

**WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLANNED INSTRUCTION**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Course Title:** American Government

**Course Number:** 00117

**Course Prerequisites:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Description:** (Include “no final exam” or “final exam required”)

American Government is designed to provide students the background they need to participate meaningfully in our democratic system. Students will examine the workings of all three levels of American Government: federal, state, local, and how citizens get involved at each level. Units to be studied include the basic foundations of government (including the U.S. Constitution); choosing government leaders; the separation of powers in government; and intergovernmental relations. Part of the course is to help students to become active participants in our democratic system and how government will affect them the rest of their lives. A variety of activities and media will be used to achieve the course objectives. There is a final exam.

**Suggested Grade Level:** 12

**Length of Course:** x One Semester        Two Semesters        Other

(Describe)

**Units of Credit:** .5 (Insert *NONE* if appropriate.)

**PDE Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines (CSPG) Required Teacher Certification(s)**

(Insert certificate title and CSPG#) \_\_\_\_\_

**Certification verified by WCSD Human Resources Department:**

       Yes        No

**Board Approved Textbooks, Software, Materials:**

**Title:**

**Publisher:**

**ISBN #:**

**Copyright Date:**

**Date of WCSD Board Approval:**

**BOARD APPROVAL:**

**Date Written:** October 2010

**Date Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Implementation Year:** 2011-2012

Technology: Suggested but not limited to Smart Board, LCD projector, computers, district-approved websites and software.

### Suggested Supplemental Materials:

Materials: suggested but not limited to books, magazines and other printed materials, videos and DVDs relevant to the curriculum.

**SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES/CORRESPONDING STANDARDS AND ELIGIBLE CONTENT WHERE APPLICABLE**

## Course Standards

### PA Academic Standards:

- 5.1. Principles and Documents of Government
- 5.2. Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship
- 5.3. How Government Works
- 5.4. How International Relationships Function

**WCSD Academic Standards:** (List or None)

None

**Industry or Other Standards:**

None

## SPECIAL EDUCATION AND GIFTED REQUIREMENTS

Teachers will make appropriate modifications to instruction and assessment based on a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Gifted Individual Education Plan (GIEP).

**SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES/CORRESPONDING STANDARDS AND  
ELIGIBLE CONTENT WHERE APPLICABLE**

(List Objectives, PA Standards #'s, Other Standards (see samples at end))

**PA Standard: 5.1 Principles and Documents of Government**

		X – performance assessed during that semester		
	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
A.	Purpose of Government	X	X	
B.	Rule of Law	X	X	
C.	Principles and Ideals that Shape Government	X	X	
D.	Documents and Ideals Shaping Pennsylvania Government	X	X	
E.	Documents and Ideals Shaping United States Government	X	X	
F.	Rights Created by the Pennsylvania and United States Constitutions	X	X	
G.	Use, Display and Respect for the United States Flag	X	X	
H.	Contributions of Framers of Government	X	X	
I.	Sources, Purposes and Functions of Law	X	X	
J.	Individual Rights and the Common Good	X	X	
K.	Roles of Symbols and Holidays	X	X	
L.	Role of Courts in Resolving Conflicts	X	X	
M.	Speeches and Writings that Impact Civic Life	X	X	

**PA Standard: 5.2 Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship**

		X – performance assessed during that semester		
	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
A.	Civic Rights and Responsibilities	x	x	
B.	Conflict and Resolution	x	x	
C.	Leadership and Public Service	x	x	
D.	Competent and Responsible Citizens	x	x	

**PA Standard: 5.3 How Government Works**

X – performance assessed during that semester

	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
A.	Branches of Government	X	X	
B.	Structure, Organization, and Operation of Governments	X	X	
C.	Government Services	X	X	
D.	Leadership and Political Elections	X	X	
E.	Elements of the Election Process	X	X	
F.	Conflict and the Court Systems	X	X	
G.	Interest Groups	X	X	
H.	Media Influences	X	X	
I.	Taxes	X	X	
J.	Systems of Government	X	X	

**PA Standard: 5.4 How International Relationships Function**

X – performance assessed during that semester

	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
A.	Countries and Conflicts	X	X	
B.	Tools of Foreign Policies	X	X	
C.	International Organizations	X	X	
D.	Media and its Influences	X	X	
E.	How Foreign Policy is Influenced	X	X	

**ASSESSMENTS**

**PSSA Assessment Anchors Addressed:** The teacher must be knowledgeable of the PDE Assessment Anchors and/or Eligible Content and incorporate them into this planned instruction. Current assessment anchors can be found at [pde@state.pa.us](mailto:pde@state.pa.us).

