
Syllabus Development Guide: AP[®] Government and Politics: United States

The guide contains the following sections and information:

Curricular Requirements	The curricular requirements are the core elements of the course. Your syllabus must provide clear evidence that each requirement is fully addressed in your course.
Scoring Components	Some curricular requirements consist of complex, multi-part statements. These particular requirements are broken down into their component parts and restated as “scoring components.” Reviewers will look for evidence that each scoring component is included in your course.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	These are the guidelines used by reviewers to evaluate the evidence in your syllabus. Use these guidelines to determine the level of detail reviewers require to demonstrate how the curricular requirements are met in your course.
Key Term(s)	To ensure the clarity of certain terms or expressions that may have multiple meanings, each of these terms is clearly defined.
Samples of Evidence For each scoring component, three separate samples of evidence are provided. These statements provide clear descriptions of what acceptable evidence should look like.	

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Curricular Requirement	The course provides instruction in each of the following six topics outlined in the Course Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government• Political Beliefs and Political Behaviors• Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media• Institutions of National Government• Public Policy• Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
Scoring Component 1	The course provides instruction in constitutional underpinnings of United States government.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Underpinnings of United States Government” from the AP Course Description or a college-level reader.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus includes federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances as part of a topic outline.2. The syllabus includes a college level textbook and cites the relevant chapters for the Constitution and federalism in the course outline.3. In a listing of learning objectives for this unit, the syllabus states objectives relating to examination of the Constitution, checks and balances, and federalism.	

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Scoring Component 2	The course provides instruction in political beliefs, political behaviors, and elections.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Political Beliefs and Behaviors” from the AP Course Description or a college-level reader.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus includes a college level textbook and cites the relevant chapters for political beliefs, behaviors, and elections in the course outline.2. In a listing of learning objectives for this unit, the syllabus includes issues such as voter registration, voter turnout, demographic differences in turnout, other types of political participation, and the relationship between class, age, race, gender, and participation.3. The syllabus includes a discussion of political socialization, political culture, public opinion, or demographic factors that relate to citizens’ tendencies to be active or inactive in politics.	

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Scoring Component 3	The course provides instruction in interest groups.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media” from the AP Course Description or a college-level reader.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus includes a college level textbook and cites the relevant chapter in assigned text that covers interest groups.2. The course outline includes a minimum of three sub-topics found in the course description’s section on interest groups.3. In a listing of learning objectives for this unit, the syllabus includes objectives that examine the role of interest groups in providing avenues for citizen input into the selection of political leaders and the development of public policy.	

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Scoring Component 4	The course provides instruction in political parties.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media” from the AP Course Description or a college-level reader.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus includes an assignment where students write a research paper on political parties.2. The course outline includes subtopics that include examination of trends in partisan identification, and party decline and resurgence.3. In a listing of learning objectives for this unit, the syllabus includes objectives that examine the development of political parties, their functions, and the distinction between parties in the electorate and parties in government.	

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Scoring Component 5	The course provides instruction in mass media.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media” from the AP Course Description or a college-level reader.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus includes a college level text and cites the relevant chapter that covers the mass media.2. The syllabus includes at least three subtopics from the AP Course Description section relating to mass media.3. In a listing of learning objectives, the syllabus includes a discussion of the relevance of mass media in elections, governing, and politics in general.	

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Curricular Requirement	<p>The course provides instruction in each of the following six topics outlined in the Course Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government • Political Beliefs and Political Behaviors • Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media • Institutions of National Government • Public Policy • Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
Scoring Component 6	The course provides instruction in institutions of national government.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	<p>The syllabus must specifically mention the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government. If a textbook on the approved list is used and the syllabus cites the chapters on each of the four institutions, then evidence is sufficient.</p> <p>If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Institutions of National Government” from the AP Course Description or a college-level reader.</p>
Key Term(s)	Institutions of national government: evidence of coverage of legislative, executive (including the bureaucracy), and judicial branches of government.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus includes a college level text and cites the relevant chapters that cover all four institutions of national government: Congress, President, Bureaucracy, and Judiciary. 2. The syllabus includes a course outline that mentions the following institutions of national government: Congress, President, Bureaucracy, and Supreme Court. 3. The syllabus includes learning objectives that address each of the national institutions of national government: Congress, the President, the Federal Bureaucracy, and the Judiciary. 	

