

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT – SEMESTER – 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

### Course Description

This course analyzes the American political system. Students learn about theories of government, the origin of American government, the Constitution, federalism, and city, state, and national government. Students also will study financing government, political parties, voting and elections, and the media.

### Course Goals

To help students understand the principles and traditions on which American democratic institutions are based.

To help students gain insight into the origins, development, structure and functions of major political, economic, legal and international systems.

To help students learn the responsibilities, rights, privileges, and freedoms of American citizens.

To help students understand the process of public policy formation.

**Course: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**Grade Level: 12**

**Topic:**

| Essential Learning   | #             | Components   | Suggested   |  |
|--|---------------|--|---|--|
|  |               |  | Activities  | Assessments  |
| <p>Understand the basic concepts of government.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>A1,A2,A3,A4<br/>B1,B2,B3,B4,B5,B6<br/>B7,B8,B9</p>          | VCS<br>12.1.1 | <p>Theories of Government:<br/>Divine Right, Social contract, Evolutionary, Force</p> <p>Kinds of Government:<br/>Anarchy, Monarchy, Dictatorship, Aristocracy, Oligarchy, Democracy</p> <p>Nation-State:<br/>Territory, Sovereignty, Population, Government</p> <p>Economic Systems:<br/>Capitalism, Socialism, Communism</p> | <p>-Memorize portions of the Declaration of Independence.</p> <p>-Compare and contrast the four theories on the development of the State.</p>                                       | <p>-In-class small group work with student assessments. In-class recitation with teacher assessment.</p> <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |
| <p>Explain the origins of the American system of government.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>A1,A2,A3,A4<br/>B1,B2</p>                      | VCS<br>12.2.1 | <p>Reflecting on, analyzing, and evaluating a variety of original source documents, readings, discussions, powerpoint presentations, CD's, and DVD's.</p>  | <p>Have students prepare a wall chart or bulletin board display depicting the major steps and events leading to the Constitution and its ratification.</p>                          | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p>  |
| <p>Summarize the basic principles by which the United States is governed and explain how these principles have been kept or changed over time.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> | VCS<br>12.3.1 | <p>Limited Government. Representative Government:<br/>Popular Sovereignty<br/>Divided Government<br/>Legislative<br/>Executive<br/>Judicial<br/>Checks and balances</p>  | <p>-Have students write reports on the historical background of each of the 27 Amendments.</p> <p>-Have students compare and contrast two separate presidential administrations</p> | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p>  |

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| Government and Citizenship:<br>B3,B5,B8,B9  |               | Constitutional Change:<br>Formal<br>Informal   | and the use of informal amendments during their respective administrations.  |                                    |
| Define Federalism and outline the division of power between the national government and the states.<br><br><u>Alaska Standards:</u><br><br>Government and Citizenship:<br>A3, B4, C8  | VCS<br>12.4.1 | The Federal System<br>Government power<br>Expressed<br>Implied<br>Inherent<br>Limited on nation power<br>States' powers<br>Limitations on state powers.<br>Concurrent powers<br>Relations between states   | Stage a class debate or class forum on the questions:<br>Resolved, That the grants-in-aid system undermines the federal system and reduces the power and importance of the states.                                 | -Chapter test and quizzes<br><br>- |
| Compare and contrast state governments and the national government; taking into consideration state constitutions, state legislatures; the role of governors and the state court system.<br><br><u>Alaska Standards:</u><br><br>Government and Citizenship:<br>A3,A4, B4, C1,C2, C7, C8 | VCS<br>12.5.1 | Structure of state constitutions.<br>Amending state constitutions.<br>Organization of state legislatures.<br>Bicameral<br>Unicameral<br>Reapportionment.<br>Legislative system.<br>The governor's job and qualifications.<br>State court system.<br>Municipal<br>District<br>Superior<br>Supreme | Have students prepare a chart to indicate the course of a bill through the various steps of the legislative process in Alaska, and then compare this process with the passage of a bill in the federal government. | -Chapter test and quizzes<br><br>- |

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| <p>Explain the organizations and functions of city government.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>C1</p>                                       | VCS<br>12.6.1 | <p>City Charters</p> <p>Structures of city government:<br/>Mayor-Council<br/>Commission system<br/>Council-Manager<br/>Land use.<br/>City Services.</p>   | <p>Invite one or more local officials from the city to discuss with the class his/her office and functions.</p>  | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |
| <p>Know the main source of revenue for national, state and local government.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>F1, F2</p>                     | VCS<br>12.7.1 | <p>Kinds of Tax</p> <p>Proportional<br/>Progressive<br/>Regressive<br/>Sales Tax<br/>Excise Tax<br/>Personal and corporate income taxes.<br/>Property taxes<br/>Categorical grants.</p>               | <p>Have the class form groups and assign each one a kind of tax; general sales, excise, personal income, corporate income and property. Have each group prepare a brief oral report on the tax category assigned to it. Have a spokesperson report to the class.</p>   | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |
| <p>Outline the history, functions, and organization of political parties in the United States.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>B6,B7,B9</p> | VCS<br>12.8.1 | <p>Federalists<br/>Anti-Federalists<br/>Factions<br/>Nominations<br/>Caucus<br/>Conventions<br/>Primaries<br/>Party Organization<br/>Levels of party activity<br/>Party finance<br/>Minor parties</p> | <p>-Make a time line of the development of political parties. Have half the class become Jeffersonians and half Hamiltonians. Ask them to write a party platform for the election of 1800.</p> <p>-Have students work in groups in order to create a list of the various ways that political parties have impacted federal elections in the three most recent elections.</p> | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |

