



A comparison of the judgments of Montana high school and college government instructors concerning indispensable content for a high school government course
by Willis Monroe Conover

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF
EDUCATION

Montana State University

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to compare the judgments of high school government teachers and college and university political science professors in Montana concerning indispensable content for a course in American government at the high school level.

A questionnaire was devised to determine the judgments of the two populations concerning forty topic areas. In addition; judgments concerning course length, grade level placement, and whether the course should be elective or required were gathered and compared. Personal data from the two populations were also compiled and reported.

The questionnaires were sent to the entire population of high school government teachers (125) and college and university political science professors (31) in Montana. Each item on the questionnaire was examined by means of a chi square statistic to determine whether or not significant differences existed in the judgments of the high school teachers and the college professors. Tables were used to show frequencies for each group of respondents.

In general, the results showed that the two populations agreed in their judgments of twenty-seven of the forty topics. Specifically, the majority of both populations determined that the U.S. Congress, the executive branch of national government, the federal court system, and the U. S. Constitution represent indispensable content for a high school course in American government. In addition, the high school government teachers and the college political science professors agreed that a government course should be required of all students. The two populations agreed that one semester is a proper length for such a course.

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A COMPARISON OF THE JUDGMENTS OF MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL AND
COLLEGE GOVERNMENT INSTRUCTORS CONCERNING INDISPENSABLE
CONTENT FOR A HIGH SCHOOL GOVERNMENT COURSE

by

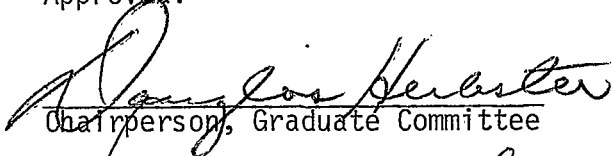
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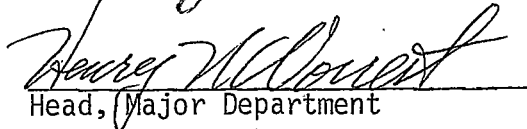
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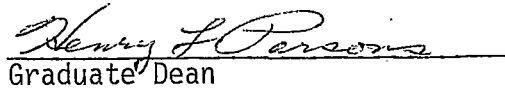
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare the judgments of high school government teachers and college and university political science professors in Montana concerning indispensable content for a course in American government at the high school level.

A questionnaire was devised to determine the judgments of the two populations concerning forty topic areas. In addition, judgments concerning course length, grade level placement, and whether the course should be elective or required were gathered and compared. Personal data from the two populations were also compiled and reported.

The questionnaires were sent to the entire population of high school government teachers (125) and college and university political science professors (31) in Montana. Each item on the questionnaire was examined by means of a chi square statistic to determine whether or not significant differences existed in the judgments of the high school teachers and the college professors. Tables were used to show frequencies for each group of respondents.

In general, the results showed that the two populations agreed in their judgments of twenty-seven of the forty topics. Specifically, the majority of both populations determined that the U.S. Congress, the executive branch of national government, the federal court system, and the U. S. Constitution represent indispensable content for a high school course in American government. In addition, the high school government teachers and the college political science professors agreed that a government course should be required of all students. The two populations agreed that one semester is a proper length for such a course.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the establishment of public education in the early United States, one of the major responsibilities assigned to the schools has been education for responsible citizenship (Quillen, 1966:256). The public schools were viewed as the major vehicle for inculcating the ideals of American democracy and the trainer of students for active political participation. More specifically, these objectives were assigned to the social studies curriculum. As the years passed, more emphasis was placed on the curriculum to deal with citizenship education. By 1916 specific courses in civics and government were being taught in American schools in pursuit of the objectives outlined for social studies (U.S. Bureau of Education, 1916:53).

With the launching of the Soviet Union's Sputnik in 1957 the American public focused on what it considered shortcomings in the American educational system. After curricular reforms emphasizing science and mathematics, attention was turned to the social studies. With the Cold War era and the challenges to the democratic system, Americans demanded that students gain more understanding and appreciation of their system of government. These developments touched off debates concerning government-related courses in the public schools and their content and emphases (Alilunas, 1964:13).

The decrease of the minimum age for voting to eighteen years, accomplished in 1971, placed even more pressure on social studies educators to provide training for students so that they could take proper roles in the American democratic system. This pressure was felt particularly at the twelfth grade level in providing seniors with knowledge and skills that would enable them to participate in American political life.

Not all educators have agreed on the content to be included in a senior American government course, nor on the length of such courses. Many scholars and educators have advanced opinions. Conant (1957:75) called for a required senior course in American problems or government with a heavy emphasis on economics. A one semester or full year course was suggested. Others such as Denhardt (1975:245) have called for the teaching of political socialization, claiming that the popular "Problems of Democracy" courses have not adequately prepared students to participate in civic affairs. Gillespie and Mehlinger (1972:599) proposed the "wedding" of two approaches--the teaching of political action and political inquiry--as a means of solving the dilemma of what to teach. In some courses, as pointed out by Hunt (1941:511), much of the content in the Problems of Democracy course dealt with personal concerns of an economic, social, or psychological nature and less with political science. Noting research results that showed that students enrolled in government

classes were not becoming politically knowledgeable nor prone to participation, such educators as Remy (1972:596) stressed the need for more emphasis on student thinking skills and less on the structure of government. The teaching of facts concerning America's government system was failing. His notions were echoed by the American Political Science Association which recommended reform of course content and emphasis (Report of the Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education, 1971:434). This group of political scientists is currently engaged in studying high school government instruction and in developing teaching materials. Various social studies curriculum projects have been instituted, but no single one has been widely adopted (Turner, 1974:10). As a result, great variety can be found. Some teachers emphasize government structure and organization. Others employ a problems approach through the study of such topics as foreign policy, taxing problems, civil rights, or law and crime. Still others have built courses around political science concepts such as political socialization. The debate concerning the proper content and direction for twelfth grade courses in government continues.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to compare the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and

university political science professors concerning indispensable content for a twelfth grade course in American government.

NEED AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Selection of content for a course in government at the twelfth grade level is no simple task. With the great expansion of knowledge in the social sciences in recent years, the determination of which content to include and which to exclude has been made more difficult (Oliver, 1957:271). Brubaker (1973:9) maintains that even though course titles may change, content is really determined by teachers. Lacking assistance in content selection, however, they tend to teach what they were taught in college and university political science courses. The Report of the National Council for the Social Studies Committees on Concepts and Values (1958:3) agrees with Brubaker, noting that someone must be responsible for determining course content--selecting the more important from the less important. Teachers are the ones who actually determine the scope, although textbook authors, curriculum developers, and committees might seem to prescribe content. Yet, because of the lack of consensus among social scientists and educators, the individual teacher receives scant assistance in fulfilling the task of content selection.

Stated in its most general terms, this study was intended to provide American government teachers with some common ground on which they may stand in determining course content. The attempt here was to focus on what is most important--indispensable topics in the study of American government at the high school level.

The judgments gathered from Montana high school government teachers and political science professors provide further information of benefit to curriculum developers and those charged with selecting classroom materials. In addition, it may assist curriculum groups in writing course guides for the use of government teachers.

This type of information is necessary (Report of the Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education, 1971:433). By surveying high school teachers and college and university political scientists a much needed exchange of judgments between the two groups took place (Haefner, 1964:70). It has been the political scientists who have been most critical in recent years of the teaching of government and politics in the secondary schools. George Denemark (1961:13) underscores the need for a scholarly exchange by urging

. . . that the most penetrating, searching kind of analyses be made of each discipline for the purpose of identifying its unique structure, its basic principles, its central ideas. Classroom teachers and other curriculum workers must join with scholars and scientists in the search for those central ideas and must take the initiative in designing school curriculums that reflect and communicate them.

With information from the two groups, courses may be devised that reduce instances of overlapping between the traditional ninth grade civics course and a senior course in government (Quillen, 1966:268). The judgments of those most active in the field can be compared and eventually put to use. In addition, college and university departments of political science or government may find the information useful in developing courses for prospective teachers planning to teach high school courses in American government.

This exchange and the development of a list of indispensable content areas may be most meaningful to Montana government teachers. Montana law requires that high school students take at least one-half unit of American government in order to graduate (State Board of Education, 1964:7). As a result, all students in Montana high schools enroll in a minimum of one semester of American government or some similar government-related course. The law does not prescribe what topics are to be included in such a course other than it should include "the study of local, state, and national government" (1964:7). Judgments gathered through this study may be of particular assistance to Montana teachers and curriculum developers in designing courses which meet state requirements.

A major purpose of this study was to provide a necessary exchange and to gather judgments that may assist the classroom teacher in selecting content for a course in American government.

With a knowledge of which content areas are judged essential by political scientists and fellow instructors, the government teacher may better decide what content to include and what to exclude from the curriculum.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What content is considered indispensable by high school government teachers for a twelfth grade government course of one semester's duration?
2. What content is considered indispensable by college and university political science professors for a twelfth grade government course of one semester's duration?
3. How do the judgments of government teachers and political science professors compare concerning indispensable content?
4. What do high school teachers and political science professors judge to be the proper amount of time to be set aside for a course in American government?
5. How do the judgments of government teachers and political science professors compare concerning the proper length of time that should be set aside for a course in American government?
6. What is the extent of preparation in political science of those high school teachers currently teaching American government courses in Montana's high schools?

7. Do government teachers and political science professors believe that a course in American government should be required of all Montana high school students or should it be elective in nature?

8. If a course in American government is offered in Montana high schools on either a required or elective basis, what do high school government teachers and political science professors judge as the proper grade level placement for such a course?

GENERAL PROCEDURE

A survey containing a list of content areas possible for inclusion in government courses for seniors was mailed to all high school government teachers and to all college and university political science professors in Montana. Each individual was asked to judge each topic on a five-point scale, reflecting its relative importance in the study of American government within the constraints of a one semester course. In addition, personal judgments concerning course length, requirements, and grade placement were requested.

Both high school teachers and political science professors were contacted directly with the mailed instrument at their places of employment.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The study was limited by the number of high school government teachers and college and university political science professors in Montana. A list of teachers teaching a course in government in Montana high schools during the 1976-77 school year was obtained from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

A further delimitation was that only Montana was used for surveying purposes. Only individuals teaching political science or government-related courses, either in the high schools or the colleges and universities, were contacted.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

American government -

The study of the processes and structures by which men govern themselves at the local, state, and national levels. (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1970:222)

Citizenship education -

The study of those portions of the social science/ social studies, and cocurricular activities which contribute to the development of understanding and attitudes conducive to effective participation in civic affairs. (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1970:219).

Political science -

The study of government(s) and political behavior. The subject matter provides pupils with insight into a variety of factors important to the study of governments and culture, and systems, processes, policies, theories, goals, and the relationships between governments. (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1970:222)

Political socialization -

The study of the ways in which society transmits political orientations, including knowledge, norms, and practices from one generation to the next. (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1970:222)

SUMMARY

This study was undertaken to gain information concerning the judgments of high school government teachers and college and university political science professors concerning content in a twelfth grade government course. Because of the current debate over content and emphasis in such courses, and because of the wide variety of practices taking place in these courses, the study enables curriculum developers or revisionists, teachers, and college personnel to know the judgments of those persons active in the teaching of government. Hopefully, this exchange of judgments provides a consensus of opinion of essential content areas.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The review of literature is arranged so as to present a historical picture of the development of government-related courses in American secondary education. The emphasis is on courses with American government content offered largely at the twelfth grade level. The review demonstrates the development of courses from their infancy, when they were considered a portion of the study of history, until their emergence as separate courses in 1916. Between 1916 and the late 1950's, the "Problems of Democracy" course dominated the curriculum until political scientists, curriculum experts, and teachers began to question its purpose and content. This questioning began a period of ferment which was part of a larger movement in the field referred to as the "New Social Studies" with its different emphases and purposes.

