

**Murrieta Valley Unified School District  
High School Course Outline  
February 2004**

**Department:** Social Science  
**Course Title:** U.S. Government  
**Course Number:** 1700  
**Grade Level:** 12  
**Prerequisite:** None  
**Length of Course:** Semester  
**UC/CSU (A-F) Requirement:** A

**I. Goals**

The students will:

- A. Explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the Constitution and other essential documents.
- B. Analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.
- C. Summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the U.S. Constitution including its amendments.
- D. Evaluate and defend positions on the scope of limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens.
- E. Evaluate and defend positions on fundamental values and principles of civil and free society.
- F. Evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state and local elective office.
- G. Formulate and answer questions about issues regarding the balance between majority rule and individual rights, liberty and equality, civil disobedience and rule of law, and religion and government.
- H. Analyze and compare powers and procedures of national, state and local governments.

- I. Analyze the origins, characteristics and developments of different political organizations across time with emphasis on political democracy.

**This course is consistent with the California State Social Science Framework.**

## **II. Outline of Content for Major Areas of Study**

### **A. Foundations of Government**

1. John Locke, Montesquieu, Machiavelli, Blackstone, Tocqueville and other thinkers
2. The balancing of Republicanism, public good and individual rights
3. The Federalist and limitations of power
4. Separate and shared powers, checks and balances, civilian control of military
5. Bill of Rights

### **B. The Branches of Government**

1. Article I: legislative branch
2. Amendment Process
3. Article II: Executive branch
4. Article III: Judicial branch
5. The Supreme Court
  - a) Bill of Right, First Amendment, Due Process, Fourteenth Amendment
  - b) Judicial activism and restraint, Warren Court
  - c) Marbury v. Madison, McCulloch v Maryland, U.S. v Nixon
  - d) Civil Rights, Plessy v Ferguson, Brown v BofEd., Miranda v Arizona, Blake v Regents of UC, U.S. v VMI

### **C. Rights and Responsibilities**

1. Bill of Rights and how it is secured
2. Economic rights, property ownership, patent, copyright
3. Legal obligations, jury duty, taxes
4. Civic duties, voting, public and military service
5. Rights of others
6. Citizenship, naturalization

### **D. Fundamental values and principles of civil and free society**

1. Association for social, cultural, religious, economic and political purposes
2. Influence on government in ways other than voting
3. Historical role of religion
4. Government and democracies, Government and authoritarian regimes

### **E. The U.S. Political System**

1. Political parties and two party system
2. Presidential politics, nomination process and primaries
3. Polls, funding, advertising
4. Lobbying, demonstrations, picketing

5. Referendums, recalls

F. State and Local Government

1. How conflicts are resolved between branches and levels of government
2. Sources of revenue for state and local governments
3. Reserved and concurrent powers of state governments
4. Ninth and Tenth Amendments and federal powers
5. Public policy, regulations and executive orders
6. Lawmaking at levels government and the media
7. Relationships of federal, state and local courts
8. Cuban missile crisis, Great Society, War Powers Act

G. The United States and the World

1. Feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies
2. Parliamentary systems and leaders
3. Federal, confederal and unitary systems
4. Tyranny in Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, Cambodia
5. Dictators in Africa, Asia, Latin America
6. Revolutions in Mexico, central America and Latin America
7. Eastern Europe and its influential leaders

**III. Accountability Determinants**

- A. Free response questions
- B. Document based questions
- C. Multiple choice tests
- D. Timed essays
- E. In class assignments
- F. Current events
- G. Homework
- H. Research projects and presentations

**IV. Required Text**

American Government. Steven Kelman. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Harcourt Brace & Company. 1999.

**V. Supplementary Materials**

- A. Daily newspapers
- B. Internet Sources