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UNIT SYNOPSIS

Connecting the application of political science methods to the development of social and economic policies that Americans support, advocate for, and adopt is foundational to understanding the ideologies of political parties and patterns of political participation. American political beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, linkage institutions (i.e., elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media in all its forms), and the changing demographics of citizens. These beliefs about government, politics, and the individual's role in the political system influence the creation of public policies.

Students should understand the many ways that they can influence policymakers and impact the decisions that will affect their daily lives. The principle of rule by the people is the bedrock of the American political system and requires that citizens engage and participate in the development of policy. Under our Constitution, governing is achieved directly through citizen participation, although there are institutions (e.g., political parties, interest groups, and mass media) that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policy making.

This unit provides a great opportunity to integrate data analysis with an investigation of American attitudes about government and politics, how those attitudes develop and change over time, and how political scientists measure and evaluate political attitudes and behaviors. Students should be able to correctly interpret and connect what they see in the data to course concepts to draw conclusions. Drawing conclusions requires students to make inferences based on the patterns and trends in the data and their knowledge of political concepts. This is also a good time to have students analyze political concepts from secondary sources and explain how they relate to a political concept. Books by political scientists, opinion pieces in major publications, and scholarly online articles will often connect to current events and be a great resource. Students should analyze the argument, considering how the author responds to opposing or differing perspectives.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS AND CONTENT STANDARDS

Below are the standards **taught** and **assessed** in this unit.

Topic, Enduring Understanding, Learning Objectives (*Students will be able to...*)

4.1 American Attitudes About Government and Politics

- **LO 4.1.A:** *Explain the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government.*

4.2 Political Socialization

- **LO 4.2.A:** *Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization.*

4.3 Changes in Ideology

- **LO 4.3.A:** *Explain how social factors influence political attitudes and socialization.*

4.4 Influence of Political Events on Ideology

- **LO 4.4.A:** *Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization.*

4.5 Measuring Public Opinion

- **LO 4.5.A:** *Describe the elements of a scientific poll.*

4.6 Evaluating Public Opinion Data

- **LO 4.6.A:** *Explain the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data.*

4.7 Ideologies of Political Parties

- **LO 4.7.A:** *Explain how the ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates.*

4.8 Ideology and Policy Making

- **LO 4.8.A:** *Explain how U.S. political culture (e.g., democratic ideals, principles, and core values) influences the formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time.*

4.9 Ideology and Economic Policy

- **LO 4.9.A:** *Explain how different political ideologies affect the role of government in regulating the marketplace.*
- **LO 4.9.B:** *Explain how fiscal and monetary policy actions influence economic conditions.*

4.10 Ideology and Social Policy

- **LO 4.10.A:** *Explain how political ideologies vary on the role of the government in addressing social issues.*
- **LO 4.10.B:** *Explain how different ideologies impact policy on social issues.*

Topic, Enduring Understanding, Learning Objectives (Students will be able to...)

5.1 Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior

- **LO 5.1.A:** Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation.
- **LO 5.1.B:** Describe different models of voting behavior.

5.2 Voter Turnout

- **LO 5.2.A:** Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections.

5.3 Political Parties

- **LO 5.3.A:** Describe linkage institutions
- **LO 5.3.A:** Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and government.

5.4 How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt

- **LO 5.4.A:** Explain why and how political parties change and adapt.

5.5 Third-Party Politics

- **LO 5.5.A:** Explain how structural barriers impact third-party and independent candidate success.

5.6 Interest Groups Influencing Policy Making

- **LO 5.6.A:** Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest-group influence on elections and policy making.
- **LO 5.6.B:** Explain how variation in types and resources of interest groups affects their ability to influence elections and policy making.

5.7 Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes

- **LO 5.7.A:** Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes.

5.8 Electing a President

- **LO 5.8.A:** Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential election.
- **LO 5.8.B:** Explain how the Electoral College affects U.S. presidential elections.

5.9 Congressional Elections

- **LO 5.9.A:** Explain how the different processes work in U.S. congressional elections.

5.10 Modern Campaigns

- **LO 5.10.A:** Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process.

5.11 Campaign Finance

- **LO 5.11.A:** Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaigns affect the election process.

5.12 The Media

- **LO 5.12.A:** Explain the media's role as a linkage institution.

5.13 Changing Media

- **LO 5.13.A:** Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.