The review is divided into three periods: the 18th and 19th centuries, the period from 1916 to the late 1950's, and the period of the 1960's and 1970's. This latter period of reform and questioning is continuing. The references included in the review constitute a sampling of those dealing with developments during the

periods. More literature dealing with the most recent time period is included.

THE 18th AND 19th CENTURIES

Early in the development of the American secondary school, government-related material was considered important for inclusion in the social studies curriculum. Benjamin Franklin, in his "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania" published in 1749 (Woody, 1931:170), called for history to be taught in the academy. This study of history was, among other things, to provide students an opportunity to see advantages of law and constitutional government. He noted the importance of instructing students in such concepts as justice and the development of "sound Politicks" (1931:171).

This emphasis on history as the main vehicle of political science content was demonstrated by the textbooks published in the 1790's and early 1800's. In an overview of the development of government-related courses in the secondary schools, Quillen (1966:255) commented that these textbooks, although emphasizing history, contained political content that stressed the principles of federalism. These texts, Quillen believed, were intended to promote the idea of federalism as it had been established in America in 1789 in order to offset the spread of democratic ideas being

advanced by Jefferson and others. Thus, courses contained government-related content that stressed the study of the United States Constitution.

A step toward more emphasis on the social studies in general and political content specifically occurred with the issuance of a report by the Committee on Secondary School Studies (U.S. Bureau of Education, 1893). One of the subcommittees, the "Committee of Ten," urged that more time be allotted to history and its allied subjects in the school curriculum (1893:28). Specifically, the Committee called for civil government content in the grammar and high schools (1893:29). For the twelfth grade, it was suggested that a period of history should be studied intensively with civil government (1893:34-5). The civil government content would stress observation of state, city, and town government along with the study of comparative systems (1893:165). The emphasis, however, would remain on history.

These developments were to dominate the study of government until the second decade of the twentieth century.

THE PERIOD FROM 1916 TO THE LATE 1950's

The year 1916 marked a milestone in the development of government-related studies in American secondary schools. A report

of the Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (U.S. Bureau of Education, 1916:53) recommended sweeping changes--including changes in the curriculum as it concerned government instruction. The committee called for the establishment of a separate course in social studies for the purpose of studying contemporary economic, social, and political conditions for the final high school year. The course, which came to be known as "Problems of Democracy," would assist in training good citizens.

By the 1930's this course had become a popular offering in the secondary school curriculum to supplement the ninth grade civics course. Jessen and Herlihy (1937:283-4) found that by 1934 over twelve thousand high schools in the forty-eight states were offering the course, compared to 890 in thirty-eight states in 1928.

Even though the problems course was intended to include three disciplines (political science, economics, and sociology), in practice the emphasis was on government and politics. A study of textbooks by Stokes (1940:338) found that books in use in 1938 contained more space devoted to government than to any economic or social problems. Assuming that the textbook reflected much of what was being taught, Stokes concluded that the true intent of the course--to enable students to study contemporary problems--was not being achieved.

In an overview of the problems course in 1940, the Educational Policies Commission (1940:95) aired its criticism that the tendency in the schools was toward studying government in terms of its structure and not its functions.

The Problems of Democracy course, recommended in 1916, was well established, but the course title was misleading when its content was examined.

THE PERIOD OF THE 1960's AND 1970's

Beginning in 1916, courses in government and politics or problems had broken the ties to history. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1965:7) reported that 18 percent of students in grades nine through twelve in the 11,388 schools surveyed were taking a course in civics or government during 1960-61. Fourteen states had instituted requirements for such courses.

The question still arose as to what content was being presented. Shaver (1973:226-57) reviewed ninety-three secondary level textbooks used in government-related courses and found that they were unrealistic in the picture they presented to students. The idealized image found in the books, Shaver felt, did not reflect the real world as seen by students in their daily lives or in the mass media.

This emphasis on unrealistic, structure-oriented study of government and politics concerned many individuals and groups interested in the teaching of social studies. Literature on the subject pointed to the problems and called for the development of "New Social Studies" which would be more meaningful to students and help fulfill the goals of civic education.

Critics of government-related courses being offered in the secondary schools received support from research. Langton and Jennings (1968:852-67), following a survey of nearly two thousand students, found that there was no evidence to support the notion that courses in politics and government were having any significant effect on the political orientation of American high school students.

The American Political Science Association, through its Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education, issued a report in 1971 (pp. 431-60) that listed five criticisms of government-related instruction as practiced in the secondary schools. The committee stated that the current instruction in civics and government

... transmits a naive, unrealistic and romanticized image of political life which confuses the ideals of democracy with the realities of politics.

... places undue stress upon historical events, legal structures and formal institutional aspects of government and fails to transmit adequate knowledge about political behaviors and processes.

. . . reflects an ethnocentric preoccupation with American society and fails to transmit to students an adequate knowledge about the political systems of other national societies or the international system.

. . . fails to develop within students a capacity to think about political phenomena in conceptually sophisticated ways; an understanding of, and skill in the process of social scientific inquiry; or a capacity to systematically analyze political decisions and values.

. . . fails to develop within students an understanding of the capacities and skills needed to participate effectively and democratically in politics.

Remy (1972:592) took these five criticisms and gathered senior students' perceptions of their government courses. All of the criticisms were viewed as accurate by a sizable portion of the over thirteen hundred students surveyed in the fifty states. Remy also surveyed these students concerning what they wanted to learn in their government courses. The highest area receiving votes (31 percent) was the desire to think about and understand political behavior. The lowest area (12 percent) was the desire on the part of students to learn facts about government and politics (1972:593).

Chancey (1975:132) conducted a similar study among 544 students in twenty-two northern Ohio high schools. He concluded that students were uninformed about the realities of the American political system after completing a course in American government. Denhardt (1975:245-6) added his voice to the criticism of political science content in the secondary schools. While calling for reform, he

condemned current content for being too structure-oriented and for not preparing students to participate in civic affairs.

The criticisms, as noted by Alilunas (1964:11-14), began in the late 1950's and are continuing today. Those proponents of the "New Social Studies," such as Edwin Fenton, emphasize government functions, political behavior, and socialization. They have proposed a return to the intent of the original problems course; others, particularly political scientists, have called for a separate course to teach political science only. The ferment continues as persons concerned with the place of government study attempt to determine proper content and purpose.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The problem of this study was to compare the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning indispensable content for a twelfth grade course in American government.

This chapter presents the procedures employed in the conduct of the study. The populations will be described and categories of investigation outlined. The method of data collection, the means of data organization, the statistical hypotheses, and the procedure for analysis of data will be presented. Precautions taken for accuracy will be noted. Finally, the chapter will be summarized.

POPULATION DESCRIPTION

This study employed two populations. The total population of public high school government teachers in Montana, as noted in the records of the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Helena, Montana, was included. All those teaching government courses during the 1976-77 academic year were surveyed.

A second population, all political science professors or social science professors who teach government-related courses in

Montana's colleges and universities that train teachers for secondary school social studies positions, both public and private, were surveyed. All those who teach one or more graduate or undergraduate courses in the political science or government areas were considered part of the population to be questioned.

CATEGORIES OF INVESTIGATION

The major emphasis of the study was to determine the judgments of the high school government teachers in Montana and the judgments of college and university political science professors in Montana concerning indispensable content for a twelfth grade course in American government of one semester's duration. In addition, the populations were surveyed relative to their judgments of the length of courses in American government. Finally, both populations were asked their judgments concerning whether the course should be required of all students or elective in nature, and at what grade level such a course should be offered.

Personal data were collected. Information concerning level of educational training and years of teaching experience was requested. High school teachers were also asked to list the government courses they teach, to indicate the number of credits they have accumulated in political science or government and history, to note other duties that they have in addition to teaching government

courses, and to indicate in what ways they keep up with new knowledge and trends concerning the teaching of American government.

The college and university professors of political science or social science were asked to indicate their titles and years of experience, whether they were gained at the high school or college or university level, and their degree status. In addition, the professors were asked if they had any experience teaching high school government and, if so, how many years.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire was mailed to all high school government teachers in Montana and to all university professors of political science (see Appendix B). The names and addresses of the teachers were acquired from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The professors' names and addresses were gained from their respective college or university catalogues. In both cases, the survey instruments were mailed to their places of employment.

Both populations were asked to judge a list of content areas for a twelfth grade course in American government, given a one semester's duration for such a course. The listing of topics was constructed from content areas included in textbooks, curriculum guides, and periodic literature in the social studies field. The respondents judged the indispensability of these areas using a

scale of 1 to 5 (5=must be included, 4=should be included, 3=probably should be included, 2=might possibly be omitted, and 1=should definitely be omitted).

In addition, the questionnaire asked the respondents to judge the necessary length for a course in government (full year, half year or one semester, nine weeks, or other) and whether the course should be required of all students or should be elective in nature. Respondents were asked to indicate at what grade level they felt a course in American government should be taught.

A cover letter accompanied the instrument and pledged confidentiality (see Appendix B). An explanation of the needs and purposes of the study was presented. In an attempt to fulfill one of the major purposes of the study, all respondents were informed that they would receive a summary of the study's findings.

An advance letter was sent to the principals of all the high schools included in the survey (all those in which it was determined a government teacher was a member of the population). The letter asked for cooperation from the principals, and requested that they encourage their government teachers to complete the questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Non-respondents were contacted by a personal note approximately two weeks after the initial mailing to encourage completion of the instrument.

The validity of the instrument was determined through the use of exhaustive lists of content areas included in textbooks currently used in the subject, curriculum guides, and the periodic literature. The instrument was checked for validity by knowledgeable individuals active in the political science and teaching fields.

The reliability of the instrument was checked through a test-retest situation. Roscoe (1969:103) supports the use of test-retest method.

The most obvious method for determining reliability of a test calls for administering it to the same sample on two different occasions, then defining reliability as the Pearson product moment correlation between the two sets of scores.

The questionnaire was administered twice to a group of thirty experienced high school social studies teachers. A two-week intervening time between the initial test and the retest was judged appropriate. A period shorter than two weeks may have resulted in easy recall of judgments by the respondents while a period longer than two weeks could have resulted in the entrance of outside influences that may have caused the respondents to change their opinions to a drastic extent. Ahmann and Glock (1971:310) have stated that ". . . a week or two is judged to be an appropriate compromise."

The Pearson r statistic was applied to the thirty pairs of scores, examining the two tests at the .05 level of significance. In twenty-nine of the thirty cases, a positive correlation was found between the results. In light of these findings, the instrument was judged to be stable.

