

AP U.S. Government and Politics Syllabus

NUCCI 2018-2019

Section #1: Overview of the Course and the AP Exam

Introduction to AP U.S. Government and Politics:

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level year-long course that not only seeks to prepare you for success on the AP Exam in May, but also provide you with the political knowledge and reasoning processes to participate meaningfully and thoughtfully in discussions and debates that are currently shaping American politics and society. It is important to note that this course is not a history course; it is a political science course that studies the interconnectedness of the different parts of the American political system and the behaviors and attitudes that shape this system and are the byproduct of this system.

AP U.S. Government and Politics accomplishes these goals by framing the acquisition of political knowledge around *enduring understandings* and *big ideas* about American government and politics that can be applied to a set of *disciplinary practices* through the use of a set of *reasoning processes*. Through the development of this set of political knowledge, disciplinary practices, and reasoning processes, by the end of the course, you will be able to analyze current and historical political events like a political scientist and develop factually accurate, well-reasoned, thoughtful arguments and opinions that acknowledge and grapple with alternative political perspectives.

The course will be organized around the following units of study:

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Unit 5: Political Participation

The political knowledge, *enduring understandings*, and *big ideas* acquired and developed in each unit will be applied to the *disciplinary practices* using the *reasoning processes* outlined below.

Overview of the AP Exam and Keys to AP Exam Success:

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will be comprised of the following sections:

55 Multiple-Choice Questions:

Structure – The questions on multiple choice will ask you to:

- Analyze and compare political concepts
- Analyze and interpret quantitative, text-based, and visual sources
- Apply course concepts, foundational documents, and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of hypothetical and real-world scenarios

Timing: One hour and 20 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

4 Free-Response Questions:

Structure – The four questions on the free response will ask students to:

- Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios
- Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
- Analyze quantitative data
- Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence

Timing: One hour and 40 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

As the breakdown of the AP Exam highlights, success in this course and on the AP Exam requires far more than the memorization of political knowledge. Success in this course and on the AP Exam requires connection-making with the aim of being able to analyze political information, regardless of the format the information is presented, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned opinion regarding this information.

The different pieces of the course fit together in pursuit of this aim through course content and *big ideas*, *reasoning processes*, and *disciplinary practices*.

Course Content and Big Ideas:

The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of *enduring understandings* and *big ideas* about American government and politics. The *big ideas* that connect the content in the course units include:

- **Constitutionalism (CON)**
- **Liberty and Order (LOR)**
- **Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD)**
- **Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)**
- **Methods of Political Analysis (MPA)**

Reasoning Processes:

The reasoning processes are the thought processes that will facilitate connection-making and analysis in the pursuit of effectively executing the disciplinary practices in the course. In other words, the reasoning processes form the cognitive bridge between the course content/big ideas and the disciplinary practices. The *reasoning processes* in this course include:

- **Definition/Classification: Demonstrating knowledge of course concepts**
- **Explain - Process: Explaining political processes**
- **Explain - Causation: Explaining causes and effects of political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors**
- **Explain - Comparison: Explaining similarities and differences among political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors**

Disciplinary Practices:

The disciplinary practices are the tasks students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices gives you the tools to analyze political information, regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The *disciplinary practices* in this course include:

- **Practice 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context**
- **Practice 2: Apply Supreme Court decisions**
- **Practice 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics**
- **Practice 4: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources**
- **Practice 5: Develop an argument in essay format**

Every AP Exam question fuses course content, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices. Thus, in-class and outside of class assignments will focus on the acquisition of course content and the application of course content to disciplinary practices using reasoning skills.

Textbook and Online Resources:

Each of you will check out copies of the following textbooks at the beginning of the course:

Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy, 16th Ed., by Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry.

Additionally, you have access to the following free online resources:

- **Oyez** – This online database provides succinct and accessible overviews for all Supreme Court cases.
- ~~**The National Constitution Center's Interactive Constitution**~~ This online resource is an annotated U.S.

Constitution that includes essays from multiple perspectives that frame the debates underlying key clauses and provisions of the U.S. Constitution. The National Constitution Center also has a blog that applies constitutional principles to current events.

