



RADNOR TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
Course Overview



Honors Government and Economics
Course # 290

General Information

Credits: 1

Weighted: honors

Prerequisite: none

Length: Full Year

Format: Meets Daily

Grade: 9

Course Description

The Government and Economics' course provides students with an opportunity to study the key concepts of government and economics and the interrelatedness of the two disciplines. This course will help students develop a deeper understanding of the ideals that define who we are as individuals and as a society, ideals that have created a unique constitutional democracy and free market economy that have matured over the past two hundred plus years and will continue to evolve into the future. The government topics include: the constitutional basis of American democracy, federalism, political beliefs and behaviors, political parties, elections, campaigns, the role of interest groups, the mass media, individual rights, the structure of U.S. government (Congress, presidency, the courts, and bureaucracy). The economic topics include: economic theories, the global economy, macro-economic concepts such as monetary policy, fiscal policy, the Federal Reserve, money and banking, micro economics concepts such as supply and demand, competition/monopolies, business organizations, entrepreneurship and the stock market.

Students in the Honors level Government and Economics course will complete a rigorous research project that is not required of students in lower level courses.

Course Objectives:

Essential Questions

- How does the past influence present forms and functions of government?
- How do governments balance the rights of individuals in relation to the public good?
- What rights attach to citizenship in the United States?
- What are the obligations of being a citizen of the United States?
- How does one's background influence their political beliefs or behaviors?
- How can individuals actively participate as citizens in a constitutional democracy?
- What level of government should have the most power?
- How does mass media impact social or political change in a constitutional democracy?
- Who has the power and how do they keep it?
- "What is economics?"
- What are the basic concepts and principles necessary to understand the workings of an economy at the local, state, and national level?
- What does it mean to be a producer, consumer, saver, and a citizen?
- In what ways are economics and politics interrelated?

- How do individuals and societies make economic decisions?
- What does it mean to think and act like an economist?
- How does scarcity affect individuals, businesses, and nations?
- Who has the wealth, how do they get it, how do they keep it?

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that:

- distributing governmental power prevents its abuse;
- there is a relationship between national systems of government and the political and economic freedom of those citizens;
- political compromise leads to the attainment of individual and public goals;
- there are disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life;
- the American concept of democracy and individual rights has impacted people from all over the world and continues to be a source of inspiration to many people;
- the political and economic systems that have developed over time in the United States are uniquely flexible and dynamic.

Common Assessments:

Quarter I: Bill of Rights in Contemporary American Society

Quarter II: Comparison of Four Founding Documents

Quarter III: Persuasive Letter to Elected Official

Quarter IV: Economic Interaction in Your Daily Life

Major Units of Study:

I. Foundations of Government & Political Philosophies (4 weeks)

- Define government, power, policy, state, sovereignty, politics, power, politics, and the public good.
- Essential Characteristics of American constitutional democracy and how this form of government has shaped the character and values of American society.
- Rights, Duties, and Responsibilities of Citizenship
 - Citizenship and Naturalization.
- Forms of government (Constitutional Monarchy, Communism, Constitutional Democracy, Dictatorship, Theocracy).
- Purposes and principles of various governmental systems.
- Characteristics of democracies, monarchies and dictatorships in history and around the world today.
- Review of the key political developments in Colonial North America.
- Influential writings and theories that influenced the Founding Fathers in the formation of a constitutional democracy.

- Historical background leading to the 1787 convention and background to the Pennsylvania constitution of 1776.

II. The U.S. Constitution and Federalism (8 weeks)

- Purpose of the Constitution: Six Goals of the Preamble;
- Organization of the Constitution: Seven Articles and 27 Amendments;
- Article I, II III: Structure of the federal government;
- Significance of Articles IV, V, VI, VIII;
 - Six Principles found throughout the Constitution
 - Popular Sovereignty
 - Separation of Powers
 - Delegated, Inherent and Concurrent Powers between the national and state governments
 - Federalism
 - Limited Government
 - Checks and Balances;
 - Structure of the PA government;
 - Federalism and concurrent powers or dual federalism;
 - Amending the U.S. Constitution and PA State Constitution
 - Formal Process: Proposal and Ratification
 - Informal Constitutional Changes.

III. The Branches of the Federal and State Governments (8weeks)

- The concept of a constitution, the various purposes that constitutions serve;
- How the United States Constitution and the Pennsylvania Constitution grant and distributes power and responsibilities to national and state governments;
- The relationships among state and local and national governments and issues pertaining to representation at all three levels of government;
- How to identify and describe conflicting interests and tensions between institutions such as the executive and legislature and their impact on governance and policy making;
- The formal and informal organization and powers of Congress;
- The formal and informal powers of the Executive branch;
- The Supreme Court and its role;
- How power is shared and how the relationships work between the Congress, the president, the bureaucracy and the federal courts;
- the process through which a bill becomes a law and analyze the structure of the Congress and state legislature and the impact of parties on the creation and passage of legislation;
- The process for amending the U.S. Constitution and the Pennsylvania Constitution;
- The responsibilities of the president's cabinet and the Governor's cabinet;
- The role of federal, state, and local agencies.

IV. The Political Process (4 weeks)

- Public Opinion and the Media;
- Interest Groups;
- Political Parties and Party Organization (local, state and national levels);
- The Electoral Process.

V. Public Policy (4 weeks)

- Domestic Policy;
- Bureaucracy and Civil Servants;
- Taxation;
- Governmental Budgets;
- Foreign Policy.

VI. Civil Liberties and Rights (3 weeks)

- Source, purposes and functions of the Constitution for the protection of individual rights and liberties and the common good
 - First Amendment Freedoms;
- Issues regarding personal, political and economic rights and judicial protection of these rights within the scope of the Constitution
 - Fourteenth Amendment and the State Constitutions
 - Rights of the Accused—(4th-8th Amendment);
- Civil Rights
 - The Civil Rights Act of 1964;
 - The Voting Rights Act of 1965;
 - Title IX 1972;
 - Affirmative Action;
 - Individuals with Disabilities Act 1990.

VII. Principles of Economics (3 weeks)

- How Economists Think;
- Division of Labor;
- Supply and Demand;
- Elasticity;
- Competition and Monopoly;
- Labor Market and Wages;
- The Problem of Inequality;
- Government Regulation;
- Balancing Economic Rights and Responsibilities.

VIII. Macro-Economics (3 weeks)

- Money and Banking;
- Federal Reserve and Monetary Policy;
- Fiscal Policy;

- Inflation;
- Unemployment;
- Budget, Deficit and National Debt.

IX. Global Economy (2 weeks)

- World Trade;
- Pros and Cons of Direct Foreign Investment;
- Effects of Multi-national and Economic Competition in the World;
- Difference Among World Economic Systems.

Materials & Texts

Textbook: *United States Government Principals in Practice* , Holt McDougal (2012 edition)

Textbook: *Economics Concepts and Choices*, Holt McDougal (2011 edition) Other selected documents including but not limited to the *Declaration of Independence*, *US Constitution*, and the *PA Constitution* along with other readings as indicated below.

Summer Assignment

Students will select five news stories that relate to one or more of the units of study and write a two paragraphs on each article: a one paragraph summary and a one paragraph response to how the content of the article relates to one of the course essential questions.