METHOD OF ORGANIZING DATA

The data collected as a result of the questionnaires are organized into tables for clearer presentation. Each item on the list of content areas is shown with its mean rating. Tables comparing the judgments of the two populations are presented. Personal data generated by the instrument are also presented in table form. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

STATISTICAL HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses that were tested in this study consist of the null and the alternatives. The null hypotheses and alternatives are stated as follows:

1. There is no difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning indispensable content for a twelfth grade course in American government.

There is a difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning

indispensable content for a twelfth grade course in American government.

2. There is no difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning proper length for a course in American government.

There is a difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning proper length for a course in American government.

3. There is no difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning whether a course in American government should be required.

There is a difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning whether a course in American government should be required.

4. There is no difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning the proper grade level placement of a course in American government.

There is a difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning the proper grade level placement of a course in American government.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data generated by the questionnaire were analyzed using a chi square test of independence at the .05 level of

significance. The function of chi square tests of independence, according to Roscoe (1969:196), is to provide

. . . extremely useful statistical procedures for determining whether two nominal (or higher level) measures are related. If one of the variables is group membership and the other a criterion of some sort, the test may be used to determine whether two or more populations are distributed in the same fashion with respect to the criterion.

The selection of the .05 level of significance reflects the "common convention" as noted by Ferguson (1971:149). The .01 level of significance protects more adequately against the possibility of rejecting a true null hypothesis, a Type I error. Selection of the .10 level protects more adequately against retaining a false null hypothesis or Type II error. The .05 level of significance accounts adequately for both Type I and Type II errors, in the opinion of this researcher, and provides a compromise position between the other available levels.

Contingency tables were constructed. The formula for determination of chi square was employed by computer, and the null hypotheses were tested.

PRECAUTIONS TAKEN FOR ACCURACY

Precautions for accuracy were taken to check the hand calculations of the respondents' judgments and the descriptive data. A

computer was employed to insure the accuracy of the chi square calculations.

SUMMARY

This chapter has endeavored to define the populations that were contacted in this study and the categories of investigation that were pursued. The method of data collection, the questionnaire, was discussed. All current Montana high school government teachers and all political science professors in Montana's colleges and universities received the mailed instrument which asked their judgments concerning content, length, required/elective, and grade level placement for a high school course in American government. Personal data were also collected and placed in descriptive tables. Checks on the validity and reliability of the instrument were conducted through the use of experts in the social studies field and through a test-retest method, respectively.

Data generated by the questionnaire are presented in table form and the null hypotheses and alternative hypotheses were tested employing a chi square test of independence. Adequate precautions, involving the use of a computer, were taken to assure accuracy.

Chapter 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA

The problem of this study was to compare the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and Montana college and university political science professors concerning indispensable content for a twelfth grade course in American government.

The instrument, cover letter, and self-addressed, stamped envelopes were sent to all high school government teachers as identified by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and to all professors and instructors of political and social science in Montana's four-year colleges and universities that train secondary school social studies teachers. The packets were mailed on March 18, 1977. Returned questionnaires received during the following four week period were used in the study. The following shows the percentage of returns from the two populations:

<u>Population</u>	<u>Sent</u>	<u>Returned</u>	<u>%</u>
High school government teachers	125	100	80.0
College and university political science professors	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>83.9</u>
Totals	156	126	80.8

Of the 156 individuals to whom instruments were mailed, 126 responded for an overall return of 80.8 percent. Not all one

hundred teachers and twenty-six professors answered each survey question; thus the total shown in some of the tables do not equal one hundred and twenty-six respectively.

Data collected through the questionnaire provided information concerning the two populations.

PERSONAL DATA CONCERNING THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

One hundred teachers representing eighty-two Montana high schools returned the questionnaires. Of these one hundred teachers, eighty-six were male and fourteen were female. A majority of these teachers (78 percent) taught courses entitled "American Government" for a semester (46 percent) or a full year (32 percent) to twelfth grade students. The remaining teachers taught courses of various titles for a semester or a year to students in grades nine through twelve.

The educational level of high school government teachers, as measured by the highest degrees they have earned, is reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Highest Degrees Held by High School
Government Teachers

Highest Degree Held	No.	%
Bachelor of Science	51	51.5
Bachelor of Arts	29	29.2
Master of Arts	7	7.1
Master of Science	6	6.1
Master of Education	5	5.1
Fifth Year	<u>1</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Totals	99	100.0

The highest degree held by over 80 percent of the teachers is a bachelor's degree. Eighteen of the ninety-nine teachers responding to the question hold master's degrees.

Table 2 indicates at what college and universities the high school government teachers earned their degrees and the number and kinds of degrees the institutions awarded.

Table 2

Colleges and Universities Attended by High School
Government Teachers and Degrees Awarded

College or University Attended	Number of Bachelor's Degrees	%	Number of Master's Degrees	%
Western Montana College	19	19.4	0	0.0
University of Montana	16	16.3	6	33.3
Eastern Montana College	14	14.3	0	0.0
Northern Montana College	13	13.3	0	0.0
Montana State University	10	10.2	6	33.3
Carroll College	6	6.1	0	0.0
College of Great Falls	4	4.1	0	0.0
Rocky Mountain College	1	1.0	0	0.0
Other Colleges or Universities Outside Montana	15	15.3	6	33.3
Totals	98	100.0	18	100.0

The largest number of high school government teachers, nineteen or 19.4 percent, received their degrees from Western Montana College. Overall, eighty-three of the ninety-eight teachers, or nearly 85 percent, received their undergraduate degrees from a college or university in Montana.

The high school government teachers' major and minor areas of study in their bachelor degree programs are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Major and Minor Areas of Study of High School
Teachers in Their Bachelor Degree Programs

Area of Study	Teachers Majoring	%	Teachers Minoring	%
Social studies or social science	33	33.3	12	13.3
History	33	33.3	15	16.7
Physical education	15	15.2	23	25.6
Political science	4	4.0	10	11.1
Business education	2	2.0	1	1.1
Psychology	1	1.0	4	4.4
English	1	1.0	9	10.0
Spanish	1	1.0	2	2.2
Biological science	1	1.0	3	3.3
General science	1	1.0	2	2.2
Guidance	0	0.0	2	2.2
All others	<u>7</u>	<u>7.0</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7.7</u>
Totals	99	100.0	90	100.0

The most popular major areas of study for the current high school government teachers were social studies or social science and history. Physical education was the most frequent minor area of study. One of the teachers had neither a major nor a minor in social studies, social science, or history.

The major and minor areas of study for those teachers who have earned a master's degree are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4
Major and Minor Areas of Study in High School
Teachers' Master's Degrees

Area of Study	Teachers Majoring	%	Teachers Minoring	%
Secondary education	5	29.4	0	0.0
History	4	23.5	1	25.0
Economics	3	17.6	0	0.0
Social studies	2	11.8	0	0.0
Sociology	1	5.9	0	0.0
Political science	1	5.9	0	0.0
Physical education	1	5.9	0	0.0
Anthropology	0	0.0	1	25.0
Educational administration	0	0.0	2	50.0
Totals	17	100.0	4	100.0

Five of the seventeen teachers who responded to this section of the questionnaire indicated that they had majored in secondary education in their master's degree programs. Only four of the seventeen respondents indicated any minor area of study in their master's degree programs.

Ninety-two teachers responded to the question on the survey asking them to indicate the number of graduate or undergraduate credits they had earned in political science or government and in history. Table 5 summarizes the findings.

Table 5
Credits in Political Science and History Earned
by High School Government Teachers

No. of Quarter Credits	No. of Teachers with Political Science Credits	%	No. of Teachers with History Credits	%
0 - 12	23	25.0	7	7.6
13 - 24	31	33.7	11	12.0
25 - 36	19	20.6	14	15.2
37 - 48	7	7.6	17	18.5
49 - 60	5	5.4	19	20.6
61 - 72	3	3.3	8	8.7
73 - 84	3	3.3	4	4.4
85 - 96	0	0.0	4	4.4
97 or more	1	1.1	8	8.6
Totals	92	100.0	92	100.0

Median number of political science credits = 15.84
Median number of history credits = 38.94

The largest percentage of teachers has earned between thirteen and twenty-four credits in political science or government. The median number of credits is 15.84. The high school government teachers have generally earned more credits in history, the largest percentage indicating between forty-nine and sixty quarter credits. The median, however, was shown to be 38.94 credits.

Table 6 summarizes the years of teaching experience of the high school government teachers. The teachers were asked to indicate the number of years of experience they had at the high school level, including the current year. In addition, each teacher was requested to state how many years he or she had taught high school government courses.

Table 6

Years of Experience of High School Teachers

Years	Total Years Experience	%	Years of Experience Teaching Government	%
1 - 3	30	30.3	41	41.4
4 - 6	18	18.2	26	26.3
7 - 9	19	19.2	14	14.1
10 - 12	9	9.1	7	7.1
13 - 15	9	9.1	6	6.1
16 - 18	5	5.1	3	3.0
19 - 21	4	4.0	0	0.0
22 - 24	2	2.0	1	1.0
25 - 27	2	2.0	0	0.0
28 - 30	1	1.0	1	1.0
Totals	99	100.0	99	100.0

Median Total Years of Experience = 8.84

Median Years of Experience Teaching Government = 5.35

In general, the high school government teachers have not had long years of experience either in high school teaching or, specifically, in teaching government courses. The median years of experience was 8.84, while the median years of teaching government was 5.35

The high school government teachers were asked to indicate what other assignments they had in addition to teaching government courses in their schools. A checklist was provided for their

responses. Table 7 reports the findings from the one hundred teachers who completed this section.

Table 7
Other Assignments of Government Teachers

Type of Assignment	No.	%
Teaching other social studies courses	80	80.0
Coaching	59	59.0
Advising student organizations	55	55.0
Teaching courses outside the social studies	33	33.0
Administrative duties	10	10.0
Other duties	18	18.0

The largest number of teachers, eighty out of one hundred, indicated that they taught other social studies courses. A majority of teachers also coach athletic teams and advise other student organizations in addition to teaching assigned courses in government.

Table 8 reports the responses of one hundred teachers when asked to indicate in what ways they keep up with trends, developments, and new knowledge in the teaching of government. A checklist with seven items or ways was provided. Ninety-six teachers responded to this question.

Table 8

How Teachers Keep up with Trends, Developments,
and New Knowledge in Teaching Government

Ways of Keeping Up	No.	%
Reading professional literature	51	53.1
Reading newspapers and other periodicals	95	98.9
Taking social studies courses	65	67.7
Taking education courses	37	38.5
Attending in-service programs	57	59.4
Attending social studies conferences	51	53.1
Other activities	23	23.9

Reading newspapers and other politically-oriented publications received the highest number of responses with ninety-five of the ninety-six teachers indicating that this was one way in which they kept up with trends, developments, and new knowledge in their teaching area.

Table 9 summarized the responses by showing the number of items checked by the teachers responding.

Table 9

Number of Items Checked by Teachers

Number of Items	Number of Teachers	%
1	6	6.2
2	15	15.6
3	24	25.0
4	21	21.9
5	16	16.7
6	11	11.5
7	3	3.1
Totals	96	100.0
Mean = 3.74		
Standard deviation = 1.52		

Ninety-four percent of the teachers checked more than one way. The mean number of items checked was 3.74.