- **AP Central** – This site has everything you ever wanted to know about AP U.S Government and Politics

Required Supreme Court Cases:

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 required Supreme Court cases:

- **Marbury v. Madison** (1803)
- **McCulloch v. Maryland** (1819)
- **Schenck v. United States** (1919)
- **Brown v. Board of Education** (1954)
- **Baker v. Carr** (1961)
- **Engel v. Vitale** (1962)
- **Gideon v. Wainwright** (1963)
- **Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District** (1969)
- **New York Times Company v. United States** (1971)
- **Wisconsin v. Yoder** (1972)
- **Roe v. Wade** (1973)
- **Shaw v. Reno** (1993)
- **United States v. Lopez** (1995)
- **McDonald v. Chicago** (2010)
- **Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC)** (2010)

For each of these cases, the facts, issues, holdings, and reasoning underlying the majority and dissenting opinions can be found through the Oyez database online. Oyez also has an app that can be downloaded to smartphones.

You will be required to complete multiple assignments analyzing and comparing these cases with other non- required cases.

The list above is not an exhaustive list of the Supreme Court cases that will be analyzed and discussed in this course. Additionally, you will have access to information and majority/dissenting opinion excerpts for cases that complement the required cases, such as:

- **Gonzales v. Raich** (2005) to go along with the analysis of **McCulloch v. Maryland** (1819)
- **Heart of Atlanta Motels v. United States** (1964) to go along with the analysis of **United States v. Lopez** (1995)
- **Zelman v. Simmons-Harris** (2002) to go along with the analysis of **Engel v. Vitale** (1962)
- **Morse v. Frederick** (2007) to go along with the analysis of **Tinker v. Des Moines** (1969)

Required Foundational Documents:

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of nine required foundational documents to help understand the context and beliefs of the founders and their critics and the debates surrounding the writing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution:

- **The Declaration of Independence**
- **The Articles of Confederation**
- **Federalist #10**
- **Brutus No. 1**
- **Federalist No. 51**
- **The Constitution of the United States**
- **Federalist No. 70**
- **Federalist No. 78**
- **“Letter from Birmingham Jail”**

You will also be responsible for related readings, including:

- Excerpts from Locke’s **Second Treatise of Civil Government** to go along with the analysis of the ~~Declaration of Independence~~
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- “**Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republican I**” to go along with the analysis of the **Articles of Confederation**
- Essays from the National Constitution Center’s “**Matters of Debate**” series (Interactive Constitution resource) to go along with the analysis of the **Tenth Amendment**

Grading

The GRCs for this course are as follows:

Content (these are the tests) 40%

Because of the length of the tests, three class periods are necessary for each assessment period. As such, units will be combined. As such, you will have three unit tests and one test for this category. Each test is weighted at 25% of this category. (unit 1 & 2: Assessment 1, unit 3 & 4: Assessment 2, unit 5: Assessment 3, Final examination: Assessment 4)

Skills (FRQs and project) 45%

Practice (homework, class activities) 10%

Reading quizzes/in-class quizzes, practice assessment 5%

Assessment/Practice Proficiency Levels	
4	Advanced Understanding of the Standard
3	Meets the Standard
2	Approaches the Standard
1	Does not Meet the Standard
S	Satisfactory
I	Incomplete
U	Unsatisfactory

Course Grade Scale	
A	89.5 - 100
B	79.5 – 89.4
C	69.5 – 79.4
D	59.5 – 69.4
F	0 – 59.4

General Expectations

- Grades are based upon the demonstration of proficiency on units associated within specific grade reporting criteria.
- **Assessment: 90%** Assessments are a means to determine a student’s mastery and understanding of information, skills, concepts, or processes.
- **Practice: 10%** Practice includes opportunities for students to receive clear, specific, and timely feedback as they are developing knowledge and skills, prior to Assessments.
- Assessments will be graded based on teacher/district/state rubrics.
- Wherever practical, students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their current level of understanding and mastery of standards.
- Students are only offered a multiple opportunity if their absence was justifiably excused. Teachers may deny a multiple opportunity if the student is unexcused or if a student has a single period excused absence without a parent signing the student out or a doctor’s note.

Class Expectations

Missing or incomplete assignments/assessments for this course: Superintendent Policies 6280 Homework and 6281 Make-Up Work will be followed for this course. They state that it is the student’s responsibility to request and obtain missing work. When a student has an excused absence, the student has the same number of days they were absent plus one day to make up assignments. Students who are unexcused may not be able to receive feedback from Practice prior to required Assessments.

- Missing work is denoted with an M, which equals zero.
- All late or missing practice assignments will not be accepted after the turn in date, unless the student has an excused absence. Absolutely no practice assignments will be accepted after the date of the unit exam.

