

Start Here - Course Description



KPBSD U.S. Government

(.5 Semester)

The twelfth-grade social studies course focuses on the American political system and preparation of students for effective and productive citizenship. This semester course provides an in-depth, content-specific study of the Constitution, comparative political and economic systems, federal, state and local governments, International Relations, and rights and responsibilities of the individual. The American legal system, legislative processes, and the Bill of Rights will be critically examined in order to invite student activism and involvement in democracy. Exposure and participation to real life experiences is a major focus in this course. Identification of issues crucial to the maintenance of democratic institutions is emphasized with a view toward resolution.

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

Unit 2: Interactions Among the Branches of Government

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Unit 5: Political Participation

Unit 1-Foundations of American Democracy

Unit Theme: Foundations of American Democracy

Essential Question	What are the key principles of the American government?
Supporting Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of democratic governments are there, and why is the American system designed the way it is? • How is the government of the United States different from other systems of government? • What events, philosophies and policies led to the American Revolution? • What were the context, purpose, and impact of founding documents like the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights? • What were the key weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and how did they lead to the formation of the U.S. Constitution? • What role does the government play in the lives of students and their communities? • What were some of the key debates that shaped the writing and ratification of the Constitution (Great Compromise, anti-federalist debate, etc.)? • Why is the U.S. Constitution amendable and how has that provision shaped U.S. history? • What are the basic roles and responsibilities of each branch in the American government? • What are checks and balances, how do the various branches of government check and balance each other?. • What is federalism? • How has the relationship between national and state governments evolved over time? • What does it mean to be “American”?

Alaska Social Studies Standards

Topic	Anchor Standard <i>The student demonstrates an understanding of...</i>	Content Standard <i>Therefore, the student is able to...</i>
Ideals of Democracy and Types of Democracy	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.2 Compare and contrast various political

		philosophies and how they form various types of governments.
Government Power and Individual Rights	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.1 Explain the philosophies, ideals, processes, and documents that the Constitution was based upon to create a representative democracy.
Challenges of the Articles of Confederation	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.6 Evaluate efforts to adapt and redesign the U.S. Constitution and political institutions over time.
Ratification of the U.S. Constitution	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.1 Explain the philosophies, ideals, process, and documents that the Constitution was based upon to create a representative democracy.
Principles of American Government	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.2 Analyze the U.S. Constitution and explain how it incorporates the principles of the rule of law, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, and limited government.
Relationship between Local, Tribal, State & National Governments	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.4 Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of

		local, state, indigenous, Tribal, national, and international civil and political institutions
	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 9 Alaska's Government</p>	<p>SS.9-12.9.1 Explain how the Alaska constitution creates a system of government with three branches, limited powers, and federalism, and evaluate the unique features of Alaska's constitution.</p>
<p>Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems</p>	<p>SS.9-12.6.1 Explain the philosophies, ideals, processes, and documents that the Constitution was based upon to create a representative democracy.</p>

Unit 2-Interactions Among the Branches of Gov

Unit Theme: Interactions Among the Branches of Government

<p>Essential Question</p>	<p>How do interactions between the various branches and levels of government impact policy, law, and enforcement?</p>
<p>Supporting Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are the branches of government always in competition? • How do interactions with the federal government shape state, local, and tribal government and policies? • How do the legislative, executive, and judicial branches interact to form a singular federal government? • What steps and processes does Congress have to go through to make a law? • How do different groups, both within and outside of Congress (committees, House and Senate leadership, interest groups, the presidential, etc.), influence the legislative process? • What are some of the powers of Congress and how have those powers evolved over time? • What are the roles, duties, responsibilities, and limitations of the presidency and how have these evolved over time? • What is executive privilege and how has it helped to expand the powers of the president over time? • How do executive orders differ from legislation? • What is the role of the federal bureaucracy in government and why does it have a level of independence? • How can the independence of the bureaucracy be checked by the three branches of government? • What is the structure of the federal judiciary? • What is the basis for judicial decision making? • What are some key judicial decisions in U.S. history and how have those cases shaped the nation? • How does the judicial branch interpret the Constitution and how has its decisions shaped the rights of the people and the role of government throughout U.S. history?