PERSONAL DATA CONCERNING THE POLITICAL
SCIENCE PROFESSORS

Twenty-six professors of political and social science in eight Montana colleges and universities that train social studies

teachers returned the questionnaire. Of these twenty-six, twenty-five were male and one was female.

The college and university political science professors and instructors were asked to list information concerning their educational level and their experience.

Table 10 summarizes the highest degrees held by the twenty-six professors.

Table 10
Highest Degrees of Professors

Highest Degree Held	No.	%
Doctor of Philosophy	21	80.9
Doctor of Education	1	3.8
Doctor of Laws (J. D.)	1	3.8
Master of Arts	2	7.7
Master of Science	1	3.8
Totals	26	100.0

Twenty-one of the respondents, or over 80 percent, indicated that they held a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Table 11 reflects the years of teaching experience accumulated by the college and university professors.

Table 11

Teaching Experience of Professors

No. of Years	At College Level	%	At High School Level	%	Of Teaching High School Government	%
0	0	0.0	18	69.2	21	80.8
1- 5	3	11.5	8	30.8	5	19.2
6-10	10	38.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
11-15	7	26.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
16-20	2	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
21 or more	4	15.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Totals	26	100.0	26	100.0	26	100.0

Mean years at college level = 12.15

The largest number of professors have taught for between six and ten years at the college or university level. The median number of years is 12.15. Eight of the professors have had experience at the high school level, and, of those, five have had experience in teaching government in the high school.

JUDGMENTS OF TOPIC AREAS

One of the major purposes of this study was to determine what topics were judged by the two populations as indispensable for a twelfth grade course in government at the high school level. Using a five point scale, the two groups were asked to judge forty topics listed on the questionnaire. A rating of "5" indicated that the item "must be included in a one semester course." A "4" indicated that the topic "should be included," a "3" that the topic "probably should be included," a "2" that it "might possible be omitted," and a "1" that the topic "should definitely be omitted." None of the forty items received a perfect mean of "5" or "1" which would have shown unanimous agreement by one or both populations.

The judgments of the high school government teachers and the college and university political science professors are shown in Tables 12 and 13 with the mean rating of each topic listed. The topics are arranged in the order of highest to lowest mean.

Table 12
High School Teachers' Judgments

Rank	Topic	Mean
1.	The United States Congress	4.68
2.	Executive Branch of National Government	4.65
3.	The United States Constitution	4.51
4.	Voters and Voting	4.40
5.	Federal Court System	4.39
6.	Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and the Courts	4.24
7.	Nominations, Campaigns, and Elections	4.14
8.	State Government	3.99
	Current Political Affairs	3.99
10.	Political Parties	3.98
11.	Public Opinion and Pressure Groups	3.77
12.	Local Government	3.65
13.	Political and Economic Ideologies	3.64
14.	American Foreign Policy	3.59
15.	Financing Government	3.57
16.	Political Values	3.49
17.	Law and its Enforcement	3.46
18.	Comparative Government	3.45
19.	Political Philosophies	3.41
	Political Participation	3.41
21.	Political Inquiry	3.39
22.	Types of Government	3.37
23.	Power in America	3.36
24.	Civil and Political Rights Movements	3.20
25.	Resolution of Conflict in America	3.19

Table 12 (continued)

Rank	Topic	Mean
26.	Immigration, Naturalization, and Citizenship	3.05
27.	Government, Business, and Labor	2.99
28.	Background to American Democracy	2.98
29.	Government, Health, and Welfare	2.85
30.	Government, Money, and Banking	2.84
31.	Agriculture, Natural Resources, and the Environment	2.74
32.	Political Socialization	2.73
33.	School Citizenship	2.70
34.	Dissent and Protest in America	2.69
35.	The United Nations	2.54
36.	Political Ethics	2.52
37.	American Civil Service	2.45
	Education in a Democratic Society	2.45
39.	History of Political Thought	2.38
40.	Governing U.S. Territories and Possessions	2.22

The topic receiving the highest rating, as determined by the calculated mean of the individual ratings by the high school teachers, was "The United States Congress." Seventy-five of the ninety-nine high school government teachers judged that the topic must be included or was indispensable content in a high school government course of one semester by rating it a "5." No respondent gave this topic a rating lower than "3," "Probably should be included."

The next highest mean ratings were registered by "The Executive Branch of National Government" and "The United States Constitution." Both these topics received a majority of "5" ratings.

Twenty-six of the forty topics rated by the high school teachers received mean scores of 3.00 or higher, indicating that the teachers judged them as topics that either must be included, should be included, or probably should be included. With these twenty-six topics placed in the "included" areas, only fourteen topics received mean ratings that placed them in the two categories suggesting that they might possibly be omitted or should definitely be omitted.

The ratings received by the three branches of the national government and by the state and local government levels reflect the importance of these topics to a high school course in the opinions of the high school teachers. The Congress, the Executive Branch, and the Federal Court System ranked first, second, and fifth respectively. The teachers also rated "State Government" eighth and "Local Government" in the twelfth position. The U.S. Constitution, which is the basis for the American government system, ranked third.

The teachers' ratings also reflect their judgments concerning the importance of teaching students about the electoral process. "Voters and Voting" ranked fourth while "Nominations, Campaigns, and Elections" placed seventh with a 4.14 mean. The various segments of

society which influence the workings of government were also highly rated by the teachers. "Political Parties" ranked tenth while "Public Opinion and Pressure Groups" ranked eleventh. The feelings of the teachers that students should study contemporary happenings in politics and current political leaders were reflected by their rating of "Current Political Affairs" which was ranked eighth.

More specific topics that deal with particular problems or aspects of government at the local, state, and national levels generally rated lower in the judgments of the high school teachers. The only exception to this might be in the placement of the topic "Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and the Courts." Ranking sixth, this topic is tied to the federal courts.

Topics that prescribe a particular method, "Political Participation" and "Political Inquiry," were rated lower, placing at nineteenth and twenty-first respectively.

Table 13 lists the forty topics as judged by the college and university political science professors. The mean rating for each topic is reported, and the topics are shown in the order of highest to lowest mean rating.

Table 13

College and University Political Science
Professors' Judgments

Rank	Topic	Mean
1.	The United States Congress	4.77
2.	Executive Branch of National Government	4.73
3.	The United States Constitution	4.62
4.	Federal Court System	4.12
5.	Political Parties	4.08
6.	Nominations, Campaigns, and Elections	4.00
7.	Public Opinion and Pressure Groups	3.96
	Civil Rights, Civil Liberties and the Courts	3.96
9.	Voters and Voting	3.81
10.	Background to American Democracy	3.54
11.	Power in America	3.50
12.	Current Political Affairs	3.48
13.	Political Philosophies	3.38
14.	Financing Government	3.35
15.	American Foreign Policy	3.23
16.	State Government	3.19
17.	Civil and Political Rights Movements	3.15
18.	Local Government	3.12
19.	Resolution of Conflict in America	3.04
20.	Agriculture, Natural Resources, and the Environment	2.96
21.	Political Inquiry	2.92
22.	Government, Health, and Welfare	2.88
23.	Political Socialization	2.85

Table 13 (continued)

Rank	Topic	Mean
24.	Political and Economic Ideologies	2.73
	Dissent and Protest in America	2.73
26.	Political Participation	2.72
27.	Political Ethics	2.69
28.	Law and its Enforcement	2.65
	Types of Government	2.65
30.	Government, Money, and Banking	2.62
31.	Political Values	2.58
32.	Immigration, Naturalization, and Citizenship	2.54
33.	Government, Business, and Labor	2.46
34.	School Citizenship	2.31
35.	Comparative Government	2.27
36.	American Civil Service	2.23
	Education in a Democratic Society	2.23
38.	History of Political Thought	2.12
39.	The United Nations	2.08
40.	Governing U.S. Territories and Possessions	1.58

The topic receiving the highest mean rating by the college and university political science professors was "The United States Congress," the same topic receiving the highest mean rating from the high school teachers. Twenty-one of the twenty-six professors judged the topic as one that "must be included" in a high school government

course. Only one respondent gave this topic a rating lower than "3."

The judgments of the high school teachers and the college political scientists coincided in ranking "The United States Congress," "The Executive Branch of National Government," and "The United States Constitution" first, second, and third respectively. As with the high school teachers, the college professors placed the greatest emphasis on the national government and its three branches along with the Constitution.

Nineteen of the forty topics rated by the professors received mean scores of 3.00 or higher, indicating that they received ratings of "5," "4," and "3" which placed them in the "included" areas on the scale. The professors tended to be more willing to give topics ratings of "1" and "2" than did the high school teachers. For example, the topic ranked at number 20 on the list by the professors had a mean score of 2.96, whereas the twentieth ranked topic according to the judgments of the teachers received a mean rating score of 3.41.

The nineteen topics that received ratings of 3 or higher, placing them in the "included" areas by the professors, emphasize the three branches of national government. The influences on the operation of government are seen as important by the professors.

"Political Parties" ranked fifth; "Public Opinion and Pressure Groups" ranked seventh.

"Power in America" was ranked eleventh by the political scientists, indicating the importance the college professors placed on the study of power and its influence on government conduct.

The professors rated two topics dealing with the general background of the study of American government in the first thirteen topics. "Background to American Democracy" ranked tenth while "Political Philosophies" rated at number thirteen.

The more specific areas of government service or problems were rated lower by the professors. Their emphasis, as that of the teachers, seems to be on the basic understanding of the structure of American government and the influences on its operation.

COMPARISON OF JUDGMENTS

A second major purpose of this study was to compare the judgments of high school government teachers and college and university political science professors concerning indispensable topics for a one semester course in American government for senior students.

A comparison of the ratings by the two populations for each of the forty topic areas was performed using the chi square test of independence. The computer program developed by R. E. Lund for

the Montana State University Statistical Center, March 29, 1977 version, was used. The .05 level of significance was deemed appropriate as a level of testing to determine if a significant difference existed between the judgments of the two populations.

The following forty contingency tables reflect the judgments of the two populations in the case of each of the topic areas appearing on the questionnaire. The calculated chi square, the degrees of freedom, and the critical value of chi square are reported for each comparison. The degrees of freedom vary because of the requirements to collapse cells in the contingency tables in order to calculate chi square.

Tables 14 through 53 follow. Table 14 shows the judgments of the two populations on the topic of "The United States Constitution."

Table 14

The United States Constitution

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	69	20
Should be included	14	4
Probably should be included	13	0
Might possibly be omitted	3	2
Should definitely be omitted	0	0

Calculated chi square = 4.706

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

Table 1 indicates that at the .05 level there was no significant difference between the high school government teachers and the college or university political science professors in regard to the indispensability of the topic. A majority of both populations believed that the topic must be included in a high school government course. Only five of the respondents placed the topic in the "might possibly be omitted" category.

Table 15 shows the judgments of the high school teachers and the political science professors on the topic of "Immigration, Naturalization and Citizenship.

Table 15
Immigration, Naturalization, and Citizenship

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	13	1
Should be included	18	4
Probably should be included	36	7
Might possibly be omitted	27	10
Should definitely be omitted	6	4

Calculated chi square = 5.348

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

No significant difference exists between the judgments of the two populations on the topic. Responses tended to cluster in the areas indicating that the teachers and professors felt that the topic was not vital to the study of American government at the high school level.