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

(Textbook Chapters 2, & 3)

(AMSCO Chapters 1 & 2)

Essential Questions:

- How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty, while also promoting public order and safety?
- How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the U.S. Constitutional system?
- How does the development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact citizens and residents of the U.S.?

What you need to know:

1. A balance between governmental power and individual rights has been a hallmark of American political development.
 - a. Explain how democratic ideals (limited government, natural rights, popular sovereignty, republicanism, and social contract) are reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.
 - b. Explain how models of representative democracy are visible in major institutions, policies, events, or debates in the U.S.
2. The Constitution emerged from the debate about the weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation as a blueprint for limited government.
 - a. Explain how Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy are reflected in U.S. foundational documents.
 - b. Explain the relationship between key provisions of the Articles of Confederation and the debate over granting the federal government greater power formerly reserved to the states.
 - c. Explain the ongoing impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system.
3. The Constitution creates a complex policy-making process to ensure the people's will is represented and that freedom is preserved.
 - a. Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances.
 - b. Explain the implications of separation of powers and checks and balances for the U.S. political system.
4. Federalism reflects the dynamic distribution of power between national and state governments.
 - a. Explain how societal needs affect the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments.
 - b. Explain how the appropriate balance of power between national and state governments has been interpreted differently over time.
 - c. Explain how the distribution of powers among three federal branches and between national and state governments impacts policy making.

Key Terms:

Limited Government

Natural Rights

Popular Sovereignty

Republicanism

Social Contract

Participatory Democracy

Pluralist Democracy

Elite Democracy

Faction

Federalist

Anti-Federalist

Federalism

Checks and Balances
Separation of Powers
Articles of Confederation
Shays' Rebellion
Great Compromise
Electoral College
Three-Fifths Compromise
Amendment Process
Congress
the President
Federal Judiciary
Concurrent Powers
Federal Revenue Sharing
Mandates
Categorical Grants
Block Grants
Tenth Amendment
Fourteenth Amendment
Commerce Clause
Necessary and Proper Clause
Enumerated Powers
Implied Powers
Policymaking

Foundational Documents:

The Declaration of Independence
Excerpts from *Federalist No. 10*
excerpts from *Brutus No. 1*
Excerpts from the Articles of Confederation
The Constitution of the United States
Excerpts from *Federalist No. 51*

Required Cases:

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
United States v. Lopez (1995)

Unit 2: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

(Textbook Chapters 4,5,16,17 & 18)
(AMSCO Chapters 7,8 & 9)

Essential Questions:

- To what extent do the U.S. Constitution and its amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from invidious discrimination?
- How have U.S. Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?

What you need to know:

1. Provisions of the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights are continually being interpreted to balance the power of the government and the civil liberties of individuals.
 - a. Explain how the U.S. Constitution protects individual liberties and rights.
 - b. Describe the rights protected in the Bill of Rights.
 - c. Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First and Second Amendments reflects a commitment to individual liberty.
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- d. Explain how the Supreme Court has attempted to balance claims of individual freedom with laws and enforcement procedures that promote public order and safety.
2. Protections of the Bill of Rights have been selectively incorporated by way of the Fourteenth Amendment's "due process" clause to prevent state infringement of basic liberties.
 - a. Explain the implications of the doctrine of selective incorporation.
 - b. Explain the extent to which states are limited by the due process clause from infringing upon individual rights.
 3. The 14th Amendment's "equal protection clause" as well as other constitutional provisions have often been used to support the advancement of equality.
 - a. Explain how constitutional provisions have supported and motivated social movements.
 4. Public policy promoting civil rights is influenced by citizen-state interactions and constitutional interpretation over time.
 - a. Explain how the government has responded to social movements.
 5. The Court's interpretation of the U.S. Constitution is influenced by the composition of the Court and citizen-state interactions. At times, it has restricted minority rights and, at others, protected them.
 - a. Explain how the Court has at times allowed the restriction of the civil rights of minority groups and at other times has protected those rights.

