

## **SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT**

### **Contact Information**

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## **POLITICAL SCIENCE: COURSE #272**

**(Alternate Year Offering: See the Program of Studies)**

### **The Department's Educational Philosophy**

The goal of the Social Studies Department is to provide students with the information and skills necessary to act as responsible global citizens. To achieve this goal we facilitate the process whereby students develop an understanding of American culture. Culture includes the unique characteristics of American society – its social structure, economic system and political organization. An understanding of American society must be grounded in a knowledge of the general patterns of western civilization from which American culture evolved. In an age of increasing global interconnectedness, it is vital to develop an awareness of and appreciation for other cultures.

### **Guiding Principles**

All social studies students should:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the major factors involved in the development of civilizations from the Middle Ages to the present.
- Acquire useful and relevant information about the world in which they live.
- Develop the necessary skills to gather further information about whatever interests them.
- Think critically about sources of information, both primary and secondary, recognizing bias and viewpoint and separating fact and fiction.
- Interpret the world around them in such a way that they can make responsible decisions and act upon them effectively.
- Develop personal values and a sense of their own worth and dignity as individuals.
- Respect and appreciate one's own culture and way of life, as well as those of others.
- Be aware of the dependence of humans on their total environment and develop a personal concern for the preservation of an environment worth living in.
- Possess a sense of responsibility toward others and a willingness to work in a cooperative way for the common good.
- Develop a respect for learning and a desire to continue to learn beyond the opportunities provided by formal education.

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE: COURSE #272**

**Course Frequency:** Offered every other year, semester-long course, six times per six-day cycle

**Credits Offered:** 2.5

**Prerequisites:** Junior or senior course, elective

### **Background to the Curriculum:**

This is an elective, every-other-year, semester-long course designed to provide students with a general overview of political science – its ancient roots, its application in American society, its application in global society, and its application to current events. The course emphasizes theoretical and applied approaches to political science, and it builds significantly on the foundations laid in United States History I and II. Though there is a central textbook, numerous sources are used to augment it. There is a strong emphasis on media awareness, and thus the course often follows particular timely events in the news or current local or national elections.

### **Major Themes/Skills**

**Note:** There is often a significant difference between the first and second semester of this course. Very often, the first semester followed the local and national elections to augment the course. In the second semester, with the absence of any election to follow, other events (e.g., war in Iraq) provide topics for comparison and discussion. This said, the following list represents only the central common themes for both semesters.

The development of government	Mass Media – function, structure, impact on public/politics
Definitions of Political Science	The presidency
Greek underpinnings of Political Science	The art of campaigning
Constitutional underpinnings of U.S. government	Voting behavior/tendencies at home and abroad
Federalism	Congress
The role of the public	Congressional committees
The role of the politician	Judicial system
Political parties – advent and evolution in the U.S. and world	Policy-making – domestic/foreign
Economic considerations, fund-raising	Elections
Special Interest Groups – development of, impact of	Political Science as philosophy
Political Action Committees (PACs)	Current events

**Topics**

Philosophy of Politics, Greek history  
Political Parties  
Campaigning and voting behavior  
Special Interest Groups  
The Presidency  
Congress  
The Judicial System  
Foreign Policy  
Plato's The Republic

**Course-End Learning Objectives**

<b><u>Learning objectives</u></b>	<b><u>Corresponding state standards, where applicable</u></b>
1] Identify the philosophical and historical background to Political Science.	US1.2, US1.11
2] Define Political Science.	US1.2, US1.11
3] Distinguish between theoretical and applied Political Science.	
4] Understand the history and development of political parties, both in the United States and the world.	US1.19, US1.20
5] Identify current political parties and key figures in each (US).	
6] Identify trends in domestic and foreign voter behavior.	US1.19
7] Identify and analyze campaign strategy/theory.	
8] Identify and analyze specific historical and current campaigns.	US1.22, US1.24, US1.36 section J
9] Understand the process and laws behind fund raising – local and national.	
10] Understand the advent and role of PACs in politics.	
11] Understand the advent and role of Special Interest groups.	
12] Define and understand the process of lobbying.	US1.21, US1.22
13] Analyze the role of the President of the United States and compare to other heads of state abroad.	US1.22, US1.24, US1.38, USII.20
14] Analyze historic and current presidencies.	

15] Understand the relationship between the president and other branches of government.	US1.22, US1.24, US1.38, USII.20
16] Understand the relationship between the president and the public.	US1.22, US1.24, US1.38, USII.20
17] Understand the history, role, and impact of Congress.	US1.15, US1.21
18] Recognize themes and trends in Congressional policy-making over time.	US1.15, US1.21
19] Analyze current congressional debates, policy-making, and tendencies.	
20] Understand the history and evolution of the judicial system in the United States.	US1.19, US1.21
21] Recognize trends and themes in Judicial decision-making over time.	US1.19, US1.21
22] Analyze current issues in the US judicial system.	
23] Identify and analyze trends in US foreign policy.	US1.22, US2.3, US2.15, US2.19, US2.20, US2.21, US2.24, US2.33
24] Understand the role of the US government in the larger global community via policy making.	US1.22, US2.3, US2.15, US2.19, US2.20, US2.21, US2.24, US2.33
25] Understand the role of the public in the creation of foreign policy.	US1.22, US2.3, US2.15, US2.19, US2.20, US2.21, US2.24, US2.33
26] Analyze the foreign policy of various other countries (current events).	WH2.47, WH2.48
27] Understand the role of the media in domestic and foreign politics.	
28] Understand and analyze the writings of Plato as they apply to US and other world governments.	
29] Understand the economic, social, and political impacts of political change.	

### Assessment

- Tests
- Comparative/Analytical papers
- Take-home test
- Class participation is highly encouraged
- Readings requiring extrapolation and analysis

**Technology and Health Learning Objectives Addressed in This Course**

(This section is for faculty and administrative reference; students and parents may disregard.)

<b><u>Course activity: skills &amp;/or topics taught</u></b>	<b><u>Standard(s) addressed through this activity</u></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1] The use of computers/internet is crucial.</li><li>2] Students are expected to check several news outlets from all over the world.</li><li>3] Students are expected to type all papers and take-home work.</li><li>4] Internet research is necessary for all paper assignments.</li></ol>	

**Materials and Resources**

Text:

William R. Sanford and Carl R. Green, Basic Principles of American Government for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, AMSCO School Publications, 2006.

Supplementary Materials:

The Republic. Plato. Penguin Books, 1987