Tables 16 and 17 show the judgments of the teachers and professors concerning "Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and the Courts" and "Political Parties." There is no significant difference at the .05 level between the judgments of the two populations. Both topics appear to be ones that the teachers and professors would include in a course in American government.

Table 16

Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and the Courts

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	44	10
Should be included	37	7
Probably should be included	16	8
Might possibly be omitted	2	0
Should definitely be omitted	0	1

Calculated chi square = 3.384

Degrees of freedom = 2

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 5.99

Table 17
Political Parties

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	34	8
Should be included	37	14
Probably should be included	22	3
Might possibly be omitted	7	0
Should definitely be omitted	0	1

Calculated chi square = 2.973

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

The judgments of the two populations concerning the topic of "Voters and Voting" are shown in Table 18.

Table 18
Voters and Voting

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	59	6
Should be included	25	13
Probably should be included	13	3
Might possibly be omitted	3	4
Should definitely be omitted	0	0

Calculated chi square = 15.17

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

There was a significant difference in the judgments of the high school government teachers and the college and university political science professors concerning the topic of "Voters and Voting." The high school teachers rated the topic higher in importance than did the political science professors. Fifty-nine percent of the teachers said that the topic "must be included" while 50 percent of the professors believed it "should be included."

No significant differences were noted in the judgments of the two populations concerning topics dealing with "Nominations, Campaigns,

and Elections" and "Public Opinion and Pressure Groups." Both these topics received ratings from the two groups that placed them in the "included" categories. Results of the comparisons are shown in Tables 19 and 20.

Table 19
Nominations, Campaigns, and Elections

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	39	6
Should be included	39	13
Probably should be included	17	6
Might possibly be omitted	4	0
Should definitely be omitted	0	0

Calculated chi square = 2.131

Degrees of freedom = 2

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 5.99

Table 20

Public Opinion and Pressure Groups

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	27	8
Should be included	33	10
Probably should be included	32	6
Might possibly be omitted	6	0
Should definitely be omitted	2	1

Calculated chi square = 1.329

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

"The United States Congress" received the highest mean rating from both populations. The comparison of the judgments on this topic show no significant difference at the .05 level. None of the respondents would omit this topic. Table 21 shows the high ratings given this topic by the high school teachers and the political science professors.

Table 21
The United States Congress

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	75	21
Should be included	18	4
Probably should be included	7	1
Might possibly be omitted	0	0
Should definitely be omitted	0	0

Calculated chi square = .4943

Degrees of freedom = 2

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 5.99

The topic receiving the second highest mean rating by both populations, "The Executive Branch of National Government," is shown in Table 22. No significant difference exists between the judgments of the high school teachers and the political science professors. Seventy-two percent of the teachers and twenty-one of the twenty-six professors judged this topic indispensable.

Table 22

The Executive Branch of National Government

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	72	20
Should be included	21	5
Probably should be included	7	1
Might possibly be omitted	0	0
Should definitely be omitted	0	0

Calculated chi square = .4231

Degrees of freedom = 2

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 5.99

Tables 23 and 24 present the judgments of the high school teachers and political science professors concerning "American Foreign Policy and National Defense" and "American Civil Service." There was no significant difference in the judgments of the two populations on these two topics. A majority of both populations would include the topic of "American Democracy and National Defense" while the "American Civil Service" is a topic a majority of the teachers and professors would omit.

Table 23

American Foreign Policy and National Defense

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	22	2
Should be included	31	11
Probably should be included	29	6
Might possibly be omitted	12	5
Should definitely be omitted	3	2

Calculated chi square = 5.104

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

Table 24

American Civil Service

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	2	0
Should be included	4	3
Probably should be included	39	5
Might possibly be omitted	41	13
Should definitely be omitted	10	5

Calculated chi square = 4.911

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

Table 25 shows no significant difference in the judgments of the high school teachers and the political science professors. The topic, the "Federal Court System," received generally high ratings from both populations. Nearly 56 percent of the professors judged this topic indispensable by rating it as a topic that "must be included."

Table 25
Federal Court System

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	56	13
Should be included	25	6
Probably should be included	16	4
Might possibly be omitted	1	3
Should definitely be omitted	0	0

Calculated chi square = 1.211

Degrees of freedom = 2

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 5.99

A significant difference exists between the judgments of the high school government teachers and the political science professors concerning the topic of "State Government." The ratings

given this topic by the professors ranged widely while the high school teachers tended to give the topic ratings suggesting that it should be included in the study of government at the high school level.

Table 26
State Government

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	41	7
Should be included	28	2
Probably should be included	21	9
Might possibly be omitted	9	5
Should definitely be omitted	1	3

Calculated chi square = 12.48

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

The topics of "Current Political Affairs" and "Political Philosophies" were judged by the two populations. There was no significant difference between the judgments of the high school teachers and the political science professors in both cases. A majority of both groups rated these topics in the "included" areas. The comparisons for these two topics are shown in Tables 27 and 28.

Table 27

Current Political Affairs

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	44	7
Should be included	25	7
Probably should be included	20	5
Might possibly be omitted	8	3
Should definitely be omitted	3	3

Calculated chi square = 5.064

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

Table 28

Political Philosophies

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	19	4
Should be included	27	10
Probably should be included	32	6
Might possibly be omitted	18	4
Should definitely be omitted	3	2

Calculated chi square = 2.823

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was no significant difference between the two populations in their judgments of the topic entitled "Political Ethics in America." Neither population shows a high degree of feeling that the topic should be taught. The comparison is shown in Table 29.

Table 29
Political Ethics in America

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	3	0
Should be included	9	6
Probably should be included	38	8
Might possibly be omitted	34	10
Should definitely be omitted	14	2

Calculated chi square = 2.790

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

A significant difference exists between the high school government teachers and the political science professors in their judgment of the topic "The United Nations." Although in the rankings of the topics according to their means, this topic did not rate highly, the high school teachers tended to rate it higher with

nearly half of the respondents placing it in the "included" categories. Nineteen of the twenty-six professors placed the topic in the "omitted" areas.

The comparison is shown in Table 30.

Table 30
The United Nations

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	1	0
Should be included	12	3
Probably should be included	37	4
Might possibly be omitted	38	11
Should definitely be omitted	11	8

Calculated chi square = 8.393

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

There was no significant difference in the judgments between the two populations concerning the topic "Background to American Democracy." Table 31 displays the comparison.

Table 31

Background to American Democracy

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	14	8
Should be included	16	4
Probably should be included	31	9
Might possibly be omitted	32	4
Should definitely be omitted	7	1

Calculated chi square = 5.730

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

It might be noted that several high school teachers indicated through written comments that they judged the "Background to American Democracy" lower on the scale because they considered it content more proper for a class in American history. A majority of the political scientists placed the topic in the "included" categories.

A significant difference exists between the judgments of the high school teachers and the political scientists concerning the topic of "Comparative Government." Table 32 shows the comparisons. A majority of the teachers judged the topic as content to be included

while a majority of the professors placed it in the "omitted" areas of the scale.

Table 32
Comparative Government

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	23	2
Should be included	26	1
Probably should be included	28	6
Might possibly be omitted	17	10
Should definitely be omitted	5	7

Calculated chi square = 22.065

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

Concerning the topic of "Law and its Enforcement," a significant difference was shown between the judgments of the high school teachers and the political science professors. Fifty percent of the professors would possibly or definitely omit it. Of the ninety-nine teachers responding, seventy-seven placed it in one of the three "included" categories. Table 33 shows the comparison.

Table 33

Law and its Enforcement

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	22	2
Should be included	28	5
Probably should be included	27	6
Might possibly be omitted	18	8
Should definitely be omitted	4	5

Calculated chi square = 11.209

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was a significant difference in the judgments of the two populations concerning the topic of "Governing U.S. Territories and Possessions," as shown in Table 34. Nearly one-third of the teachers gave this topic a rating of "3" or higher whereas only two of the twenty-six professors believed that the topic "probably should be included."

Table 34

Governing U.S. Territories and Possessions

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	3	0
Should be included	5	0
Probably should be included	25	2
Might possibly be omitted	45	11
Should definitely be omitted	22	13

Calculated chi square = 10.82

Degrees of freedom = 3

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 7.82

Concerning the topic of "Political Values," a significant difference was shown between the judgments of the high school teachers and the political science professors. Table 35 shows the results of the comparison.

Eighty percent of the teachers rated the topic a "3" or higher, indicating that it was one which they believed must or should be included in a high school course. Over half of the professors, however, placed the topic in the "1" and "2" areas.

Table 35

Political Values

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	25	5
Should be included	23	1
Probably should be included	32	6
Might possibly be omitted	16	6
Should definitely be omitted	4	8

Calculated chi square = 20.926

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was no significant difference in the judgments of the two populations concerning the topic of "Government, Money, and Banking." A majority of both populations rated the topic in the "included" areas of the scale. Table 36 displays the comparison of judgments.

Table 36.

Government, Money, and Banking

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	7	1
Should be included	15	4
Probably should be included	41	9
Might possibly be omitted	27	8
Should definitely be omitted	9	4

Calculated chi square = 1.447

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was a significant difference between the high school government teachers and the political science professors in their judgments of the topic concerning "Types of Government." Table 37 reports the findings. Most teachers placed this topic in the "included" areas. Half of the professors believed the topic was not essential.

Table 37.

Types of Government

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	16	2
Should be included	28	5
Probably should be included	34	6
Might possibly be omitted	14	8
Should definitely be omitted	5	5

Calculated chi square = 10.756

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There were significant differences between the two populations in their judgments of the topics of "Political and Economic Ideologies" and "Local Government." The comparisons for these topics are shown in Tables 38 and 39.

Over 50 percent of the high school teachers gave the topic of "Political and Economic Ideologies" a rating of "3" or higher while the professors tended to give a lower rating to the topic.

Table 38

Political and Economic Ideologies

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	27	2
Should be included	29	5
Probably should be included	21	7
Might possibly be omitted	14	8
Should definitely be omitted	4	4

Calculated chi square = 11.532

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

A significant difference between the two groups also appears concerning the topic of "Local Government." The high school teachers tended to rate this topic higher than the professors. Only fourteen of the ninety-eight teacher respondents placed the topic in the "omitted" areas.

Table 39
Local Government

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	27	5
Should be included	28	5
Probably should be included	29	5
Might possibly be omitted	10	10
Should definitely be omitted	4	1

Calculated chi square = 12.205

Degrees of freedom =

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

No significant difference exists between the high school government teachers and the college and university political science professors in their judgments of the topics of "Dissent and Protest in America" and "Government, Health, and Welfare." Tables 40 and 41 report these comparisons.

Judgments of the two populations on the topic of "Dissent and Protest in America" clustered in the "probably should be included" and "might possibly be omitted" areas. A majority of the teachers and professors placed the topic dealing with health and welfare in the "included" categories.

Table 40

Dissent and Protest in America

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	4	2
Should be included	9	4
Probably should be included	44	8
Might possibly be omitted	36	9
Should definitely be omitted	6	3

Calculated chi square = 3.158

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at a .05 level = 9.49

Table 41

Government, Health, and Welfare

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	4	2
Should be included	24	3
Probably should be included	29	14
Might possibly be omitted	35	4
Should definitely be omitted	6	3

Calculated chi square = 9.153

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was a significant difference between the high school teachers and the college and university professors in their judgments of the topic of "School Citizenship." The political scientists tended to place this topic in the "1" and "2" areas, reflecting their views that it should definitely or possibly be omitted. The high school teachers, although split on this topic, tended to rate it higher. Table 42 reports the comparison of judgments.