Key Terms:

Bill of Rights
 Civil Liberties
 Establishment Clause
 Free Exercise Clause
 Symbolic Speech
 Limits on Speech – Time, Manner, and Place Regulations
 Defamatory, Offensive, and Obscene Gestures
 "Clear and Present Danger"
 Prior Restraint
 Second Amendment
 Fourth Amendment
 Eighth Amendment
 Selective Incorporation
 Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment
 Miranda Rule
 Public Safety Exception
 Right to Legal Counsel
 Right to Speedy and Public Trial
 Right to Impartial Jury
 Protection Against Warrantless Searches
 Exclusionary Rule
 Ninth Amendment
 Civil Rights
 National Organization for Women (NOW)
 Pro-Life Movement
 The Civil Rights Act of 1964
 Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972
 the Voting Rights Act of 1965
 Public Accommodation Laws
 Majority-Minority Districts
 Affirmative Action

Foundational Documents:

The Constitution of the United States

“Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Required Cases:

Engel v. Vitale (1962)

Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)

Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

Schenck v. United States (1919)

New York Times Co. v. United States (1971)

McDonald v. Chicago (2010)

Miranda v. Arizona (1966)

Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)

Roe v. Wade (1973)

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

Unit 3: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

(Textbook Chapters 6, & 16)

(AMSCO Chapters 10 & 11)

Essential Questions:

- How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time?
- How do political ideology and core values influence government policy making?

What you need to know:

1. Citizen beliefs about government are shaped by the intersection of demographics, political culture, and dynamic social change.
 - a. Explain the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government.
 - b. Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization.
2. Public opinion is measured through scientific polling, and the results of public opinion polls influence public policies and institutions.
 - a. Describe the elements of a scientific poll.
 - b. Explain the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data.
3. Widely held political ideologies shape policy debates and choices in American policies.
 - a. Explain how ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates.
 - b. Explain how U.S. political culture (values, attitudes, and beliefs) influences the formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time.
 - c. Describe different political ideologies on the role of government in regulating the marketplace.
 - d. Explain how political ideologies vary on the government’s role in regulating the marketplace.
 - e. Explain how political ideologies vary on the role of the government in addressing social issues.
 - f. Explain how different ideologies impact policy on social issues.

Key Terms:

Individualism

Equality of Opportunity

Free Enterprise

Rule of Law

Limited Government

Political Socialization

Political Culture

Opinion Polls

Tracking Polls

Exit Polls

Sampling Techniques
Sampling Error
Democratic Party
Republican Party
Conservative Ideology
Liberal Ideology
Libertarian Ideology
Keynesian Economics
Supply-Side Economics
Fiscal Policy
Monetary Policy
the Federal Reserve

Unit 5: Political Participation

(Textbook Chapters 1,7,8,9, &10)
(AMSCO Chapters 12,13,14,15, & 16)

Essential Questions:

- How have changes in technology influenced political communication and behavior?
- Why do levels of participation and influence in politics vary?
- How effective are the various methods of political participation in shaping public policies?

What you need to know:

1. Factors associated with political ideology, efficacy, structural barriers, and demographics influence the nature and degree of political participation.
 - a. Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation.
 - b. Describe different models of voting behavior.
 - c. Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections.
 2. Political parties, interest groups, and social movements provide opportunities for participation and influence how people relate to government and policy-makers.
 - a. Describe linkage institutions.
 - b. Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and government.
 - c. Explain why and how political parties change and adapt.
 - d. Explain how structural barriers impact third-party and independent candidate success.
 - e. Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest-group influence on elections and policy making.
 - f. Explain how variation in types and resources of interest groups affects their ability to influence elections and policy making.
 - g. Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes.
 3. The impact of federal policies on campaigning and electoral rules continues to be contested by both sides of the political spectrum.
 - a. Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential election.
 - b. Explain how the Electoral College facilitates and/or impedes democracy.
 - c. Explain how the different processes work in U.S. Congressional elections.
 - d. Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process.
 - e. Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaigns affect the election process.
 4. The various forms of media provide citizens with political information and influence the ways in which they participate politically.
 - a. Explain the media's role as a linkage institution.
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- b. Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.

