

Syllabus

PLATO Course Principles of Government and Public Administration, Semester A

Course Overview

This one-semester course is intended to help you familiarize yourself with the foundations and functioning of governmental functions within the United States. This course has thirteen lessons organized into four units. Each unit has a Unit Activity and each lesson contains one or more Lesson Activities.

This course covers the history and development of the US Constitution, and the functions of government and public administration in the United States.

You will submit the Unit Activity documents to your teacher, and you will grade your work in the Lesson Activities by comparing them with given sample responses. The Unit Activities (submitted to the teacher), and the Lesson Activities (self-checked) are the major components of this course. There are other assessment components, namely the mastery test questions that feature along with the lesson; the pre- and post-test questions that come at the beginning and end of the unit, respectively; and an end-of-semester test. All of these tests are a combination of simple multiple-choice questions and technology enhanced (TE) questions.

Course Goals

This course will help you meet the following goals:

- Evaluate and compare the characteristics and responsibilities of government and public administration and the concept of citizens' rights in the United States and abroad.
- Interpret the US Constitution, the evolution and functions of the US government, and citizens' rights and responsibilities.
- Analyze the role and influences of public policy and its effect on various groups in the United States and abroad.
- Appraise various careers, education, training, and the professional and ethical skills required to work in the field of government and public administration.

Prerequisite Skills

PLATO Course Principles of Government and Public Administration, Semester A has the following prerequisites:

- basic math knowledge
- ability to visualize and apply creativity and innovation
- familiarity with the writing process and following guidelines
- basic computer skills
- ability to structure and process information

General Skills

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

- Perform basic operations on a computer.
- 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

PLATO Course Principles of Government and Public Administration, Semester A is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- Notebook
- Computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft Excel or equivalent
- Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent

Course Pacing Guide

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

Course Components and Grading Rubric

The table gives a breakdown of the weight for each component in the course. Weight represents the percentage of the total score coming from each activity.

Course Components	Count	Weight
Pretest. <i>Pretests are optional assessments, typically designed for credit recovery use. If a student shows mastery of a lesson's objective, the student may be automatically exempted from that lesson in the upcoming unit. Typically, teachers do not choose to employ exemptive pretests for first-time credit courses. Pretests are not included as a component of the student's final grade.</i>	4	0%
Module. <i>Each module in this course contains an interactive tutorial and an associated mastery test. Tutorials may include one or more Lesson Activities that constitute tasks associated with the tutorial. The module score comes from a student's score on the mastery test.</i>	13	20%
Discussion. <i>Online discussions allow for higher-order thinking about terminal objectives. An online threaded discussion mirrors the educational experience of a classroom discussion. Teachers can initiate a discussion by asking a complex, open-ended question. Students can engage in the discussion by responding both to the question and to the thoughts of others. Each unit in a course has one predefined discussion topic; teachers may add more discussion topics.</i>	4	20%
Unit Activity. <i>Unit Activities are at the end a unit and constitute one or more small tasks. Their purpose is to deepen understanding of key unit concepts and tie them together. Each Unit Activity includes a simple rubric. The teacher versions include both a rubric and modeled sample answers. Unit Activities are teacher graded.</i>	4	20%
Posttest. <i>The posttest appears at the end of the unit and mirrors the pretest in structure, content, and complexity.</i>	4	20%
End of Semester Test. <i>The end of semester test (EOS) appears at the end of the course. Students are delivered a few items from every tutorial in the course in order to assess the major course objectives.</i>	1	20%
Total	30	100%

*Teachers may manually adjust these weights if desired, per district grading requirements.

