

*A Noble Experiment:
The History and Nature of the American Government
Course Outline*

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Unit 1: Foundational Principles

1. View of God: view of God affects your view of man, and your view of man affects your political philosophy and political system
2. View of man: Biblical or liberal (created being responsible to the Creator vs. evolution; sin nature vs. good environment; power corrupts)
3. Define government. When did government begin? Why is government necessary?
4. What is government's biblical responsibility (Romans 13)? What extra-biblical responsibilities has government assumed?
5. What is man's biblical responsibility toward civil government (Romans 13, I Peter 2)? When is civil disobedience justified (Acts 5)?

Unit 2: Two Types of Government

1. Unlimited: theocracy, absolute monarchy, dictatorship, socialism, communism fascism, (characteristics & pros / cons of each)
2. Limited: constitutional monarchy, democracy, republic (characteristics & pros / cons of each) **TEST**

Unit 3: American Political Heritage

1. Greeks: Athenian democracy
2. Romans: Republic 509 B.C. – 31 B.C., compare structure of the Roman Republic to the U.S. national government
3. England: Magna Charta & English Civil War imposing limit's on the King's power; growth of Parliament from an advisory body to the monarch to a true legislature
4. Enlightenment Political Philosophy: Montesquieu, Locke's state of nature and natural rights philosophy, Rousseau's social contract
5. Colonial Experience: Mayflower Compact, Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, Albany Plan of Union, post-Seven Years' War experiences leading to independence emphasizing the changed relationship between the mother country and the colonies, especially the imposition of internal taxes vs. the old commercial regulations and external taxes
6. Declaration of Independence (in-depth study and memorization of the important first and last paragraphs) **TEST**

Unit 4: Articles of Confederation

1. Rationale for creating a weak central government (the colonial experience from 1763 – 1776)

2. Structure and powers of the Articles government (confederate form of government with very limited powers)
3. Inherent weaknesses of the Articles government (no power to tax, no means of enforcing legislation and decisions)
4. Successes of the Articles government (Land Ordinance of 1785/Northwest Ordinance of 1787)
5. Factors leading to the Article's replacement (Shay's Rebellion, interstate economic conflicts)

Unit 5: The Constitutional Convention

1. Philadelphia, Virginia Plan, New Jersey Plan, Connecticut Compromise, 3/5ths Compromise, Interstate Commerce Clause, Executive Branch, Federal System, Preamble
2. Debate over ratification (Federalists v. Antifederalists) **TEST**

Unit 6: The Constitution

1. What is a constitution?
2. Article 1: The Legislative Branch (tie in recent history with each article; i.e Clinton's impeachment, 2000 disputed election, economic stimuli plans from the New Deal to the present, etc)
3. Article 2: The Executive Branch –different hats that the president wears
4. Article 3: The Judicial Branch – District/Circuit/Supreme Court/Legislative Courts (other courts created by an act of Congress) **TEST**
5. Article 4: The States
6. Article 5: Amendment Process
7. Article 6: Supremacy Clause
8. Amendments
9. Various views of the Constitution and their ramifications; i.e. literal interpretation, "living document," etc. as it relates to abortion rights, welfare, powers of government, and other contemporary issues)
10. Memorization of the Preamble and the Bill of Rights **TEST**

Unit 7: State & Local Governments

1. Organization of state, county, township, and city government (basic structure only; limited details)
2. Responsibilities (education, road maintenance, zoning regulations, law enforcement, etc)
3. Post-New Deal reliance on the national government
4. How population shifts have affected state and local governments (decreasing revenue in the Rust Belt states, demands for services in the Sun Belt states)

TEST

Unit 8: The World Order and U.S. Government

1. Isolationism and isolationist sentiment at various times in our nation's history, especially the world wars era and the war on terror
2. Intervention (Monroe Doctrine, Roosevelt Corollary, World Wars, Containment of Communism, War on Terror)
3. Historical impact of immigration (legal and illegal) on American politics

4. Impact of the news media on actions of the U.S. government **TEST**
5. How globalization and the global economy affects American politics
6. Proactive/reactive approach to foreign policy
7. U.S. role in light of the United Nations **TEST**

Unit 9: Citizenship

1. Definition and methods of (*jus soli*, naturalization, etc.)
2. Qualities necessary for good citizenship (honesty, frugality, hard work, etc)
3. Rights of citizens (life, liberty, property/equality of opportunity vs. equality of outcome debate)
4. Responsibilities of citizens
5. Participation in the political process/political parties
6. Impact of the news media on citizen's attitudes and actions
7. Memorization of the Pledge of Allegiance and the 1st verse of our National Anthem
TEST