

## Political Science

***“Politics is the art of the possible, the attainable - the art of the next best.” -  
Otto Von Bismarck***

### Course Description

This course will introduce students to the basic principles of Political Science and offer them the opportunity to examine political ideas and theories from different places and time periods. Students will study the effects of political events on their own lives and the lives of others, and they will develop an understanding of how political systems impact the world around them. Through critical examination of existing political systems and situations, students will sharpen their thinking skills and develop educated opinions about the global community in which they live.

Political Science is directly aligned with the traits defined in the ***Portrait of the Crusader***. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to develop an understanding of and appreciation for the duties of a faithful citizen, how to engage in political discourse honorably, and the importance of studying and understanding various political systems. Students are encouraged to value and respect the rights and dignity of all people and develop an awareness of the social issues that all nations face.

### Assessment Practices

Student knowledge and skills are measured in a variety of ways throughout the course, which may include the following:

- Written assessments that include terminology, short answers, and constructed responses to assess content knowledge and make connections.
- Essays that ask students to research, analyze and respond with sound reasoning and thoughtful insight.
- A project that may include a presentation or performative component.
- A Socratic Seminar or other form of debate.

### Essential Questions for the Course

- What role do political theories and ideologies play in the study of political science?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of different political systems?
- How does communication and culture shape political opinions?
- What happens when a government does not adequately meet the needs of its people?

### Course Curriculum

#### Unit 1 - Politics and Political Science (Chapter 1)

Pacing: 6 -10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- What is political power?
- What is political science?
- What role do theories play in the study of political science?
- What is the difference between political theory and ideology in political science?

Concepts/Skills:

- Examine the several explanations of political power.
- Justify the claim that political science may be considered a science.
- Compare and contrast the prevalent theories present in modern Political Science discourse.
- Contrast normative theories of politics to political science.

**Unit 2 - States (Chapter 3)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- What role does the bureaucracy play in wielding the power of the government?
- What statuses can a government achieve?
- What role do states and local governments play in relation to the central government?
- How does the performance of an electoral system impact the government?
- How does money impact the performance of a government?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain the institutionalization of power.
- Determine the factors that make a state effective, weak or failed.
- Describe the difference between unitary and federal systems of government.
- Explain how electoral systems and federal systems relate to each other.
- Analyze the role that the economy plays in the operation of states.

**Unit 3 - Regimes (Chapter 5)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- Which kind of government is the most effective in meeting the needs of the people?
- What is the difference between Elitist and Pluralist democratic theories?
- What is totalitarianism? Authoritarianism?
- What do you need to make a democracy work?

Concepts/Skills:

- Describe the values inherent in a representative democracy.
- Analyze the differences among various theories on how power is distributed in a democracy.
- Describe the essential factors inherent in totalitarianism and authoritarianism.
- Analyze the challenges that new democracies face.

**Unit 4 - Political Ideologies (Chapter 2)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- What is the difference between political theory and political ideology?
- What is the difference between classical and modern liberalism? Classical and modern conservatism?
- Why are there different forms of socialism?
- What is nationalism, and how can it be dangerous?
- Does nationalism ever have a legitimate place in politics?
- Do we still have ideologies?

Concepts/Skills:

- Contrast political theory with political ideology.
- Analyze how liberalism has changed over the years and explain why.
- Analyze how conservatism has changed over the years and explain why.
- Explain how socialism has evolved over time.
- Determine the benefits and deficits of nationalism.
- Explore the tenets of modern ideologies.

**Unit 5 - Political Culture (Chapter 6)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- What is the difference between political culture and public opinion?
- What causes a country's political culture to change over time?
- What makes up a political subculture?
- What are the main agents of political socialization?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explore the interaction between a person's value system and feelings on specific issues.
- Analyze how individual historical events and the evolution of people's needs impact political culture.
- Describe the type of people who have the most impact on political subcultures.
- Explain the impact that media, family, peer groups, and the government have on political socialization.

**Unit 6 - Public Opinion (Chapter 7)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- What can impact the relevancy of evidence?
- How is public opinion created?
- What are the benefits and downsides of polling?
- Describe what intensity means as it relates to public opinion.