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<p>Legislative Branch: Structure, Powers and Function</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws</p>	<p>SS.9-12.8.1 Evaluate procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, Tribal, state, national, and... levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved through the decision-making process.</p>
<p>Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws</p>	<p>SS.9-12.8.6 Examine the role of the three branches of government concerning the creation, implementation, and interpretation of laws and policies.</p>
<p>Executive Branch: Structure, Powers and Function</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws</p>	<p>SS.9-12.8.6 Examine the role of the three branches of government concerning the creation, implementation, and interpretation of laws and policies.</p>
<p>Presidential Policymaking and Communication</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws</p>	<p>SS.9-12.8.3 Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes and related consequences.</p>
<p>Judicial Branch: Structure, Powers and Function</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws</p>	<p>SS.9-12.8.5 Evaluate the impact the U.S. justice system has had over time on policy, society,</p>

		economics, and individual rights.
The Court in Action	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.8 Explain the significance and impact of landmark Supreme Court cases.
Checks and balances on the Branches of Government	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.6 Examine the role of the three branches of government concerning the creation, implementation, and interpretation of laws and policies.
The Bureaucracy, its Discretionary Rulemaking Authority, and Accountability	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.1 Evaluate procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, Tribal, state, (and) national... levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved through the decision-making process.
	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.7 Examine the role that the media has in government oversight as well as in the creation, implementation, and interpretation of laws and policies.
Policy and the Branches of Government at the Local, Tribal, State, and National Levels	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.1 Evaluate procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, Tribal, state,

		(and) national... levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved through the decision-making process.
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Unit 3- Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Unit Theme: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Essential Question	What rights and liberties should be protected by law?
Supporting Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does American public discourse influence and shape legislation relating to civil rights? ● How and why have protected rights changed over the course of American history? ● Will the fight for civil rights and liberties ever reach a point of completion? ● When is it appropriate to limit civil liberties? ● What is the Bill of Rights and what rights does it specifically protect? ● What were the origins and purpose of the Bill of Rights? ● How have the First Amendment's protections of religion, speech, and press shaped American culture, public discourse, and law? ● What are the various interpretations of the Second Amendment and how have those interpretations shaped law and policy? ● What due process guarantees are enshrined in the Constitution and why are these important? ● What rights do those accused of a crime have? ● What are privacy rights, why are they important, and how have they evolved over time? ● What challenges does the digital age pose for interpreting the Fourth Amendment? ● What effect have social movements had on American history and how the government has responded to these movements? ● How have cornerstone Supreme Court cases expanded or limited civil rights and liberties?

Alaska Social Studies Standards

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The Bill of Rights	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.6 Evaluate efforts to adapt and redesign the U.S. Constitution and political institutions over time.
First Amendment Freedoms of Religion, Speech, and the Press	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.7 Examine the role that the media has in government oversight as well as in the creation, implementation, and interpretation of laws and policies.
Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms (!!!!Do we even need this additional topic!!!!)	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.3 Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes and related consequences.
Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.4 Discuss the methods used to change societies, promote the common good, and protect civil and human rights.
	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.7 Formulate an informed opinion and engage in productive discourse on how we balance individual liberties and public good.
Selective Incorporation	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.1 Evaluate how fundamental U.S. principles have been interpreted over time and how they currently

		<p>shape policy debates.</p> <p>SS.9-12.6.8 Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, Tribal, national, and or international levels.</p>
	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems</p>	<p>SS.9-12.6.4 Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, Indigenous, Tribal, national., civic and political institutions.</p>
<p>Amendments: Due Process, the Right to Privacy and the Rights of the Accused</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws</p>	<p>SS.9-12.8.4 Discuss the methods used to change societies, promote the common good, and protect civil and human rights.</p>
<p>Social Movements, Equal Protection and Government Responses to Social Movements</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation</p>	<p>SS.9-12.7.5 Evaluate the effectiveness of political action in changing government systems and policy.</p>
	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems</p>	<p>SS.9-12.6.10 Examine how the concept of citizenship has been used to expand or deny rights to various groups throughout U.S. history</p>


Balancing Minority and Majority Rights	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.6 Use civic virtues to deliberate on and discuss solutions to core conflicts in representative democracy.
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Unit 4- American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Unit Theme: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Essential Question	How do political ideologies influence governmental law and policy?
Supporting Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do polling and information-gathering strategies affect our understanding of American political opinions and beliefs? • What are some of the varying political attitudes and beliefs that Americans have about government and political socialization? • What are the different beliefs that define conservative and liberal ideologies and how do these ideologies actually relate to current Democratic, Republican, and prominent third parties platforms? • How do conservative and liberal ideologies affect policymaking on the national, state, and local level? • What are the key elements of public opinion polls and what role they should have in policy making? • How have political ideologies evolved over time? • How have key historical events shaped political ideology?

