



I. Course Proficiency Purpose:

The purpose of this study guide is to aid the students who wish to take the proficiency assessment for the credit flex option. Items that the student will be required to know for proficiency will be administered in a two hour written exam.

II. Description of the Assessment Format:

- a. 150 Multiple Choice Questions – 1 point each
- b. 4 Written Free Response/Essay – 8 points each
- c. Total test is 182 points

III. Proficiency Content:

a. FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

- i. Students must know and understand the foundations and components of American democracy.
- ii. Students must know and understand the main principles of the Constitution, the formal and informal amendment processes and how the Constitution is a living document.
 1. Principles of Government
 - a. Government and the State
 - b. Forms of Government
 - c. Basic Concepts of Democracy
 2. Origins of Government
 - a. Our Political Beginnings
 - b. The Coming of Independence
 - c. The Critical Period
 - d. Creating the Constitution\Ratification of the Constitution
 3. The Constitution
 - a. The Six Basic Principles
 - b. Formal Amendment
 - c. Constitutional Change by Other Means
 4. Federalism
 - a. Federalism: The Division of Power
 - b. The National Government and the 50 States
 - c. Interstate Relations

b. THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

- i. Students must know and understand the framework of our national legislature
- ii. Students must know the powers that Congress possesses and how a bill becomes a law.
 - 1. Congress
 - a. The National Legislature
 - b. The House of Representatives
 - c. The Senate
 - d. The Members of Congress
 - 2. Powers of Congress
 - a. The Scope of Congressional Powers
 - b. The Expressed Powers of Money and Commerce
 - c. Other Expressed Powers
 - d. The Implied Powers
 - e. The Nonlegislative Powers
 - 3. Congress in Action
 - a. Congress Organizes
 - b. Committees in Congress
 - c. How a Bill Becomes a Law: The House
 - d. The Bill in the Senate

c. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

- i. Students must know and understand the presidential roles, powers and the structure of the other offices
- ii. Students must know departments, and agencies of the executive branch.
 - 1. The Presidency
 - a. The President's Job Description
 - b. Presidential Succession and the Vice Presidency
 - c. Presidential Nominations
 - d. The Electoral College
 - e. The Election
 - 2. The Presidency in Action
 - a. The Growth of Presidential Power
 - b. The President's Executive Powers
 - c. Diplomatic and Military Powers
 - d. Legislative and Judicial Powers

d. THE JUCICIAL BRANCH

- i. Students must know the structure of the U.S court system
- ii. Students must know the role that the courts play in interpreting the Constitution's civil liberties.
 1. The Federal Court System
 - a. The National Judiciary
 - b. Supreme Court
 - c. Important Supreme Court Cases: Marbury V. Madison, 1803, McCullough V. Maryland, 1819, Dred Scot V. Sandford, 1857, Plessy V. Ferguson, 1896, Brown V. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas,1954, Roe V. Wade, 1973, Tinker V. DesMoines, 1969, Miranda V. Arizona, 1966, Gideon V. Wainright,1963
 2. Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights
 - a. Due Process of Law
 - b. Freedom and Security of the Person
 - c. Rights of the Accused
 - d. Punishment

IV. Suggested Resources:

- Text: Macgruder's American Government 2003 Edition
- www.Oyez.org for Supreme Court Cases