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain the difference between anecdotal evidence and survey evidence.
- Analyze the impact that education, social class, religion, geography, gender, age, and race or ethnic background play on forming an opinion.
- Explain how statistical analysis can be misleading.
- Analyze the value of intensity when it comes to public opinion.

**Unit 7 - Political Communication(Chapter 8)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- Which mass media vehicles are the most influential?
- What role has the 24 hour news model played in altering political discourse?
- How have the unique needs for running a viable business on the internet further altered it?
- Why is adversarial media a necessity for democracy?

Concepts/Skills:

- Analyze the pros and cons of various forms of mass media.
- Examine how social media can impact political opinion
- Explain structural bias and how it affects news networks.

**Unit 8 - Interest Groups (Chapter 9)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- What makes interest groups different from political parties?
- Why does democracy need interest groups in order to function properly?
- What can interest groups do to further their goals?
- What are the negative consequences of an interest group becoming too powerful?

Concepts/Skills:

- Compare and contrast the relative importance of issues that affect everyone versus issues that affect specific groups.
- Explain the impact that lobbying, demonstrations, and protests have on preserving a democracy.
- Describe how interest groups can make a democracy stronger.
- Explain what happens when an interest group becomes too strong and how it can become a roadblock to needed changes.

**Unit 9 - Political Economy (Chapter 15)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- What is the connection between politics and the economy?
- What economic challenges have the U.S. faced since the 1960s?
- How are entitlements different from welfare?
- What could motivate people to change entitlement or welfare programs?
- How is America's attitude towards welfare programs problematic?

Concepts/Skills:

- Examine how the current state of the economy impacts political campaigns.
- Analyze how economic problems like poverty and outside competition can lead to disillusionment with the current government.
- Describe the qualifications needed for the various social programs typically enacted by democracies.
- Analyze the delicate balance between helping those in need and keeping taxes low.
- Examine the perspective that all America's social programs should be eliminated.
- Analyze the dangers of increasing America's social programs.

**Unit 10 - Violence and Revolution (Chapter 16)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- What role does legitimacy play in keeping a government together?
- What types of violence can be politically motivated? What is terrorism?
- What is the typical course of a revolution?
- Is our present era pre or post revolutionary?

Concepts/Skills:

- Analyze the factors that impact the longevity of a government.
- Examine the possible, varied forms of resistance against a government.
- Describe the power of fear as it relates to weaker organizations attempting to impose their will.
- Analyze the typical course of a revolution (decay, reaction to decay, dissatisfaction with that reaction, loss of popularity, the thermidorian reaction to bring back stability).

**Unit 11 - International Relations (Chapter 17)**

**Pacing: 6 -10 Classes**

Focus Questions:

- What are the differences between domestic politics and international relations?
- What causes people to disagree about what is best for a nation on the world stage?
- What makes international economics so complicated?
- Why do wars happen and how can we potentially avoid them?
- How does modern day international relations impact the idea of national sovereignty?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain the value of borders on politics.
- Analyze the factors that can make one nation stronger than another and how these factors can be adopted by political parties.
- Analyze how economic relations between nations form both bonds and competition.
- Examine the causes of violence and ways to mitigate them.
- Evaluate if a nation can keep its citizens safe in a 21st century world.

**Resources:**

**Textbook: Political Science: An Introduction, Updated Edition, 14th edition**

**Published by Pearson (July 14th 2021) - Copyright © 2017**

An E-book is available for the text and is typically used.

**Grading Policy:**

- 50% - Mastery - Summative assessments that test knowledge of content and topic questions.
- 20% - Formative -Assignments that help develop knowledge and understanding between summative assessments.
- 15% - Student Preparation - Assignments typically include work completed to prepare for class.
- 15% - Participation -Relates to participation in class and participation in assignments and group projects

Please refer to the Absence Make Up Policy in the student handbook.

The Social Studies Department has developed a department-wide policy for accepting and grading late work which will be shared with each student during the first two days of classes.