

## Syllabus

# Virginia and United States Government, Semester A

## Course Overview

This course provides a detailed study of the Virginia government and the US federal government. The course begins with a review of how to gather, interpret, and evaluate historical sources and data. Next, you'll explore the political and philosophical foundations of American democracy. You will explore the US Constitution in depth and develop a deep understanding of its significance in the functioning of government at the national, state, and, local levels. You'll also examine your roles and responsibilities as an American citizen, enabling you to participate effectively in civic life.

## Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Use a variety of methods to analyze historical information and interpret historical data.
- Analyze opinion, bias, and persuasive techniques in informational texts.
- Discuss the philosophical and historical origins of the foundational values of American government.
- Investigate the development of democracy in the United States.
- Examine the process of creating the Constitution, its principles and structure, and the protections afforded by the Bill of Rights.
- Examine the structure and powers of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government.
- Analyze the powers given to national, state, and local governments.
- Explain the civil rights and liberties granted to US citizens by the Constitution.
- Discuss the duties associated with civic life and citizenship in the United States and the importance of civic participation.

## General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Understand the basics of presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides.

- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Communicate through email and participate in discussion boards.

*For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.*

## Credit Value

Virginia and United States Government, Semester A, is a 0.5-credit course.

## Course Materials

- notebook
- computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent

## Course Pacing Guide

This course description and pacing guide is intended to help you keep on schedule with your work. Note that your course instructor may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

## Unit 1: Social Studies Skills

### Summary

In this unit, you will use a variety of methods to gather, interpret, and analyze historical evidence and data. You'll also investigate opinion, bias, and persuasive techniques in informational texts.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 1	<b>Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation</b> <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	Course Orientation
3 days: 2–4	<b>Gathering and Interpreting Historical Sources</b> <i>Review and describe how historians gather and interpret historical evidence.</i>	Lesson
2 days: 5–6	<b>Analyzing Historical Information</b> <i>Use a variety of methods to analyze historical information.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
2 days: 7–8	<b>Historical Data</b> <i>Interpret historical data.</i>	Lesson
2 days: 9–10	<b>Opinion in Informational Texts</b> <i>Analyze opinion, bias, and persuasive techniques in informational texts.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 11–15	<b>Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 1</b>	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 16	<b>Posttest—Unit 1</b>	Assessment

## Unit 2: Foundations of US Democracy

### Summary

In this unit, you'll analyze and compare historical and contemporary political systems and governments. You'll discuss the philosophical and historical origins of US government and investigate the development of democracy in the United States. You'll examine the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, US Constitution, and Bill of Rights. At the end of the unit, you'll compare the US system of government with other forms of governments, with a focus on the government of Mexico.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 17–19	<b>Political Systems</b> <i>Examine and compare historical and contemporary political systems and governments.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 20–22	<b>Origins of American Government</b> <i>Discuss the philosophical and historical origins of the foundational values of American government.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 23–25	<b>The Development of US Democracy</b> <i>Investigate the development of democracy in the United States.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 26–28	<b>The Jamestown and Plymouth Colonies</b> <i>Characterize the Jamestown and Plymouth colonies.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 29–31	<b>The Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation</b> <i>Examine the Declaration of Independence and the government created by the Articles of Confederation.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 32–34	<b>Writing the Constitution</b> <i>Examine the process of creating the Constitution.</i>	Lesson
2 days: 35–36	<b>The Constitution and the Bill of Rights</b> <i>Investigate the principles and structure of the Constitution and the protections afforded by the Bill of Rights.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 37–39	<b>Comparing Government Systems</b> <i>Compare the US system of government with other political systems.</i>	Lesson
6 days: 40–45	<b>Mexican Government</b> <i>Compare the government of Mexico to that of the United States.</i>	Course Activity
5 days: 46–50	<b>Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 2</b>	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 51	<b>Posttest—Unit 2</b>	Assessment

## Unit 3: Branches and Levels of Government

### Summary

This unit focuses on the structure and organization of federal and local governments in the United States. You'll analyze the structure and powers of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the federal government and examine the powers of the national, state, and local governments.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 52–54	<b>The Legislative Branch</b> <i>Examine the structure and powers of the legislative branch.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 55–57	<b>The Executive Branch</b> <i>Examine the structure and powers of the executive branch.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 58–60	<b>The Judicial Branch</b> <i>Examine the structure and powers of the judicial branch.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 61–63	<b>Local, State, and National Government</b> <i>Analyze the powers given to the national, state, and local governments.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 64–68	<b>Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 3</b>	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 69	<b>Posttest—Unit 3</b>	Assessment

## Unit 4: Rights, Liberties, and the Election Process

### Summary

In this unit, you will learn about the liberties and rights conferred on US citizens by the Constitution. You'll examine the role of elections and the party system in the US political process, the effects of campaign funding on elections, and how reapportionment and redistricting affect elections.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 70–72	<b>Civil Rights</b> <i>Examine rights that are granted and protected by the Constitution.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 73–75	<b>Civil Rights and Liberties</b> <i>Examine the civil rights and liberties enjoyed by US citizens as stated in the Constitution.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 76–78	<b>Political Parties, Elections, and Elected Officials</b> <i>Examine how elections and the party system play a role in the US political process.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 79–83	<b>Campaigns and Elections</b> <i>Examine campaign funding as well as reapportionment and redistricting in elections.</i>	Course Activity
4 days: 84–87	<b>Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 4</b>	Unit Activity/ Discussion

<b>Day</b>	<b>Activity/<i>Objective</i></b>	<b>Type</b>
1 day: 88	<b>Posttest—Unit 4</b>	Assessment
1 day: 89	<b>Semester Review</b>	
1 day: 90	<b>End-of-Semester Exam</b>	Assessment