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| <p>Analyze the effect of public opinion, pressure groups and the media on government.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>B5,B9</p>  | <p>VCS<br/>12.9.1</p>  | <p>Public opinion<br/>Measuring public opinion.<br/>Pressure groups<br/>Economic interest groups.<br/>Professional<br/>Labor<br/>Non-economic groups<br/>Lobbyists<br/>Media<br/>Power of media<br/>Creating an issue</p>                                | <p>Use the quote by Will Rogers, "All I know is what I read in the papers." Ask students to compare the way the media covers a particular issue/candidate. Is the criticism that the media gives slanted or one-sided coverage justified?</p> | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |
| <p>Trace the history of suffrage from the beginning of the United States through the passage of the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>B5,B7,B9<br/>E2</p> | <p>VCS<br/>12.10.1</p> | <p>The extensions of suffrage.<br/>Limitations to suffrage:<br/>Age, citizenship, residence, registration.<br/>Limitations abolished:<br/>Literacy tests, taxes,<br/>Civil Rights Act 1960,<br/>Civil Rights Act 1964,<br/>26<sup>th</sup> Amendment</p> | <p>Have the students take an actual literacy test. Once the test is completed, grade and discuss the test and its purposes. How well do the students think the test accomplished its objectives?</p>  | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |

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|  |             |  | Activities  | Assessments                               |
| <p>Explain the Constitutional provisions, the powers functions and organization of Congress along with the public policy formation process.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>A3<br/>B1,B2,B3,B4,B5,B6, B7, B8,B9</p> | VCS 12.11.1 | <p>Provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bicameral</li> <li>Representatives</li> <li>Senators</li> <li>Terms of office</li> <li>Qualifications</li> <li>Elections</li> <li>Reappointment</li> </ul> <p>Powers and functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enumerated powers</li> <li>Electoral power</li> <li>Impeachment power</li> <li>Executive power</li> <li>Amendment power</li> <li>Investigative power</li> </ul> <p>Organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Party leaders</li> <li>Speaker of the House</li> <li>President of the Senate</li> <li>Committees</li> </ul> | <p>Have students write reports on one of the following topics: the work of the House Rules committee; the Office of the Speaker; the seniority rule; congressional reform; the Library of Congress.</p> | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |

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|   |                |  | Activities   | Assessments                               |
| <p>Compare the growth of presidential power and the functions of the president from Washington’s administration through George W. Bush’s.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>B3, D3, E5</p> | VCS<br>12.12.1 | <p>Chief of State.<br/>Commander in Chief.<br/>Director of Foreign Policy.<br/>Veto.<br/>Appoint supreme court judges.<br/>Appoint executive offices.<br/>Execute laws.<br/>Chief legislator.<br/>Director of Domestic Policy.<br/>Party leader.<br/>The pardon.</p> | <p>Have students construct a diagram or poster to illustrate the various roles of the President.</p>   | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |
| <p>Outline the process of nomination and electing a president.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and Citizenship:<br/>B3, D3, E5</p>  | VCS<br>12.13.1 | <p>Campaigning<br/>Nominating conventions<br/>Electoral College<br/>General election</p>   | <p>Prepare a report on one of the following topics: the “Stolen Election of 1876”; reform of the electoral college; the presidential campaign and election of 1976; the “youth vote” in 1972 and 1992.</p> | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |
| <p>Explain the function, growth, and characteristics of bureaucracy in America.</p> <p><u>Alaska Standards:</u></p> <p>Government and</p>   | VCS<br>12.14.1 | <p>The Cabinet<br/>Executive Office of the President.<br/>Office of Management and Budget.<br/>White House Staff.<br/>Czars.<br/>Functions.<br/>Uniqueness.<br/>Size.</p>  | <p>Invite a representative of some federal agency operating in your local to discuss that agency and its functions with the class.</p>   | <p>-Chapter test and quizzes</p> <p>-</p> |

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| Citizenship:<br>A3<br>B4, B5<br>G5  |                | Specialization.<br>Hierarchy.<br>Formal channels of communication.<br>Civil Service.   |   |                                    |
| Understand the jurisdiction of the federal courts and the kinds of cases that come before them.<br><u>Alaska Standards:</u><br>Government and Citizenship:<br>A3<br>B4, B5<br>G5  | VCS<br>12.15.1 | U.S. District Court.<br>U.S. Court of Appeals.<br>Jurisdiction.<br>Civil and criminal cases.<br>Controversy requirements.<br>Judicial review.<br>Checks and balances.<br>Public policy.<br>Importation policy for marijuana. | -Ask students to select a past Supreme Court case. Tell them to assume the role of the defendant, requesting a review of his/her case and write to the Supreme Court.<br><br>- Research Timothy Leary case. Discuss particulars of case and possible outcomes. Research similar cases in order to establish precedence. | -Chapter test and quizzes<br><br>- |
| Summarize the civil liberties guaranteed by the Bill of rights and the 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment and state cases in which these liberties have been upheld.<br><u>Alaska Standards:</u><br>Government and Citizenship:<br>A2<br>B2, B8, B9<br>E4 | VCS<br>12.16.1 | Bill of Rights<br>Amendments to the Constitution.<br>Supreme Court decisions.<br>Juvenile rights.<br>"Equal protection".   | For two or more of the Civil Rights guaranteed in the Constitution, draw up three hypothetical cases in which you think the Supreme Court would hold that a person's civil rights have been violated.   | -Chapter test and quizzes<br><br>- |