

Intro to American Government Course Plan

My Intro class is broken up into three modules (it used to be 4, but I condensed them so some of the older material might reference 4 modules). This is set up for a 16 week full semester course. A 10 week quarter would need some adjustment.

Each module has between 4 and 5 lessons each representing a week of normal class time, a set of discussions, 1 “exploratory assignment” and 1 module test.

The text of the discussion questions that go along with each lesson can be found in the “Other Materials” File

The Text for the Exploratory Assignments are in the “Copy of Exploratory Assignments” file.

I use an Open Educational Resource (OER) or Zero Cost Textbook (ZTC). It is the OpenStax American Government 2e text. It is just as good as any other textbook, and is available for free online at the openstax website. www.openstax.org

The Module tests are set up as “Mastery Tests” which means that students can take them as many times as they want, but they must get an 80% on the test to proceed with the course. This is to ensure that they have mastery of the material, rather than punishing them, or stressing them out with tests. I have found that this works really well.

The modules are set up as follows:

Module 1: The Founding

Lesson 1: Introduction and Main Themes of Democracy

Lesson 2: The Founding and Articles of Confederation

Lesson 3: The Constitution

Lesson 4: Federalism

Exploratory Assignment: Declaration of Independence Assignment

Module 2: The Three Branches

Lesson 1: Congress

Lesson 2: The Presidency

Lesson 3: The Judiciary

Lesson 4: The Bureaucracy

Exploratory Assignment: Bill Tracker Assignment

Module 3: Governmental Interactions

Lesson 1: Interest Groups

Lesson 2: Political Parties

Lesson 3: Voting and Elections

Lesson 4: Civil Rights and Liberties

Lesson 5: California Politics

Exploratory Assignment: Interest Group Assignment
Exploratory Assignment: Ballot Exploration Assignment.