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***Suggested Formative Assessments:***

- Pre-Assessments of prior knowledge (e.g. entrance cards or KWL chart)
- Discussions
- Projects
- Teacher observation
- Graphic organizers (e.g. Venn diagrams, word mapping, webbing, KWL chart, etc.)
- Summarizing
- Debate
- Writing prompts
- Note taking
- Problem-based learning modules

- Open-ended written response
- Quizzes /tests
- Essays

***Suggested Summative Assessments:***

- Student presentations/projects
- Essays
- Quizzes/tests

**Portfolio Assessment:**        ☐ Yes    ☒ No

**District-wide Final Examination Required:**        ☒ Yes    ☐ No

**Course Challenge Assessment (Describe):**

## **REQUIRED COURSE SEQUENCE AND TIMELINE**

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

1. Why are government and politics necessary?
2. What are the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government?
3. What is the American idea of Constitutional Government?
4. What responsibilities do citizens of a democracy have?

### **I. Introduction to Government (1-2 weeks)**

- A. Identify the powers every government holds.
- B. Understand the purpose of government in the United States and other countries.
- C. Classify different forms of governments.
- D. Examine early Colonial Governments and understand their English origins.
- E. Study landmark English government documents.
- F. Explain how Britain's colonial policies contributed to the self government of the colonies.
- G. Analyze the reasons for the American Revolution.
- H. Analyze the ideas of the Declaration of Independence.
- I. Explore the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
- J. Identify key individuals who led the revolution movement and creation of the new government.

### **II. The U.S. Constitution (3-5 weeks)**

- A. Compare and contrast the different plans that made the Constitution
- B. Summarize the compromises and explain the effects the compromises had on the Constitution.
- C. Identify the opposing sides fight during the ratification process
- D. Outline the important features of the Constitution such as the Preamble, 7 Articles and 27 Amendments.
- E. Identify the basic principles of the Constitution.
- F. Explore ways the Constitution can be changed informally without formal amendment.
- G. Understand the significance of federalism and explain why this system was chosen.
- H. Examine the Supremacy Clause and analyze powers given to the states and federal government.

- I. Explore American Civil Rights, and apply them to landmark civil rights examples.

### **III. Political Participation (2-4 weeks)**

- A. Define political party and compare the major parties in the United States
- B. Understand the origins of political parties.
- C. Study voter qualifications and identify Constitutional restrictions on voting.
- D. Explore the entire election process at the different levels of government
- E. Compare specific candidates.
- F. Identify the roles of the media and interest groups in politics.

### **IV. The Legislative Branch (1-2 weeks)**

- A. Describe the organization of Congress.
- B. Distinguish between expressed and implied powers of Congress and give examples of each.
- C. List the non-legislative powers of Congress.
- D. Describe how Congress functions.

### **V. The Executive Branch (1-2 weeks)**

- A. Describe the organization of the Executive Branch.
- B. Explain how the President is nominated and elected.
- C. Outline the President's powers and explain the growth of Presidential power.

### **VI. The Judicial Branch (1-2 weeks)**

- A. Describe the organization of the Judicial Branch.
- B. Define civil liberties and describe the government's role in protecting them.
- C. Define civil rights.

### **VII. Comparative Politics and Foreign Policy (1-2 weeks)**

- A. Describe how government structures in other countries differ from the U.S. Government.
- B. Define the main characteristics of capitalism, socialism, and communism.

### **IV. State and Local Government (1-2 weeks)**

- A. Describe the structure, organization, and powers of state legislatures
- B. Describe the structure, organization, and powers of the state executive branch of governor.
- C. Describe the structure, organization, and powers of local governments.

### **Objectives:**

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political philosophies that shaped the development of United States constitutional government.
2. The student will analyze the natural rights philosophy and the nature of government expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the United States Constitution.
4. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of the national government.
5. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the federal system of government described in the United States Constitution.
6. The student will describe the nature of thoughtful and effective participation in civic life.
7. The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections.
8. The student will explain the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate, with emphasis on terms of office, powers, organization, leadership, and representation of each house.
9. The student will describe the legislative process including the roles played by committees and leadership.
10. The student will describe the influence of lobbyists (business, labor, professional organizations) and special interest groups on the legislative process.

11. The student will analyze the various roles played by the President of the United States; describe the qualifications for becoming President of the United States; and explain the impeachment process and its use.
12. The student will explain the functions of the departments and agencies of the federal bureaucracy.
13. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the operation of the federal judiciary.
14. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of state and local government.
15. The student will compare and contrast governments that are unitary, confederated and federal; autocratic, oligarchic and democratic; presidential and parliamentary.
16. The student will describe the causes and effects of criminal activity and demonstrate knowledge of the criminal justice process.

**WRITING TEAM:** Joe Errett, Jim Morrison

### WCSD STUDENT DATA SYSTEM INFORMATION

1. Is there a required final examination? ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. Does this course issue a mark/grade for the report card? ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. Does this course issue a Pass/Fail mark? ☐ Yes ☒ No
4. Is the course mark/grade part of the GPA calculation? ☒ Yes ☐ No
5. Is the course eligible for Honor Roll calculation? ☒ Yes ☐ No
6. What is the academic weight of the course?  
☐ No weight/Non credit      ☒ Standard weight  
☐ Enhanced weight (Describe)