

**MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
COURSE OF STUDY**

**COURSE TITLE:** Dynamic Government

**COURSE NUMBER:** 803280 - TBD

**DEPARTMENT:** Social Science

**LENGTH OF COURSE:** One Semester

**CREDITS PER SEMESTER:** 5

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 12

**REQUIRED OR ELECTIVE:** Required

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTION:** June 2023

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Dynamic United States Government is a study of the institutions of the American government. The course, designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are anticipated to earn a high school diploma through an alternative pathway in accordance with California Education Code 51225.31.

The course focuses on the executive, judicial and legislative branches of the federal government, the election process, and political parties. There is an emphasis on the concepts of constitutionalism, representative democracy, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.

**TIME ESTIMATES**

Major units will vary in length, depending on the History-Social Science Framework Guiding Questions.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**Students will:**

- Understand the foundations of American constitutional democracy and its contemporary manifestations at the local, national and international levels.
- Understand and apply the responsibilities of being a citizen in a participatory democracy. 3. Understand the role that a plurality of thought, culture, and expression play in nurturing a healthy community.

**Content Themes:**

- Foundations of democracy
- The U.S. Constitution
- Federalism
- Branches of government
- Civil liberties
- The electoral process
- Civil society and media
- Comparative government

- Local politics

**Skills:**

- Critical Reading and Media Literacy
  - Identifying claims
  - Analyzing bias (author’s purpose, point of view, and audience)
- Conducting Historical Research
  - Evaluating the credibility of sources (print, digital, electronic)
- Historical and Critical Thinking
  - Cause and effect
  - Continuity and change over time
  - Compare and contrast
- Analytical writing
  - Working collaboratively with others
  - Identifying connections and patterns in American politics and institutions
  - Applying civic responsibility beyond the classroom

**COURSE CONTENT**

Unit 1: Fundamental Principles of American Democracy	
<p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Why do we need a government?</li> <li>● What do the terms liberty and equality mean?</li> <li>● What are the dangers of a democratic system?</li> <li>● What are the trade-offs between majority rule and individual rights?</li> </ul>	
Content Standards	Suggested Practice
<p>12.1 Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the influence of ancient Greek, Roman, English, and leading European political thinkers such as John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Niccolò Machiavelli, and William Blackstone on the development of the American government.</li> <li>2. Discuss the character of American democracy and its promise and perils as articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville.</li> <li>3. Explain how the U.S. The Constitution reflects a balance between the classical republican concern with promotion of the public good and the classical liberal concern with protecting individual rights; and discuss how the basic premises of liberal constitutionalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence as “self-evident truths.”</li> <li>4. Explain how the Founding Fathers’ realistic view.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand different places have different forms of government</li> <li>● Identify key political figures</li> <li>● Understand our nation was founded on key documents such as the Declaration of Independence</li> <li>● Demonstrate understanding of democracy</li> </ul>

<p>12.2.2. Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society (e.g., the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; right to choose one's work; right to join or not join labor unions; copyright and patent).</p> <p>12.2.5. Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations; that is, why enjoyment of one's rights entails respect for the rights of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of rights and responsibilities, including labor rights and responsibilities</li> </ul>
---	---

**Unit 2: The Constitution**

**Guiding Questions:**

- How and why does the Constitution both grant power and limit it?
- What is the relative power of each branch of government?

Content Standards	Suggested Practice
<p>12.4.</p> <p>2. Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.</p> <p>12.5.</p> <p>2. Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over the decades (e.g., the Warren and Rehnquist courts).</p> <p>12.1</p> <p>4. Explain how the Founding Fathers' realistic view of human nature led directly to the establishment of a constitutional system that limited the power of the governors and the governed as articulated in the Federalist Papers.</p> <p>5. Describe the systems of separated and shared powers, the role of organized interests (Federalist Paper Number 10), checks and balances (Federalist Paper Number 51), the importance of an independent judiciary (Federalist Paper Number 78), enumerated powers, rule of Law, federalism, and civilian control of the military.</p> <p>6. Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments.</p>	<p>Demonstrate understanding that the constitution can be amended</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of the three branches of government and their role and responsibilities.</p>

**Unit 3: Federalism: Different Levels of Government**

**Guiding Questions:**

- How and why are powers divided among different levels of government?
- What level of government is the most powerful—local, state, tribal, or federal?

Content Standards	Suggested Practice
-------------------	--------------------

<p>12.7 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.</p> <p>4. Discuss the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government's power.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate an understanding of levels of government by identifying who makes laws/regulations from the City level to the National level.</p> <p>Students will identify state rights and federal rights.</p>
---	---

**Unit 4: Three Branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary.**

<p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the structure and organization of Congress?</li> <li>● How does a bill become a law?</li> <li>● What are the greatest influences on congressional power?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the formal and informal powers of the President?</li> <li>● How has executive power changed over time?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Judiciary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the relationship between federal and state courts?</li> <li>● How are Supreme Court judges selected?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
--	--