Table 42
School Citizenship

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	9	2
Should be included	14	5
Probably should be included	30	2
Might possibly be omitted	30	7
Should definitely be omitted	16	10

Calculated chi square = 9.512

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

As reported in Tables 43 and 44, there was no significant difference between the high school teachers and the political scientists in their judgments of the topics of "Agriculture, Natural Resources, and the Environment" and "Political Socialization." A majority of both populations rated these topics in the "included" areas; yet the teachers and professors do not demonstrate strong feelings that these topics are essential.

Table 43

Agriculture, Natural Resources, and the Environment

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	4	2
Should be included	18	9
Probably should be included	35	6
Might possibly be omitted	31	4
Should definitely be omitted	10	5

Calculated chi square = 7.076

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

Table 44

Political Socialization

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	7	3
Should be included	10	3
Probably should be included	34	10
Might possibly be omitted	42	7
Should definitely be omitted	4	3

Calculated chi square = 3.928

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was a significant difference in the judgments of the two populations concerning the topic of "Government, Business, and Labor." Table 45 demonstrates the comparison, showing that the college and university professors tended to rate this topic lower than did the high school teachers. Of the twenty-six professors, twelve rated the topic in the "omitted" areas.

Table 45

Government, Business, and Labor

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	5	1
Should be included	23	2
Probably should be included	42	11
Might possibly be omitted	24	6
Should definitely be omitted	5	6

Calculated chi square = 10.164

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was no significant difference between the two populations' judgments of the topics of "Education in a Democratic Society" and "History of Political Thought." Tables 46 and 47 report the comparisons and show that a majority of both the high school teachers and the political scientists did not judge the topics to be essential content for a course in American government.

Table 46

Education in a Democratic Society

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	4	1
Should be included	9	4
Probably should be included	29	4
Might possibly be omitted	43	8
Should definitely be omitted	14	9

Calculated chi square = 7.796

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

Table 47

History of Political Thought

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	8	2
Should be included	7	4
Probably should be included	26	1
Might possibly be omitted	30	7
Should definitely be omitted	27	12

Calculated chi square = 8.790

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was no significant difference between the high school government teachers and the political science professors concerning their judgments of the topics "Civil and Political Rights Movements," "Political Inquiry Exercises," and "Power in America." In all three cases, a majority of the teachers and professors rated the topics toward the "included" areas with "3," "4," and "5" ratings. Tables 48, 49, and 50 report the comparison of judgments.

Table 48

Civil and Political Rights Movements

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	10	5
Should be included	28	3
Probably should be included	38	10
Might possibly be omitted	18	7
Should definitely be omitted	5	1

Calculated chi square = 4.607

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

Table 49

Political Inquiry Exercises

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	21	4
Should be included	21	4
Probably should be included	35	7
Might possibly be omitted	17	8
Should definitely be omitted	4	3

Calculated chi square = 5.074

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

Table 50

Power in America

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	19	5
Should be included	27	9
Probably should be included	30	7
Might possibly be omitted	14	4
Should definitely be omitted	8	1

Calculated chi square = .992

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was a significant difference between the high school teachers and the political science professors concerning "Political Participation by Students." The high school teachers tended to rate this topic higher than the political scientists with seventy-eight of the ninety-nine responding placing it in the "included" areas.

The comparison of judgments is reported in Table 51.

Table 51
Political Participation by Students

Judgments	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	19	2
Should be included	28	6
Probably should be included	32	6
Might possibly be omitted	15	5
Should definitely be omitted	5	6

Calculated chi square = 10.431

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

There was no significant difference between the judgments of the populations concerning the topics of "Financing Government" and "Resolution of Conflict in America." In both cases, the high school teachers and the political science professors tended to rate the topics on the higher levels of the scale.

Judgment comparisons are shown in Tables 52 and 53.

Table 52
Financing Government

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	20	2
Should be included	32	12
Probably should be included	35	6
Might possibly be omitted	8	5
Should definitely be omitted	4	1

Calculated chi square = 6.360

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

Table 53

Resolution of Conflict in America

Judgment	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Must be included	18	2
Should be included	20	7
Probably should be included	27	8
Might possibly be omitted	29	8
Should definitely be omitted	4	1

Calculated chi square = 1.940

Degrees of freedom = 4

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 9.49

COMPARISON OF JUDGMENTS CONCERNING COURSE LENGTH,
REQUIRED-ELECTIVE CHOICE, AND GRADE LEVEL

The high school teachers and college and university professors were also asked to judge whether a course in government in the high school should be required or elective, and to indicate what the proper length for such a course should be and at what grade level the course should be taught. The judgments of the two populations are shown in Tables 54, 55, and 56.

Table 54, dealing with the judgments of the two populations concerning whether a government course should be required or elective

in nature, shows that there was no significant difference. Ninety-six percent of the teachers and 92 percent of the professors indicated that a course in American government should be required in Montana high schools. The null hypothesis that there was no difference in the judgments of the two populations concerning whether the course should be required or elective was retained.

Table 54
Required or Elective Choice

Choice	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Required	96	24
Elective	4	2

Calculated chi square = .0733

Degrees of freedom = 1

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 3.84

No significant difference was found concerning the judgments of the teachers and professors on the question of the length of such a course in government. The high school teachers were split in their judgments with a majority, fifty-one of the ninety-nine respondents, favoring a one semester or half year course. Two thirds of the professors favored a one semester course. The null hypothesis concerning

the judgments of the course length was retained. Table 55 displays the findings.

Table 55
Judgments Concerning the Length
of a Government Course

Length	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
A full year	47	8
One semester (half year)	51	16
Nine weeks	0	0
Other	1	0

Calculated chi square = 1.043

Degrees of freedom = 1

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 3.84

In answer to the question asking the two populations to indicate at what grade level they thought a course in government should be taught, there was a significant difference between the teachers and political scientists. The null hypothesis that stated that there was no difference in the judgments of the two populations concerning grade level placement was rejected. This difference seems to result from the judgments of the political science professors in tending to select a combination of grade levels. Ten of the twenty-six

professors indicated that they favored some combination of grades on the teaching of two courses in government. Of the one hundred teachers responding, seventy-four judged the twelfth grade to be the best. Table 56 reports the judgments.

Table 56
Grade Level Placement

Grade level(s)	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Grade 12	74	12
Grade 11	2	2
Grade 10	1	2
Grade 9	1	0
Grade 8	0	0
Grade 7	0	0
A combination of grade levels	19	10
No opinion	3	0

Calculated chi square = 9.759

Degrees of freedom = 2

Critical value of chi square at .05 level = 5.99

A breakdown of the judgments of those teachers and professors who favored a combination of grade levels is presented in Table 57.

Table 57

Breakdown of Respondents Indicating
a Combination of Grade Levels

Combination	High School Teachers	Political Scientists
Grades 11 and 12	4	4
Grades 10 and 12	1	0
Grades 9 and 12	8	0
Grades 8 and 12	3	1
Grades 8 and 11	0	1
Grades 7 and 10	0	1
Grades 10, 11, and 12	2	1
Grades 11 or 12	1	2

Some teachers and professors indicated that government should be taught at two grade levels. Eight high school teachers favored the idea of teaching two courses in government, one at the ninth grade level, the other at the twelfth grade level. Four professors noted that they favored offering two courses, one in eleventh grade and the other in twelfth grade. One professor wrote that he favored a one semester course for eleventh graders that would center on the institutions of government and one course of one semester's length for seniors that would deal with problems.

The three respondents who indicated that Grades 10, 11, and 12 were best for a course in government believed that one course should be taught to students in those three grades. This would result in a class composed of students from those three grades.

Three respondents felt that a government course should be taught at either the eleventh or twelfth grade levels.

SUMMARY

Chapter 4 presented a description of the data received from one hundred high school government teachers and twenty-six professors of political science in Montana's colleges and universities. Nearly 81 percent of the questionnaires sent to the members of the two populations were returned.

Information generated by the questionnaires was presented in tables reflecting the high school government teachers' educational preparation. The highest degree held by nearly 85 percent of the teachers is a bachelor's degree. Nearly 80 percent of these teachers earned their degrees at Montana colleges and universities. Over 66 percent of them majored in social studies, social science, or history. The teachers have earned a median of nearly 16 credits in political science and a median of nearly 39 credits in history.

Tables reported the years of teaching experience among the high school teachers. The median years of experience is 8.84 and a

median of 5.35 years in the teaching of government. Information concerning other duties the teachers have in addition to their assignments of teaching government courses was presented. A majority of the high school teachers also teach other social studies courses, coach athletics, and advise student clubs and organizations. The responses of the teachers to the questions of how they keep up with trends, developments, and new knowledge in the teaching of government showed that almost 99 percent read newspapers and other politically oriented periodicals. A majority of the teachers also read professional literature, take additional social studies courses, attend in-service programs, and attend social studies conferences.

The professors of political science were requested to furnish information concerning their degree status and the years of teaching experience they had accumulated at both the college and high school levels. Nearly 81 percent hold Doctor of Philosophy degrees. The professors have taught at the college or university level for an average of slightly over twelve years. Nearly 81 percent have had no teaching experience at the high school level.

The judgments of the two populations of forty topic areas for possible inclusion in a high school course in American government were recorded and the mean rating for each topic item was indicated. Examination of the forty topics based on their mean ratings shows

that the two populations agreed in the ranking of the "United States Congress," the "Executive Branch of National Government," and "The United States Constitution" first, second, and third, respectively.

Comparisons of the judgments of the two populations were accomplished by the application of a chi square test of independence at the .05 level of significance for each of the forty topics. There were significant differences between the judgments of the two populations in thirteen of the forty topic areas. These thirteen topics were: "Voters and Voting," "State Governments," "The United Nations," "Comparative Government," "Law and its Enforcement," "Governing U.S. Territories and Possessions," "Political Values," "Types of Government," "Local Government," "School Citizenship," "Political and Economic Ideologies," "Government, Business, and Labor," and "Political Participation by Students." Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no difference in the judgments of the two populations concerning indispensable content for a high school government course was rejected.

Four topics were judged indispensable by the two populations as content for a high school government course. These four, "The United States Congress," "The Executive Branch of National Government," "The Federal Court System," and "The United States Constitution," were judged topics that "must be included" by 50 percent or more of the high school and college respondents. Of the forty topics, only one

was judged as content that "should definitely be omitted" by either population. "Governing U.S. Territories and Possessions" received a majority of "1" ratings from the college and university professors.

Comparisons of the judgments of the two populations were also made concerning whether a course in government should be required or elective, the proper length for such a course, and its proper grade level placement. There was a significant difference in the judgments of the high school teachers and the college and university professors. Seventy-four percent of the teachers indicated that grade 12 was best and a plurality of the professors agreed, but ten of the twenty-six professors favored a combination of grade levels. The null hypothesis stating that there was no difference in the judgments of Montana high school government teachers and college and university professors of political science concerning grade level placement for a high school course in American government was rejected.

