics, with special attention paid to the 2016 election. In this paper, students must examine the various proposals to reform the Electoral College and assess the advantages and disadvantages to each, explaining why the current system should either be maintained, revised, or completely eliminated and replaced with election by national popular vote.
- ✓ After the lesson regarding the theory of critical elections, students use presidential election data from the 20th and 21st centuries to classify each election as either a critical election or a deviating election.
- ✓ Students write an essay, with an analytical thesis, that incorporates information from a select list of foundational documents that examines the influence of interest groups on the policy-making process in the United States.

- ✓ After the lesson on the media as a linkage institution, especially the part about partisan media and social media, students complete a media analysis assignment. Students are assigned to read two articles about a specific policy issue in the United States. One article is from a conservative source and one from a liberal source. They then analyze the two sources – making note of the facts provided, the viewpoints expressed in each, and other differences between the two sources. This will also allow students to make a connection to gridlock in the national government.
- ✓ Political Science Research Project. After reading “How to Spot Fake News” at [FactCheck.org](https://www.factcheck.org) as homework, students work in groups to identify the fake news stories in their assigned packet (the packet contains both legitimate and fake news stories). Students first develop a list of indicators which they can use to determine if each story is fake news or not and then they conduct a content analysis of each report. Finally, they share the results with the class and assess the extent to which political science research provided in the course can provide guidance for discerning the difference between valid and invalid news stories.