



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

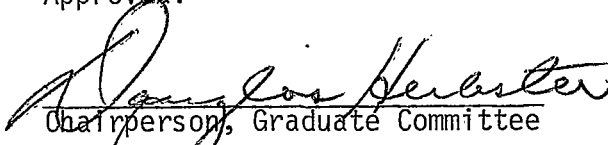
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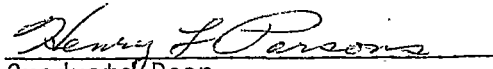
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ABSTRACT

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	7	7.0	7	7.7
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