Unit 1: Foundations of the US Government

Summary

In this unit, you will familiarize yourself with the basic concepts of government and public administration. You will also learn about the major features of different forms of government. Additionally, you will analyze the major political ideas, philosophies, and key historical documents that influenced the foundations of the US government. Finally, you will learn about the similarities and differences between the US system of government and other types of political systems.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	Course Orientation
5 days: 2–6	Fundamentals of Government <i>Recognize and explain the concept of authority, the functions of government, rights granted by governments, and governmental organizations.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 7–11	Origins of the US Government <i>Identify and discuss the philosophical and historical origins of the foundational values and documents of American government.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 12–16	Comparing Government Systems <i>Explain the similarities and differences between the US system of government and the political systems of other countries.</i>	Lesson
1 day: 17	Space Jumble	Game
4 days: 18–21	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 1 <i>Discuss the history of the political philosophies of natural rights, natural law, and social contract theory. Recall the emergence of people asserting their rights through the history of the two countries.</i>	Activity
1 day: 22	Post-test—Unit 1	Assessment

Unit 2: The US Constitution

Summary

In this unit, you will learn about the contributions of the political philosophies of the Founding Fathers to the development of the US Constitution. Further, you will familiarize yourself with the structure and functions of the national, state, and local governments of the United States. Finally, you will examine the structure and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the US government.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 23–27	Development of the US Constitution <i>Recall and discuss the doctrines and historical background to the US Constitution.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 28–32	Federalism in the United States <i>Recall the evolution and fundamentals of federalism and state governments in the United States.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 33–37	Branches of Government <i>Identify and describe the three branches of the US government.</i>	Lesson
1 day: 38	Thwack-A-Mole	Game
4 days: 39–42	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 2 <i>Name and discuss the philosophies that led to this design for the US federal government. Explain how the Framers of the Constitution convinced their fellow citizens that this was the best way to avoid tyranny.</i>	Activity
1 day: 43	Post-test—Unit 2	Assessment

Unit 3: Public Policy

Summary

In this unit, you will learn about the different types of public policies in the United States. You will also learn about the role of government officials and agencies in administering these policies. Further, you will explore how different groups influence public policy. Finally, you will learn about the impact of public policies on culture and different groups in the United States.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 44–48	Introduction to Public Policy <i>Explain how public policy is created and the contribution of government officials and agencies in administering policies; list steps in the policy-making process.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 49–53	Role of Different Groups in Policy Making <i>Identify and describe the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and media in policymaking.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 54–57	Public Policies and Culture <i>Recognize and discuss the impact of public and foreign policies on the culture and different groups in the US and abroad.</i>	Lesson
1 day: 58	Para Jumble	Game
4 days: 59–62	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 3 <i>Describe how the foreign policy of the United States policy has had a dramatic and direct effect on other countries.</i>	Activity
1 day: 63	Post-test—Unit 3	Assessment

Unit 4: Rights and Responsibilities of US Citizens

Summary

In this unit, you will explore the rights and liberties of US citizens as guaranteed by the US Constitution. You will also learn about the importance of voluntary individual participation in US democratic society. Finally, you will learn about effective leadership skills that are essential in government and public administration.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 64–68	Bill of Rights <i>Recognize the importance of the Bill of Rights and related amendments in the US Constitution.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 69–73	Civil Rights and Liberties <i>Identify and describe civil rights, liberties, and civil rights laws that impact US citizens.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 74–78	Civic Engagement/Participation <i>Recognize the importance of civic participation in the US democratic society and describe civic responsibilities.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 79–83	Teamwork <i>Describe the role and characteristics of teamwork and the role of parliamentary procedure in maintaining fair and orderly meetings.</i>	Lesson
1 day: 83	Space Jumble	Game
4 days: 84–87	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 4 <i>Recall the evolution of laws and doctrine such that today state laws adhere to federal standards regarding rights.</i>	Activity
1 day: 88	Post-test—Unit 4	Assessment
1 day: 89	Semester Review	
1 day: 90	End-of-Semester Test	Assessment

Course Map

You will achieve course level objectives by completing each lesson’s instruction, assignments, and assessments. For a detailed look at how the materials meet these objectives, review the [course map for Semester A](#).