

Milford Public Schools Curriculum



Department: Social Studies
Course Name: Youth and Government
Grades 10-12

YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT
Grade 10,11,12

(0.5 Credits)

Level: ES - 60E220

This course will blend the elements of civics and law-making and will incorporate the requirements of the YMCA Youth and Government program into the structure of learning. During this semester course only offered in the fall, students will examine the three branches of state and federal government, the bill and law making process, the role and importance of state and local governments in the daily lives of our citizens. Students will develop debate and oral argument skills through the use of various governmental simulation activities. Students will be required to participate in both a Pre-State Conference held on a Sunday in January, and the YMCA Youth and Government state program held during a weekend in March, or a Model Congress experience, where they will experience a hands-on and comprehensive approach to learning about the structure and function of our state government. This course has a fee and financial aid is available. This course meets the Civics requirement.

UNIT 1

Unit Title: Foundations of American Government

Unit Description

This unit focuses on the foundations of American government. Students will study the ideals of our founders, Articles of Confederation and its weaknesses, Constitutional Convention and Constitution, and the system of checks and balances. Students will also study federalism with a focus on state's rights and concurrent powers.

LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

Students will analyze ideas, historical documents and events that shaped the U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the early foundation of the nation.
Students will describe the structural features of the Constitution.
Students will explain the features of our federal system.
Students will analyze the arguments made by the Federalists and Anti-Federalists.
Students will analyze the development of our two party system.

Essential Question(s):

Why did the founders create a republican system of government rather than a democracy?
How does the Constitution create a limited federal government which preserves states' rights?
What is federalism? How does it impact governing in the United States?
How does the system of checks and balances prevent a tyrannical federal government?
What are the roles and responsibilities of each branch of government?
Why did a two party system develop in the United States?
How to individuals develop their political beliefs?

Content and Skills:

The ideals of John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Barron de Montesquieu and their influence on our founders.
The original intention of the states to develop a weak federal government that would preserve state powers

under the Articles of Confederation. The failure of the Articles of Confederation to provide enough structure for the new government to succeed, particularly in the areas of national defense, trade, and interstate relations. The motives of the founders at the Constitutional Convention to develop our current system of government. Why the founders chose to create a republican system of government rather than a democracy. Students should analyze Federalist 10 or other comparable sources to determine why the founders were concerned with factions.

How the new Constitution resolved the problems found in the Articles of Confederation, prevent a tyrant from gaining power, and create our system of checks and balances.

What the concerns of the federalist and anti-federalists were and how they were resolved by the Bill of Rights.

How political parties developed in our system with a focus on the nature of the two party system.

The platforms of the two current major parties with the option to also cover minor and third parties such as the Constitution Party, Green Party, Libertarian Party, and Socialist Party.

How people develop their political preferences, how Americans vote (trends), and the impact of polls on elections.

Standards Addressed:

D2.Civ.1.9-12. Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions.

D2.Civ.2.9-12. Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans' participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present.

D2.Civ.4.9-12. Explain how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested.

UNIT 2

Unit Title: The Executive Branch

Unit Description:

Students will study the role of the executive branch at both the state and national level. Students will study the powers of an executive in the legislative process and in carrying out governmental actions. Students will study the election process including: selecting candidates, campaign finance, primaries and caucuses, debates, campaign strategies, and elections.

LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

Students will describe and demonstrate the organization and functions of the executive branch.
 Students will identify executive powers.
 Students will evaluate the legal and expected prerequisites to be elected chief executive.
 Students will evaluate the functions of the federal bureaucracy.
 Students will demonstrate the operation of a presidential election campaign.

Essential Question(s):

What are the various roles of the President?
 How do checks and balances limit the power of a president?
 What are the qualifications to become president?
 What are the components of running a political campaign?

Content and Skills:

How the official (constitutional) and unofficial (well educated, wealthy, prior political experience, etc.) requirements of a candidate impact their electability.

How a political campaign is structured, including the roles of campaign staffers.

How political campaigns are funded, including PACs, Super PACs, individual contributions, campaign finance laws, and fundraisers.

How a political party vets a candidate before and during the primaries.

The role and organization of political debates.

How to carry out primary and general elections.

What powers are granted to the executive, how they carry out their responsibilities, and how they represent the people.

The role of the cabinet in carrying out laws and advising the chief executive.

The role of the bureaucracy in carrying out laws.

Standards Addressed:

D2.Civ.1.9-12. Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions.

D2.Civ.2.9-12. Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans' participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present.

D2.Civ.5.9-12. Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.

D2.Civ.10.9-12. Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

D2.Civ.11.9-12. Evaluate multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved.

D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.

UNIT 3**Unit Title: The Legislative Branch****Unit Description:**

This unit will cover the role of the legislative branch at both the state and federal level. Students will study the lawmaking process, political strategy, and handling constituent needs. In this unit students will research, draft, and argue bills in a model Senate. These bills will serve as the basis for legislation that is presented at the YMCA Youth and Government conference during the 2nd semester.

LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

Students will describe the organizational structure, support systems, and leadership systems of Congress. Students will discuss and demonstrate the procedures of Congress.

Students will demonstrate understanding of the relationship between the branches of government. Students will analyze the law-making process, the factors involved in the passage of legislation, and the interaction between members of Congress and their constituents.

Students will develop legislation and recommend government actions.

Essential Question(s):

How does Congress operate?

What is the impact checks and balances plays on Congress's ability to function?

Describe the lawmaking process.

How do members of Congress serve their constituents?

Content and Skills:

Mock Senate meeting, Textbook

Standards Addressed:

D2.Civ.1.9-12. Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions.

D2.Civ.3.9-12. Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order.

D2.Civ.5.9-12. Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.

D2.Civ.10.9-12. Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

D2.Civ.11.9-12. Evaluate multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved.

D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.

UNIT 4**Unit Title: The Judicial Branch****Unit Description:**

This unit will cover the judicial branch. Students will examine the dual court system as well as the three tier set up of our judicial branch at the state/federal level.

LEARNING GOALS

Enduring Understanding(s):

Students will describe the jurisdiction of federal/state courts and the method of selecting judges for them.
Students will demonstrate the workings of the Supreme Court, how it shapes public policy, and the forces that shape its decisions.
Students will apply the Constitution to a court case.

Essential Question(s):

How does the U.S. judicial system ensure equal justice under law?
What impact do presidential elections have on judicial selections to the courts?
Compare and contrast strict and loose interpretation of the Constitution and how it impacts judicial decision making.

Content and Skills:

Judicial checks and balances, including judicial review.
The impact of precedent on court decisions.
The selection process of judges.
The jurisdictions of courts at different levels of government.
How politics influences judicial decision making at the state and federal levels.
How the makeup of the Supreme Court is impacted by presidents long after they leave office.

Standards Addressed:

D2.Civ.1.9-12. Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions.

D2.Civ.4.9-12. Explain how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested.

D2.Civ.12.9-12. Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.

D2.Civ.14.9-12. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.