

# Wachusett Regional High School

**Course Name: Government and Politics**

**Level: Advanced Placement (AP)**

**Grade (s): 12**

## **Course Description:**

This highly challenging course will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. It includes both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific examples. It requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute U.S. politics. Topics: "Constitutional Underpinnings of the U.S. Government," "Political Beliefs and Behaviors," "Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media," "Institutions of National Government," "Political Policy," and "Civil Rights and Civil Liberties." There will be substantial and required summer reading, and optional but critical after school review sessions preceding the AP exam in May.

## **Links to Student Expectations:**

1. All students will develop skills to utilize technology to gather, to evaluate, to assimilate, and to present information.
2. All students will utilize critical thinking by using skills to identify and to provide resources to solve a problem.
3. All students will learn to communicate critically, persuasively, and personally in both oral and written expression.
4. All students will develop skills to promote a sense of confidence in tackling the rigors of standardized tests such as the required MCAS and optional AP, SAT.

## **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- ✓ Economics
- ✓ U.S. History
- ✓ Comparative Government
- ✓ Criminal Justice

## **Essential Concepts:**

1. U.S. Government is designed to prepare the students to take the advanced placement exam in Government and politics.
2. U.S. Government identifies the nations political system.
3. U.S. Government studies general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics.
4. U.S. Government requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute U.S. politics.

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## Student Objectives:

1. Students should become acquainted with a variety of theoretical perspectives and explanations for various behaviors and outcomes.
2. Students will write, read, interpret, discuss, and debate analytically, certain perspectives of the nation's government and politics.
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4. Students will write, read, interpret, discuss, and debate analytically, certain perspectives of the nation's government and politics.

## Suggestions for Instruction:

1. Students will work individually.
2. Students will work in cooperative learning groups.
3. Students will use the technologies in the Media Center.
4. Students will attend field trips.
5. Students will read primary and secondary sources:
  - ✓ Wilson, James Q. American Government. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. D.C. Heath, c. 1995.
  - ✓ Alderman and Kennedy. In Our Defense. Avon Books, c. 1991.

## Suggestions for Assessment:

- ✓ Quizzes and tests for understanding
- ✓ Mock Supreme Court trial
- ✓ Essays for critical thinking
- ✓ Written and oral projects.
- ✓ Weekly current events (oral and written)
- ✓ Final Exam

## Curriculum:

- ✓ The Study of American Government
- ✓ The Constitution
- ✓ The Legislative Branch
- ✓ The Executive Branch
- ✓ The Bureaucracy
- ✓ Judicial Branch
- ✓ Federalism
- ✓ State Governments
- ✓ Local Governments
- ✓ Bill of Rights in Action: Civil liberties and Criminal law
- ✓ Politics: People, Parties, and Elections
- ✓ Politics of Public Policy: Economic, Social, Civil, Foreign, Military, and Environmental

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## Lesson Extensions:

- ✓ Summer reading including one outside book and one unit in the text with questions
- ✓ Additional research topics on court cases and legislative process
- ✓ Advanced placement exam study group before the exam
- ✓ Advanced Placement Exam