Key Terms:

Fifteenth Amendment
Seventeenth Amendment
Nineteenth Amendment
Twenty-Fourth Amendment
Twenty-Sixth Amendment
Voting Rights Act of 1965
Rational Choice Voting
Retrospective Voting
Prospective Voting
Party-Line Voting
Voter Turnout
Vote Choice
Political Efficacy
Voter Registration
Compulsory Voting
Mid-Term Elections
Presidential Elections
Relationship Between Demographics and Voter Turnout
Relationship Between Demographics and Vote Choice
Linkage Institutions
Political Parties
Party Platforms
Committee and Party Leadership in Legislatures
Candidate-Centric Campaigns
Direct Primaries
Critical Elections
Realignments
Campaign Finance
Proportional System
Winner-Take-All System
Party Platforms
Iron Triangle
Issue Networks
“Free Rider” Problem
Single-Issue Groups
Ideological/Social Movements
Protest Movements
Professional Organizations
Federal Budget Process
Incumbency Advantage
Open and Closed Primaries
Caucuses
Party Conventions
Electoral College
Winner-Take-All
National Popular Vote
Presidential Elections

Mid-Term Elections
Political Consultants
Campaign Finance

Social Media
Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002
Soft Money
“Stand by Your Ad” provision
PACs and Super PACs
Horse Race Journalism
Media as a Gatekeeper
Media Bias
Partisan News Sites
Ideologically Oriented Programming

Foundational Documents:

The Constitution of the United States

Required Case:

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)

Unit 6: Interactions Among Branches of Government

(Textbook Chapters 11,12,13,14 & 15)

(AMSCO Chapters 3,4,5, & 6)

Essential Questions:

- How do the branches of the national government compete and cooperate in order to govern?
- To what extent have changes in the powers of each branch affected how responsive and accountable the national government is in the 21st century?

What you need to know:

1. The republican ideal in the U.S. is manifested in the structure and operation of the legislative branch.
 - a. Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.
 - b. Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policy making process.
 - c. Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.
 2. The presidency has been enhanced beyond its expressed constitutional powers.
 - a. Explain how the president can implement a policy agenda.
 - b. Explain how the president’s agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress.
 - c. Explain how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers.
 - d. Explain how communication technology has changed the president’s relationship with the national constituency and the other branches.
 3. The design of the judicial branch protects the Supreme Court’s independence as a branch of government, and the emergence and use of judicial review remains a powerful judicial practice.
 - a. Explain the principle of judicial review and how it checks the power of other institutions and state governments.
 - b. Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life tenure can lead to debate about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court’s power.
 - c. Explain how other branches in the government can limit the Supreme Court’s power.
 4. The federal bureaucracy is a powerful institution implementing federal policies with sometimes questionable accountability.
 - a. Explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government.
 - b. Explain how the federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rule making and implementation.
 - c. Explain how Congress uses its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch.
 - d. Explain how the president ensures that executive branch agencies and departments carry out their responsibilities in concert with the goals of the administration
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- e. Explain the extent to which governmental branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable given the competing interests of Congress, the president, and the federal courts.

Key Terms:

Senate

House

Chamber Sizes

Constituencies

Term-Lengths in Congress

Enumerated Powers (including Passing a Budget, Raising Revenue, Coining Money, Declaring War, and Maintaining Armed Forces)

Implied Powers

Necessary and Proper Clause

Policy-Making Process

Congressional Standing Committees

Speaker of the House

President of the Senate

Party Leadership in Congress

Committee Leadership

Filibuster and Cloture

Holds

Unanimous Consent

Rules Committee

Committee of the Whole

Discharge Petitions

Treaty Ratification

Confirmation

Federal Budget

Discretionary Spending

Mandatory Spending

Entitlement Spending

Tax Revenues

Budget Deficit

Pork Barrel

Logrolling

Party Polarization

Gerrymandering

Redistricting

“One Person, One Vote,”

Divided Government

Lame-Duck

Trustee

Delegate

Politico

Formal Powers

Informal Powers

Veto and Pocket Vetoes

Commander-in-Chief

Treaties

Executive Agreements

Executive Orders

Signing Statements

Appointments (Cabinet Members, Ambassadors, White House Staff, Federal Judges)

Executive Orders

Twenty-Second Amendment

State of the Union
Bully Pulpit

Judicial Review
Life Tenure
Precedent
Stare Decisis
Appointment and Confirmation
Judicial Activism
Judicial Restraint
Constitutional Amendments
Court Jurisdiction
Implementation of Court Rulings
Regulations
Fines
Congressional Testimony
Issue Network
Iron Triangles
Political Patronage
Civil Service
Merit System
Bureaucratic Discretion
Rule-Making
Policy Implementation
Oversight (Committee Hearings and Power of the Purse)

Foundational Documents:

The Constitution of the United States
Federalist No. 70
Federalist No. 78

Required Cases:

Baker v. Carr (1961)
Shaw v. Reno (1993)
Marbury v. Madison (1803)

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