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Scoring Component 7	The course provides instruction in public policy and public policy areas.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	The syllabus must provide evidence of instruction in the public policy making process and coverage of policy areas. To satisfy the scoring component, both domestic and foreign policy must be covered. If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Public Policy” from the AP Course Description or a college-level reader.
Key Term(s)	Public policy areas: evidence of coverage of both domestic and foreign policy.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The course outline includes specific subtopics of domestic policy and foreign or defense policy.2. The syllabus includes a college level textbook and includes a course outline with the relevant chapters that cover economic, domestic, and foreign policy.3. The course includes an assignment that requires students to keep a notebook that collects news articles, commentary, and other information on several domestic and foreign policies in the current political environment.	

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Scoring Component 8	The course provides instruction in civil rights and civil liberties.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Civil Rights and Civil Liberties” from the AP Course Description or a college-level reader
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus includes in the course outline the Women’s movement to meet the civil rights component.2. The syllabus includes in the course outline <i>Brown vs. the Board of Education</i> as a subtopic to meet the civil rights component.3. The syllabus includes study of First Amendment freedoms (speech, religion, assembly, expression), rights of the accused, privacy, racial and gender equality in the course outline.	

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Curricular Requirement	The course provides students with practice in analyzing and interpreting data and other information relevant to U.S. government and politics.
Scoring Component 9	The course provides students with practice analyzing and interpreting data.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	<p>Evidence of how a student will be expected to analyze or interpret data must be presented either in the course description, the inclusion of data resources in course readings, software used for data analysis, or at least two specific mentions of data analysis in the course outline.</p> <p>Statements about the use of data must explain how this use will be implemented in course assignments. A simple statement without a clear description of how data will be used is not sufficient evidence.</p>
Key Term(s)	Analyzing and interpreting data: use of numeric, statistical, and graphic information to study dynamics and trends in American politics.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus includes a requirement that students design, conduct, and analyze their own public opinion poll.2. As a class activity, the syllabus lists the analysis of voter turnout and voting results for specific elections.3. The syllabus includes two or more activities that allow students to analyze and interpret data including the study of charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, public opinion polls and other survey research.	

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Curricular Requirement	The course provides students with practice in analyzing and interpreting data and other information relevant to U.S. government and politics.
Scoring Component 10	The course provides students with practice analyzing information relevant to U.S. government and politics.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	The course description may include mention that analysis occurs in the course, but must also explain how this is achieved.
Key Term(s)	Analyzing information relevant: the process of studying complex information by breaking it down into composite pieces of political information, issues, cases, rhetoric, and commentary.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In the unit on public policy, the syllabus cites specific current or past pieces of legislation as a topic covered.2. The syllabus includes a variety of activities including analysis of court cases, political cartoons, speeches, political commentary, current events discussions, and debates.3. The syllabus includes an activity where students analyze a current Supreme Court case, predict the likely outcome of that case, and explain why the predicted outcome is the most likely result.	

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Curricular Requirement	The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as The Federalist Papers) and contemporary news analyses that strengthen student understanding of the curriculum.
Scoring Component 11	The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as the Federalist Papers).
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If a reader has been cited, evidence is sufficient. If a reader is not cited, there must be evidence of primary sources and supplemental readings in at least two units.
Key Term(s)	Primary source materials: both important documents from the political development of the United States government and more recent readings from the various subfields of political science found in edited books of readings.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The course outline includes specific citations of assigned readings from a supplemental reader.2. The course outline specifies that a supplemental reading is provided on at least two separate course topics.3. The course includes an assignment that requires students to complete and present supplemental readings in oral reports, written reports, or both.	

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Curricular Requirement	The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as The Federalist Papers) and contemporary news analyses that strengthen student understanding of the curriculum.
Scoring Component 12	The course includes supplemental readings, including contemporary news analyses, that strengthen student understanding of the curriculum.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	None at this time.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus includes the requirement that students give oral summaries based on current news articles, books, or commentary pieces.2. The syllabus includes a requirement that students compile a current events binder that includes clippings on a specific political topic with written comment by students on that topic.3. There is specific mention in the course description that requires students to read, watch, or listen to a newspaper, magazine, website, television program, or other contemporary source of political information.	

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Curricular Requirement	The course requires students to answer analytical and interpretive free-response questions on a frequent basis.
Scoring Component 13	The course requires students to answer analytical and interpretive free-response questions on a frequent basis.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If there is no indication of the frequency or type (i.e., free response questions) of questions on the exam, then this requirement is not met. Students must answer such questions at least three times per course.
Key Term(s)	Frequent basis: At least three instances of the use of analytical and/or interpretive free response questions are included on the syllabus.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The syllabus states that timed essays, free-response essay, or essay exams are used in each unit test.2. The syllabus states that free response questions are done at least three times during the course.3. The outline of the syllabus states that free response questions will be administered after each unit or chapter.	