

**Amherst-Pelham Regional School District
Curriculum Overview**

Subject: Social Studies

Course: Constitutional Law

Grade Level: 11/12

Concepts/Enduring Understandings/Themes	Topics/Units	Content/Skills	Essential Activities/Agreements
What are the basic principles of our judicial process? What are alternative judicial philosophies? How does the judicial system work? How can we use specific sources to research judicial issues?	Origins and Powers of the Supreme Court	Note-taking, formal essay skills Research strategies for judicial issues	Oral presentation: current issues Essay Unit test
Why is free speech valued? What types of speech are protected? What are the limitations on free speech? What landmark cases have defined free speech protections?	Freedom of Expression	Synthesize multiple sources on Supreme court decisions: summary and interpretation	Panel discussion: First Amendment in Schools Essay: Hate speech (Honors)
What is the establishment clause? How has it been interpreted? What are the interests of government in limiting free exercise? How do current cases illustrate key dilemmas?	Freedom of Religion	Present and defend personal interpretation Exam preparation	Moderated panel discussion Mid-term exam
What rights are promulgated in the 4 th , 5 th , 6 th , and 8 th amendments? What landmark cases have shaped interpretation of these rights? What current issues are pending resolutions?	Rights of the Accused/Research Paper	Research significant cases in multiple sources (Honors); limited sources (CP) Interview guest speaker	Research paper Oral presentation and visual aid
How were the Civil War Amendments created? How do judicial activism, discrimination standards, and affirmative action principles affect past and current civil rights issues?	14 th Amendment and Civil Rights	Research and brief Supreme Court cases; work in small groups to prepare position for oral presentations on current controversies	Supreme Court Hearing (CP) Appeals Court Hearing (Honors)
What are the advantages and disadvantages of other judicial systems, especially the parliamentary models? How do these models affect current US foreign policy?	Constitutional Comparisons	Discussion Visual models Exam preparation	Visual model of parliamentary systems Final exam