APGov

Name_____

Date_____ Per._____

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
COURSE REDESIGN ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

UNIT 4 – POLITICAL PARTICIPATION			
Enduring Understanding	**Learning Objective**	**Essential Knowledge**	✔
Political parties, interest groups, and social movements provide opportunities for participation and influence how people relate to government and policy-makers	Describe the linkage institutions	Linkage institutions are channels, such as the following, that allow individuals to communicate their preferences to policy-makers: • Parties • Interest groups • Elections • Media	
	Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and government	The functions and impact of political parties on the electorate and government are represented by: • Mobilization and education of voters • Party platforms • Candidate recruitment • Campaign management, including fundraising and media strategy • The committee and party leadership systems in legislatures	
	Explain why and how political parties change and adapt	Parties have adapted to candidate-centered campaigns, and their role in nominating candidates has been weakened	
		Parties modify their policies and messaging to appeal to various demographic coalitions	
		The structure of parties has been influenced by: • Critical elections • Campaign finance law • Changes in communication and data-management technology	
		Parties use communication technology and voter-data management to disseminate, control, and clarify political messages and enhance outreach and mobilization efforts	
	Explain how structural barriers impact third-party and independent candidate success	In comparison to proportional systems, winner-take-all voting districts serve as a structural barrier to third-party and independent candidate success	
		The incorporation of third-party agendas into platforms of major political parties serves as a barrier to third-party and independent candidate success	

Enduring Understanding	Learning Objective	Essential Knowledge	✓
Political parties, interest groups, and social movements provide opportunities for participation and influence how people relate to government and policy-makers	Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest-group influence on elections and policy making	Interest groups may represent very specific or more general interests, and can educate voters and office holders, draft legislation, and mobilize membership to apply pressure on and work with legislators and government agencies	
		In addition to working within party coalitions, interest groups exert influence through long-standing relationships with bureaucratic agencies, congressional committees, and other interest groups; such relationships are described as "iron triangles" and issue networks and they help interest groups exert influence across political party coalitions	
	Explain how variation in types and resources of interest groups affects their ability to influence elections and policy making	Interest group influence may be impacted by: • Inequality of political and economic resources • Unequal access to decision makers • "Free rider" problem	
	Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes	Single-issue groups, ideological/social movements, and protest movements form with the goal of impacting society and policy making	
		Competing actors such as interest groups, professional organizations, social movements, the military, and bureaucratic agencies influence policy making, such as the federal budget process, at key stages and to varying degrees	
		Elections and political parties are related to major policy shifts or initiatives, occasionally leading to political realignments of voting constituencies	
The impact of federal policies on campaigning and electoral rules continues to be contested by both sides of the political spectrum	Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaign affect the election process	Federal legislation and case law pertaining to campaign finance demonstrate the ongoing debate over the role of money in political and free speech, as set forth in: • Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, which was an effort to ban soft money and reduce attack ads with "Stand by Your Ad" provision: "I'm [candidate's name] and I approve this message" • **Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission** (2010), which ruled that political spending by corporations, associations, and labor unions is a form of protected speech under the **First Amendment**	
		Debates have increased over free speech and competitive and fair elections related to money and campaign funding (including contributions from individuals, PACs, and political parties)	
		Different types of political action committees (PACs) influence elections and policy making through fundraising and spending	

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The various forms of media provide citizens with political information and influence the ways in which they participate politically	Explain the media's role as a linkage institution	Traditional news media, new communication technologies, and advances in social media have profoundly influenced how citizens routinely acquire political information, including new events, investigative journalism, election coverage, and political commentary	
		The media's use of polling results to convey popular levels of trust and confidence in government can impact elections by turning such events in to "horse races" based more on popularity and factors other than qualifications and platforms of candidates	
	Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior	Political participation is influenced by a variety of media coverage, analysis, and commentary on political events	
		The rapidly increasing demand for media and political communications outlets from an ideologically diverse audience have led to debates over media bias and the impact of media ownership and partisan news sites	
		The nature of democratic debate and the level of political knowledge among citizens is impacted by: • Increasing media choices • Ideologically oriented programming • Consumer-driven media outlets and emerging technologies that reinforce existing beliefs • Uncertainty over the credibility of news sources and information	