<p><b>Content Standards</b></p> <p>12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legislative: Discuss Article I of the Constitution as it relates to the legislative branch, including eligibility for office and lengths of terms of representatives and senators; election to office; the roles of the House and Senate in impeachment proceedings; the role of the vice president; the enumerated legislative powers; and the process by which a bill becomes a law.</li> <li>2. Legislative: Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.</li> <li>3. Legislative: Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government.</li> <li>4. Executive: Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers</li> <li>5. Executive: Understand the scope of presidential power and decision making through examination of current and relevant examples.</li> <li>6. Judiciary: Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.</li> <li>7. Judiciary: Explain the processes of selection confirmation of Supreme Court justices.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Suggested Practice</b></p> <p>Identify the roles of the legislative, judicial and executive branches of government due</p>
---	--

**Unit 5: Civil Liberties**

**Guiding Questions:**

- What rights and responsibilities does a citizen have in a democracy?
- What does it mean to be a citizen?
- What are the limits of individual liberty?
- What are the dangers of majority rule?

**Content Standards**

12.2 Discuss the meaning and importance of Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

12.2.1 Each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).

12.2.3 Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes.

12.2.4 Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.

12.2.6 Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States, including the process of naturalization (e.g., literacy, language, and other requirements).

12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

12.3.3 Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity.

12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.

1. Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly) articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal- protection-of-the law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.

2. Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over the decades (e.g., the Warren and Rehnquist courts).

**Suggested Practice**

Identify or discuss the role and responsibilities of being a citizen.

Understand the basic freedoms the constitution provides for every citizen

<p>3. Evaluate the effects of the Court's interpretations of the Constitution in <i>Marbury v. Madison</i>, <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i>, and <i>United States v. Nixon</i>, with emphasis on the arguments espoused by each side in these cases.</p> <p>4. Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>, <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>, <i>Miranda v. Arizona</i>, <i>Regents of the University of California v. Bakke</i>, and <i>Adarand</i>.</p>	
---	--

**Unit 6: The Electoral Process**

**Guiding Questions:**

- How do government officials get elected?
- Why are elections regular and repeating in a democracy?
- What is enfranchisement and how has it evolved throughout American history?
- What impact do polls, political parties, and various interest groups have upon elections?
- How can young adults get civically engaged?

<b>Content Standards</b>	<b>Suggested Practice</b>
<p>12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.</p> <p>4. Understand the obligations of civic mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.</p> <p>12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the origin, development, and role of political parties, noting those occasional periods in which there was only one major party or were more than two major parties.</li> <li>2. Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections.</li> <li>3. Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding.</li> <li>4. Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office).</li> <li>5. Discuss the features of direct democracy in numerous states (e.g., the process of</li> </ol>	<p>Explain or discuss the right and reasonability of all citizens to vote.</p> <p>Explain or demonstrate understanding of the process and age when one can vote.</p> <p>Explain or discuss how democratic elections are won through majority decisions.</p>

<p>referendums, recall elections).</p> <p>6. Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.</p>	
---	--

**Unit 7: Civil Society and Media**

<p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent are the press and the media fulfilling a watchdog role?</li> <li>● Do media outlets provide enough relevant information about government and politics to allow citizens to vote and participate in a well-informed way?</li> <li>● How has the Internet revolution impacted journalism?</li> </ul>
---

<b>Content Standards</b>	<b>Suggested Practice</b>
<p>12.3.1 Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.</p> <p>12.6.4. Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office).</p> <p>12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press.</li> <li>2. Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics.</li> <li>3. Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.</li> </ol>	<p>Demonstrate understanding of the ways citizens can participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office)</p> <p>Discuss how the media can influence elections</p>

**Unit 8: Comparative Government and Challenges of Democracy**

<p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the major distinctions between free, partly free and not free nations?</li> <li>● How do authoritarian governments maintain power in comparison to democratic governments?</li> <li>● What is the evolution of non-state actors on the world stage?</li> </ul>
---

<b>Content Standards</b>	<b>Suggested Practice</b>
<p>12.3 Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify different types of governments and how each individual is elected (e.g. democracy, authoritarian, monarchy, etc.).</li> </ul>

12.9 Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

1. Explain how the different philosophies and structures of feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies, parliamentary systems, and constitutional liberal democracies influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.
2. Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.
4. Describe for at least two countries the consequences of conditions that gave rise to tyrannies during certain periods (e.g., Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, Cambodia).
5. Identify the forms of illegitimate power that twentieth-century African, Asian, and Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.
6. Identify the ideologies, causes, stages, and outcomes of major Mexican, Central American, and South American revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
7. Describe the ideologies that give rise to Communism, methods of maintaining control, and the movements to overthrow such governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, including the roles of individuals (e.g., Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel).
8. Identify the successes of relatively new democracies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the ideas, leaders, and general societal conditions that have launched and sustained, or failed to sustain, them.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Title	Publisher	Date
<u>MDUSD Government Units of Study</u>		



<u>History-Social Science Framework</u>	California Department of Education	2016
Magruder's American Government	Pearson	2015
<u>History Content Standards</u>	California Department of Education	2000

## **EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS**

Assessment Methods:

Formative and summative assessments include, but are not limited to, quickwrites, essays, quizzes, tests, exit tickets, discussions, Philosophical Chairs, and Socratic Seminars.