No significant difference appeared in the judgments of the two populations concerning whether the course should be required or elective or concerning the length of such a course. A majority of both populations indicated that the course should be required and that one semester was a proper length. The null hypothesis that stated that there was no difference in the judgments of the two populations concerning whether a high school government course should

be required or elective was retained. Also, the null hypothesis stating that there was no difference in the judgments of the high school teachers and the political science professors concerning length for a high school government course was retained.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The debate concerning the purposes and content of a high school course in American government has been continuing since the late 1950's. Traditionally a course in government has been considered important in developing good citizenship among students and in preparing them to participate in the American political system. Disagreements, however, have developed over what content should be included in such a course and what the overall emphasis should be. A review of related literature reveals this debate and disagreement. Some critics of current high school government instruction argue that a problems approach should be taken; others call for emphasis on development of student thinking skills or on the teaching of concepts. Others contend that high school courses should stress the structure of American government and the basic ideals of the American democratic system.

In light of this debate, some social studies educators have called for a wide exchange of opinion among teachers, political scientists, and others concerned with social studies education, suggesting that a consensus of opinion can be reached.

This study, from its inception, was intended to provide an opportunity for such an exchange among two groups concerned with government instruction in Montana. The problem of this study was to gather the judgments of high school government teachers and college and university political science professors concerning the content areas they believe must be included in a high school government course. These judgments were compared in order to determine differences, if any, in the importance the two populations placed on various topical areas.

As discussed in the purposes of the study in Chapter 1, it was hoped that Montana government teachers would benefit from knowing the views of their fellow teachers and the political science professors in the state's colleges and universities. This information would assist them in making curricular decisions concerning what content to include or exclude in their courses of study. In addition, the results of the study would prove beneficial to curriculum developers, materials producers, and persons involved in preparing prospective social studies teachers.

The procedures and methodology of the study were described. A questionnaire, on which checks of validity and reliability were completed, was mailed to 156 teachers and professors. The respondents employed a five point scale to judge the importance of forty topics that might be taught in a high school government course. Views

concerning course length, grade level placement, and whether it should be required or elective were also gathered. The data were compared using a chi square statistic, testing at the .05 level of significance to determine where significant differences appeared between the judgments of the two populations.

The data were described in Chapter 4 with the use of tables. In addition to gathering judgments concerning course content, personal data were accumulated and reported from the 80.8 percent of the two populations who returned the questionnaire.

Examination of the descriptive data presented a picture of the average Montana high school government teacher. The typical government instructor is a male who has earned a bachelor's degree at a Montana college or university where he majored in social studies, social science, or history. He has completed nearly sixteen credits in political science and almost thirty-nine credits in history. With nearly nine years of teaching experience at the high school level, he has taught American government for a little more than five years. In addition to teaching government, he is also assigned to teach other social studies courses, to coach athletics, and to advise student clubs and organizations.

The average professor of political science in Montana, as revealed by the descriptive data, is a male who has had no high school teaching experience but has taught at the college or university

level for slightly more than twelve years. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

The two populations showed no significant differences in their judgments of twenty-seven of the forty topics on the questionnaire. Since significant differences were shown in thirteen of the forty topics, the null hypothesis was rejected. No significant differences were found in the judgments of the two populations concerning course length or whether the course should be required or elective. A majority of both groups felt the course should be one semester in length and should be required of all students. The two populations were shown to differ in their judgments of grade level placement. The teachers favored the twelfth grade while ten of the twenty-six professors suggested a combination of grade levels.

Fifty percent or more of each population believed that four topics must be included in a high school government course. These indispensable topics were "The United States Congress," "The Executive Branch of National Government," the "Federal Court System," and "The United States Constitution." The two populations did not agree on any topics that both would definitely omit from a high school course.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the findings in this study, several conclusions may be drawn concerning the two populations and the judgments they offered concerning course content.

1. Because of the return achieved by this study, it can be concluded that there is considerable interest in the teaching of American government in Montana. Several respondents took time to write lengthy comments outlining their philosophies or thanking the researcher for providing an opportunity for them to express their views..

2. The typical high school government teacher in Montana has a variety of responsibilities that contest for his time and efforts. Many of these teachers work in small high schools where the number of faculty members is limited. This necessitates most teachers being required to prepare for more than one subject class as well as devoting time to the school's extracurricular offerings. In many of these schools, the government teacher is the only social studies teacher and is responsible for all the social studies courses offered in the school curriculum. These numerous duties may result in limiting the teacher's time to prepare for his or her government class, particularly when there is only one section. These conditions, it may be suggested, may have led to the frequent criticism that

teachers depend on their government textbooks to determine course content.

3. The preparation of high school government teachers in the political science area is not extensive, but it is probably adequate in light of the topics these teachers judge as indispensable content in their classes. Most teachers have majored in social studies or history and have not concentrated on political science. The median of nearly sixteen credits in political science could be deemed sufficient to enable the government teacher to adequately teach the basics of the American system.

4. The high school government teachers and the political science professors in Montana agree with those persons in the social studies field who have called for a return to the basic structure of American government as content in a high school government course. The two populations do not agree with the proponents of the "New Social Studies" and other critics who believe that high school government courses should emphasize economics, political socialization, political action, political inquiry, or problems of government.

5. The high school government teachers and the political science professors in Montana believe that the emphasis in a high school course should be on the national government and its three branches.

6. Montana high school government teachers appear to believe that one of their duties is to help prepare citizens who will participate in political affairs. This feeling is most strongly reflected in the teachers' ratings of "Voters and Voting," a topic a majority of them judged indispensable.

7. It can be concluded that there is no high level of agreement on the proper length of a course in government. Although a majority of both populations selected one semester as adequate time for a course, there appears to be a paradox when their views are compared with their judgments of the topical areas. The high school teachers, in particular, were reluctant to omit many topics. Twenty-six topics were judged, according to their mean scores, to be content that must be included, should be included, or probably should be included. Comprehensive presentation of all twenty-six of these topics would be most difficult to accomplish given one semester of teaching time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this study, several recommendations may be offered in light of the findings.

1. More attention should be devoted to the teaching of government in Montana high schools by curriculum teams, teacher

training personnel, and the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. State law and the judgments of teachers and political scientists attest to the importance the government course holds in the school curriculum. Development of materials and specific teaching techniques for use in the government classroom would be beneficial. Particularly teaching aids and techniques for use in the four topic areas judged indispensable would be most helpful to those charged with the responsibility of teaching the government course.

2. Further study and discussion is necessary to determine more specifically what areas of study should be included in a high school government course. It is suggested that further studies include members of the community and students of high school age. Through this further examination and discussion, topics suggested by such groups as the American Political Science Association and the proponents of the "New Social Studies" could be more fully evaluated.

3. A syllabus for a course in American government for high school students should be developed, reflecting the findings of this study and the further study and discussion recommended above. This syllabus, perhaps developed under the sponsorship of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, should be widely distributed to high school government teachers throughout the state.

4. A further study should be undertaken to assess the criteria used by the high school government teachers and the political science professors in judging the topics included on the survey questionnaire.

5. High school government teachers should devote time to curriculum development. They should determine the purposes of a course in American government and what content should be taught that best works toward accomplishment of those purposes. Following this determination of needs, and assessment of current course content and emphasis, new courses of study should be developed. Selection of the best teaching methods, techniques, and proper materials for classroom use should follow. In the course of this curriculum study, a determination concerning proper length for a government course should be accomplished.

6. Students in Montana's colleges and universities preparing to teach American government should be assisted in confronting the decisions they will be making concerning content selection. Methods courses should provide students with practice in determining what to teach in addition to instruction in how to teach. This assistance would aid in forestalling the recurring criticism that American government is taught strictly from the textbook. Experienced teachers could also be assisted in making these content decisions through in-service programs and curriculum studies.

7. Colleges and universities, working through their departments of secondary education or political science, should sponsor additional workshops and conferences for high school government teachers that provide practical techniques and materials for use in the high school classroom.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

March 12, 1977

As part of a doctoral study currently underway at Montana State University, I will be contacting the teacher(s) of American government courses in your school. The information gathered from these teachers will be of great value as I strive to answer a curricular question. That question, stated simply, is "What topics or content areas should be taught in a course in American government?" The goal of the study is to determine what high school government teachers judge to be indispensable content areas for an American government course. The final product, which will bring together the judgments of Montana teachers and political scientists in Montana's colleges and universities, will be a listing of those topic areas deemed most essential. This listing, it is hoped, would be of help to teachers and curriculum developers in designing government courses.

I hope that your permission is granted to your teachers to participate in the study. Completion of the survey will require only a few minutes on the part of the teacher, and I think the rewards will justify the small amount of time expended.

I enlist your support in this endeavor and hope that your teachers will complete the survey. All responses will be kept confidential, and no report of teachers' names or schools will be published.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and that of your school.

Sincerely yours,

Willis M. Conover, Jr.

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTERS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

LETTER TO HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

As an experienced social studies teacher, your judgments are of immense value as part of a doctoral study currently underway at Montana State University.

The goal of this study is to determine what you, and your fellow teachers in Montana, judge to be an indispensable content for a one semester course in American government for high school seniors. The judgments of political science professors in Montana's colleges and universities are also being solicited.

With the increasing "information explosion" it is impossible for us to include all topics in a half-year course. We must decide what to include and what to exclude. Your judgments will aid in determining what content is indispensable--a "must" for inclusion in an American government course. By bringing together the judgments of high school teachers and political scientists it is hoped that a list of indispensable content areas will be generated.

Would you please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it to me in the enclosed stamped envelope at your earliest convenience? Your responses will be kept confidential. No names of individuals or schools will be reported. Only ranking and other numerical information will be used in the study's report. The number appearing on the survey is simply a way of indicating who has returned the instrument, so that I might send reminders to those who may have forgotten.

You will receive a summary report of the findings which I trust you will find interesting and useful.

I thank you in advance for your valued assistance in this study. I believe that together we can develop a valuable tool that will be helpful to those of us responsible for teaching government courses in Montana's high schools.

Sincerely yours,

Willis M. Conover, Jr.

Enclosure

LETTER TO POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSORS

Your judgments are of immense value as part of a doctoral study currently underway at Montana State University.

The study's goal is to determine what you, and your fellow political scientists and professors of social science at Montana's colleges and universities, judge to be indispensable content for a one semester course in American government for high school seniors. The judgments of high school government teachers are also being surveyed.

As you know, Montana law requires the teaching of a course in American government to all students. The state provides few guidelines, however, concerning course content; thus the individual teacher frequently makes such determinations, deciding what to include or exclude. Your judgments will aid in determining what content is indispensable--a "must" for inclusion in an American government course. By bringing together the judgments of high school teachers and political scientists it is hoped that a list of essential content areas will be generated. This listing would be of assistance to teachers, curriculum developers, and college and university instructors.

Would you please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey and return it to me in the enclosed stamped envelope at your earliest convenience? Your responses will be kept confidential. No names of individuals or schools will be reported. The number appearing on the survey is simply a way of indicating who has returned the instrument, so that I might send reminders to those who may have forgotten.

You will receive a summary report of the findings, which I trust you will find interesting and helpful.

I thank you in advance for your valued assistance. I believe that together we can develop a valuable tool that will be helpful to those teachers responsible for government courses in Montana's high schools.