Alaska Social Studies Standards

Topic	Anchor Standard <i>The student demonstrates an understanding of...</i>	Content Standard <i>Therefore, the student is able to...</i>
American Attitudes about Government and Politics 	Anchor Standard 5 Informed Civic Discourse and Engagement	SS.9-12.5.3 Examine the historical context of issues to explain the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address them.
	Anchor Standard 5 Informed Civic Discourse and Engagement	SS.9-12.5.4 Engage in public and reflective conversations about civic challenges and issues in order to

		extend understanding with varying perspectives.
Political Socialization	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.4 Evaluate the effects of political socialization on developing and maintaining political ideologies within the United States.
Changes in Ideology and Influences of Political Events on Ideology	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.8 Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, Tribal, national, and/or international levels.
Measuring and Evaluating Public Opinion	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.2 Use data and evidence to determine how bias in the media impacts political participation.
Ideology and Policymaking	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.1 Evaluation how fundamental U.S. principles have been interpreted over time and how they currently shape policy debates.
Foreign Policymaking	Civics Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.8.9 Evaluate the way that the United States' founding principles and constitutional structures have influenced foreign policy over time.

Local Policymaking	Anchor Standard 5 Informed Civic Discourse and Engagement	SS.9-12.5.6 Create and implement solutions to a local issue incorporating perspectives from the local experts.
	Civics Anchor Standard 9 Alaska's Government	SS.9-12.9.4 Take informed action to create and implement solutions to local issues, incorporating perspectives from local experts.

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Unit 5- Political Participation

Unit Theme: Political Participation		
Essential Question	What factors encourage or discourage political participation?	
Supporting Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do individual and group beliefs affect voting behavior, and where do those beliefs come from? ● How do special interest groups, political parties, and campaigns attempt to modify voter behavior and influence legislation? ● What impact have third parties had on past elections? ● What is the role of third parties in the political process? ● What are the current platforms of the Democratic, Republican, and prominent third parties and how have those platforms changed over time? ● What are the similarities and differences between local, state, and national level election processes? ● What is the role of campaign finance in elections and what impact does advertising have in political campaigns? ● What is the Electoral College and how does it shape presidential campaigns? ● What are the requirements to serve government offices in the House of Representatives and the Senate at the national level and in the State of Alaska? ● How do political leaders and campaigns use the concept of demographic groups to shape election strategies? ● How does the media influence and shape political discourse and public opinion? ● What are government watchdogs and what role do they play in U.S. democracy? ● How does the media act as a government watchdog? 	
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<p>Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation</p>	<p>SS.9-12.7.7 Using data and evidence, examine influences on and barriers to voter participation and voter behavior.</p>
<p>Voting Systems and Voter Turnout</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation</p>	<p>SS.9-12.7.8 Examine different electoral systems in the United States and explain how to register to vote.</p>
	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation</p>	<p>SS.9-12.7.9 Develop a position regarding the most effective electoral system at the local, Tribal, state, or national level based on evidence from multiple sources and perspectives.</p>
<p>Political Parties (Democrats, Republicans, and Third Parties)</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation</p>	<p>SS.9-12.7.4 Evaluate the effects of political socialization on developing and maintaining political ideologies within the United States.</p>
<p>How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt</p>	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems</p>	<p>SS.9-12.6.2 Compare and contrast various political philosophies and how they form various types of governments.</p>
	<p>Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems</p>	<p>SS.9-12.6.5 Take a position based on evidence about the purpose processes, strengths, and weaknesses of the</p>

		structure of the U.S. government.
Interest Groups Influencing Policymaking and Outcomes	Civics Anchor Standard 6: Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	SS.9-12.6.8 Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, Tribal, national, and/ or international levels.
National Elections (President and Congress)	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.7 Using data and evidence, examine influences on and barriers to voter participation and voter behavior.
	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.8 Examine different electoral systems in the United States and explain how to register to vote.
Local, Tribal, and State Elections	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.7 Using data and evidence, examine influences on and barriers to voter participation and voter behavior.
	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.9 Develop a position regarding the most effective electoral system at the local, Tribal, state, or national level based on evidence from multiple sources and perspectives.
Modern Campaigns and Campaign Finance	Anchor Standard 5 Informed Civic Discourse and Engagement	SS.9-12.5.1 Identify local, regional, and/ or global problems by using

		varying perspectives and ways of knowing.
	Anchor Standard 5 Informed Civic Discourse and Engagement	SS.9-12.5.5 Apply a range of deliberative strategies and procedures to make decisions and propose feasible solutions to address local, regional, and/ or global concerns.
The Media	Civics Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	SS.9-12.7.2 Use data and evidence to determine how bias in the media impacts political participation.