Sincerely yours,

Willis M. Conover, Jr.

Enclosure

SURVEY OF JUDGMENTS OF INDISPENSABLE CONTENT
FOR A COURSE IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
(Teachers)

Using the rating scale of one to five, please indicate the relative importance of each of the following topics in American government. Please note by "importance" it is not implied that a particular topic cannot make some contribution to the study of American government, but, given the limitations of time (one semester or 90 days), it is probably not possible to include all areas. Please assume that you are selecting topics for inclusion in an American government course for high school seniors for one semester.

In the space following each topic please circle a

"5" if you feel the topic must be included in a one semester course.

"4" if you feel the topic should be included.

"3" if you feel the topic probably should be included.

"2" if you feel the topic might possibly be omitted.

"1" if you feel the topic should definitely be omitted.

Note: Please feel free to use the space following each topic to delete or revise any of the content indicated. Additional comments are welcomed. Please use the bottom of the page or the reverse side. Thank you.

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. <u>The United States Constitution</u> (historical develop- | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| ment; Articles of Confederation; early state constitutions; Constitutional Convention; major features; Bill of Rights; other amendments; checks and balances; organization; amending process) | | | | | |
| 2. <u>Immigration, Naturalization, and Citizenship</u> | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (laws, losing and gaining citizenship) | | | | | |
| 3. <u>Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and the Courts</u> | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (cases; rights of accused and others; legislation; Warren and Burger Courts) | | | | | |

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| 4. <u>Political Parties</u> (historical development; party organization; functions; characteristics; third parties; reasons why people join parties) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. <u>Voters and Voting</u> (qualifications; procedures; analysis of voting behavior; polling) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. <u>Nominations, Campaigns, and Elections</u> (general elections; primaries; conventions; caucuses; funding; Electoral College) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. <u>Public Opinion and Pressure Groups</u> (mass media; political propaganda; measuring opinion; role of opinion; role of interest groups; lobbyists; types of groups; regulations) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. <u>The United States Congress</u> (powers; organization; bicameralism; members' qualifications; apportionment; leadership; compensation; privileges; lawmaking procedures; role of committees; work of a Congressman) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. <u>The Executive Branch of National Government</u> (Presidential qualifications, powers, and duties; Cabinet; departmental duties; agencies and commissions and their duties; role of the Vice President) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. <u>American Foreign Policy and National Defense</u> (policy formation; role of three branches; public role; State and Defense Departments; historical developments; defense establishment) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. <u>American Civil Service</u> (patronage; personnel systems; reforms) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. <u>Federal Court System</u> (qualifications of judges; powers; jurisdiction; procedures; appeals; judicial review) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

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| 13. <u>State Governments</u> (state constitutions; state legislatures; lawmaking; state executive positions; departments, bureaus, services; state courts; powers, duties, organization of the three branches; finances; criticisms) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. <u>Current Political Affairs</u> (current events of concern to politicians and citizens at the local, state, national, and international levels) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. <u>Political Philosophies</u> (liberal, conservative, moderate, radical, reactionary; political spectrum and examples) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. <u>Political Ethics in America</u> (reforms through history; reformers; scandals in American history) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. <u>The United Nations</u> (organization; purposes; membership; praise and criticism; U.S. role) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. <u>Background to American Democracy</u> (English heritage; colonial experience; Declaration of Independence; democratic theory) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. <u>Comparative Government</u> (U.S. as compared to other systems such as the Soviet Union) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. <u>Law and Its Enforcement</u> (classes of law; state and federal agencies; prison systems; crime) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. <u>Governing U.S. Territories and Possessions</u> (power to govern; incorporated; unincorporated; trusts) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. <u>Political Values</u> (loyalty; patriotism; individual dignity; citizen duties) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23. <u>Government, Money, and Banking</u> (national and state powers; activities; Federal Reserve System; economic controls) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

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| 24. <u>Types of Government</u> (democracy, aristocracy, oligarchy, etc.; examples in today's world) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 25. <u>Political and Economic Ideologies</u> (communism, fascism; capitalism; socialism) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 26. <u>Local Government</u> (urban and rural government types; duties; services; problems; Local government in Montana) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 27. <u>Dissent and Protest in America</u> (history of dissent; methods; Court decisions; limits; examples) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 28. <u>Government, Health, and Welfare</u> (Social Security; other programs; national, state, and local responsibilities and powers; problems) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 29. <u>School Citizenship</u> (the school as a community; school rules; student rights and responsibilities; community values) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 30. <u>Agriculture, Natural Resources, and the Environment</u> (government policies and services; current concerns) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 31. <u>Political Socialization</u> (how Americans acquire political views; examination of personal views, practices) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 32. <u>Government, Business, and Labor</u> (federal policies; regulation; authority; programs) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 33. <u>Education in a Democratic Society</u> (goals organization; responsibility; authority; Montana education; problems) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 34. <u>History of Political Thought</u> (role of religion; Greek; Roman; divine right; social contract; origin of the state; natural rights) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

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| 35. <u>Civil and Political Rights Movements</u>
(the rights of minorities; women's rights;
historical developments; Court decisions;
laws) | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 36. <u>Political Inquiry Exercises</u> (student
problem-solving of political problems;
case studies; emphasis on inquiry) | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 37. <u>Power in America</u> (sources of power in
America today; economic; political) | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 38. <u>Political Participation by Students</u>
(out-of-school experiences in political
affairs such as campaigns, local govern-
ment activities, involvement) | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 39. <u>Financing Government</u> (taxing policies of
local, state, national government; tax
reform; budgets) | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 40. <u>Resolution of Conflict in America</u> (mechanisms
for conflict resolution; decision-making) | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 41. _____
(Suggested area not included above.) | 5 4 3 2 1 |

Please check one optional answer for each of the following questions.

42. A course in American government is currently required of Montana high school students. Do you believe that a course in government should be
- _____ required of all students.
 _____ an elective open to all students.
 _____ no opinion.
43. In Montana today, American government courses are offered largely on a one semester (or half-year) basis. Should a government course be designed for
- _____ a full year.
 _____ one semester (half year).
 _____ nine weeks.
 _____ other. Please indicate length: _____
 _____ no opinion.

44. Most government courses today are offered to twelfth grade students. In your opinion, at what grade level should a government course be offered in the secondary school?

_____ 12th grade.
 _____ 11th grade.
 _____ 10th grade
 _____ 9th grade

_____ 8 grade grade
_____ 7th grade.
_____ a combination of grade
_____ levels. Please indicate
specifically: _____
no opinion

Please complete the following questions dealing with personal data.

45. Education and preparation:

Degree(s)	College/University	Major	Minor

46. How many college or university credits (graduate or undergraduate) have you earned in political science or government?

_____ quarter credits.
semester credits.

47. How many college or university credits (graduate or undergraduate) have you earned in history? _____ quarter credits.

_____ quarter credits.
_____ semester credits.

48. How many years of high school teaching experience have you had (including the current year)? _____ years.

49. Of these years of teaching experience, how many years have you taught government courses (including the current year)?

years.

50. List the course(s) you are teaching during the 1976-77 school year that stress government content:

<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Grade Level(s)</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

51. Is the government course you teach offered each school year?

_____ Yes.
_____ No.

52. If your answer was "no" to number 51, please indicate how often the course is offered; _____

53. Please check any other duties you have in addition to teaching government courses. (Check as many as apply to you.)

_____ I teach other social studies courses.
_____ I teach courses outside of social studies. Please indicate what area(s): _____
_____ I have coaching assignments.
_____ I advise or sponsor a student group(s) such as student council, clubs, etc.
_____ I have administrative responsibilities.
_____ Other duties. Please explain briefly: _____

54. Please check the ways in which you keep up with trends, developments, and new knowledge in the teaching of government. (Check as many as apply to you.)

_____ Reading professional literature (such as that of the National Council for the Social Studies).
_____ Reading newspapers and politically-oriented publications.
_____ Taking additional courses in the social studies (government, history, sociology, economics, etc.).
_____ Taking additional courses in secondary or general education (methods, educational psychology, etc.).
_____ Attending in-service programs.
_____ Attending conferences dealing with social studies.
_____ Other. Please explain briefly: _____

Thank you.

SURVEY OF JUDGMENTS OF INDISPENSABLE CONTENT
FOR A COURSE IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
(College and University Professors)

Using the rating scale of one to five, please indicate the relative importance of each of the following topics in American government. Please note by "importance" it is not implied that a particular topic cannot make some contribution to the study of American government, but, given the limitations of time (one semester or 90 days), it is probably not possible to include all areas. Please assume that you are selecting topics for inclusion in an American government course for high school seniors for one semester.

In the space following each topic please circle a

"5" if you feel the topic must be included in a one semester course.

"4" if you feel the topic should be included.

"3" if you feel the topic probably should be included.

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affairs such as campaigns, local govern-
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local, state, national government; tax
reform; budgets) | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 40. <u>Resolution of Conflict in America</u> (mechanisms
for conflict resolution; decision-making) | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| 41. _____
(Suggested area not included above.) | 5 4 3 2 1 |

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 _____ an elective open to all students.
 _____ no opinion.
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 _____ one semester (half year).
 _____ nine weeks.
 _____ other. Please indicate length: _____
 _____ no opinion.

44. Most government courses today are offered to twelfth grade students. In your opinion, at what grade level should a government course be offered in the secondary school?

☐ 12th grade	☐ 8th grade.
☐ 11th grade.	☐ 7th grade.
☐ 10th grade.	☐ a combination of grade
☐ 9th grade	☐ levels. Please indicate
	specifically: _____
	☐ no opinion.

Please complete the following questions dealing with personal data.

45. Your title or position: _____

46. Educational background:

Degree

Major Area of Study

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

47. Years of teaching experience:

_____ years at the high school level.

_____ years at the college/university level.

48. Have you taught American government at the high school level?

_____ Yes, for _____ years.

_____ No.

APPENDIX C

SIGNIFICANT WRITTEN COMMENTS

The following represent selected written comments appearing on the returned questionnaires from the high school government teachers and political science professors. They are included in order to provide further information to the reader.

COMMENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

Probably the hardest part of a true American government course is a "where to teach it, at what level." It is also hard to incorporate a true American government course in small schools. I know that seniors are the prime targets for (the) ...course, but I do not believe most schools do an adequate job in the lead up to it. Schools that teach Citizenship (Civics) to the 9th grade, World History 10th, American History 11th, and Problems of Democracy and American Government to seniors usually have the edge in completing all 40 of your main points. I know a huge volume of material is involved, but a total program is needed, not one course. We do need all your 40 points, but to be realistic, school systems could incorporate all of them into a group of courses, not one.

"Every government teacher should have a basic understanding of economics in order to integrate it into the study of government."

"The historical element of American government should be stressed but in a one semester course it has to be done in cooperation with the history course teacher."

"Current events should not be taught separately--like on a special day, etc., but should be interwoven with subject matter. The newspaper can serve as the 'textbook for the day'."

". . . can't discuss the past without reference to the present."

COMMENTS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSORS.

"If high schools could equip students with a basic knowledge of the structure of American government, it would be doing a major service."

"I marked so many 1's because I doubt the ability of most teachers to handle them fairly and objectively, and doubt the capacity of children to understand them."

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