

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

SYLLABUS: C (American Government: Continuity and Change.)

INTRODUCTION:

Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum is designed to give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. Students will study both general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and examine specific examples. The AP Government course requires students to learn facts and concepts and understand typical political processes. The course will require students to master historical and analytic skills, including; chronological and spatial thinking, historical research and interpretation. Students will evaluate viewpoints presented through major print and electronic media, understand statistical data and analyze trends related to significant political events. Emphasis is placed on applying problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, interpreting graphs and tables, organizing information, evaluating information, and communicating orally and in writing. The course aims to help the student to participate effectively and democratically in the American political society

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course explores the political theory and everyday practice that direct the daily operation of our government and shape our public policies. The express purpose of this course is to prepare students to take the AP Exam for U.S Government and Politics. The course is for all intents and purposes taught on a college level and it requires a substantial amount of reading and preparation for every class. The objectives of this course go beyond a basic analysis of how our government “works.” Students will develop a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system, as well as their rights and responsibilities as citizens. In addition to described content, the course will also work to refine important skills. They include analyzing data and writing and presenting written and oral arguments. In order to help students master the ability to write a good political science essay the course will concentrate on the instruction of several essential skills:

- Effective writing style
- The ability to make arguments
- The ability to evaluate critically and to compare scholarly works
- The ability to synthesize political science data
- The ability analyze, interpret, and respond to stimulus-based data including charts, graphs, cartoons, and quotes

The course will cover a large amount of content. The study of American Government is both historical and contemporary. Therefore, it is essential that students remain aware of what is happening in the world. It is suggested that regular reading of newspapers and news magazines as well as the regular viewing of news broadcasts be maintained throughout the course.

COURSE STANDARDS:

1. Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.
2. Students evaluate the scope and limits of civil rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.
3. Students evaluate the fundamental values and principles of civil society (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.
4. Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.
5. Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.
6. Students evaluate issues regarding national, state and local elective offices.
7. Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, and local governments.
8. Students evaluate the influence of the media on American political life.
9. Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.
10. Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

TEXTBOOK:

O'Connor, Karen, Sabato, Larry J. *American Government: Continuity and Change* 8th edition. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2006.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

Matthews, Chris. *Hardball. How Politics is Played Told by one who Knows the Game*. Free Press; 1st Touchstone Ed edition (November 2, 1999)

Woll, Peter. *American Government: Readings and Cases*. Longman; 14th edition 2004.

The Enduring Debate-Classic and Contemporary reader.

C-Span in the classroom.

Cnn.com/SPECIALREPORTS

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/index.html> - on-line current events quiz

Primary Source Documents as selected by the instructor from the 100 Milestone Documents collection at the NARA website <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/>

Articles from: NY Times, Congressional Quarterly, Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor and other sources

Collegeboard.com/ap website and various test preparation books.

Quia.com- flashcard activities for key terms in each chapter

Yahoo.com/briefcase- PowerPoint presentations for each chapter

Teacherweb.com - provides all assignments as documents for student downloads. Also provides essential links for informational research, etc. Access for this syllabus.

Summer Reading:

- Select one book from list of current political viewpoints and issues with lit log.
- Collect 8 articles from Op/Ed section of various newspapers.
- Watch and write four reviews of political shows: Hardball, Meet the Press, Washington Journal, etc.
- Oral book report for chosen book.

Unit I: Foundations of United States Government (8 Weeks)

Objectives:

What is the purpose of government? What was the founders' view of the purpose of government and the role of the citizen in the American Republic? How does the Constitution underpin the U.S. government? What was the impact of the enlightenment thinkers on the development of the U.S. Constitution? In which ways did the framers deal with the following: pluralism, popular sovereignty, republican ideals and elite theory. Students will explore American political culture and characteristics of American democracy.

Reading:

Text: O'Connor-Foundations of Government Chapters 1-6

Chapter 1-*The Political Landscape*

- Origins of American Government: What it is and why we need it
- Roots of American Government; Where did the ideas come from?
- American political culture and the characteristics of American democracy
- Changing characteristics of the American people
- Ideology of the American public
- Current attitudes toward American government

Chapter 2-*The Constitution*

- The origins of a new nation
- The first attempt at Government: the articles of Confederation
- The miracle at Philadelphia: Writing the Constitution
- The U.S. Constitution
- The drive for ratification
- Methods of Amending the Constitution

Chapter 3-***Federalism***

- The roots of the federal system: Governmental power under the constitution
- Federalism and the Marshall Court
- Dual Federalism: The Taney court, slavery, and the Civil War
- Cooperative Federalism: the New Deal and the growth of national government
- New Federalism: returning power to the states.

Chapter 4-***State and Local Government***

- The evolution of State and local governments
- State government
- Local government
- Grassroots power and politics
- Relations with Indian nations
- State and local finances

Chapter 5-***Civil Liberties***

- The First Constitutional Amendments: the Bill of Rights
- First Amendment guarantees: Freedom of religion
- First Amendment guaranteed: freedom of speech, press, and assembly
- The Second Amendment: the right to keep and bear arms
- The right of criminal defendants
- The right to privacy

Chapter 6-***Civil Rights***

- Slavery, abolition, and winning the right to vote, 1800-1890
- The push for equality, 1890-1954
- The Civil Rights Movement
- Other groups mobilize for rights
- Continuing controversies in civil rights.

Assignments and Activities:

Readings on Locke and Hobbes-internet sources

The ACLU: Freedom Files-video segment

AP United States Government and Politics; Origins of Constitutional Principles and Rights.

Chapter 1 Canon, Coleman & Mayer. *Constructing the Government: The Founding of the Constitution*

Federalist Papers 10 & 51

Lanahan Reader; Alexis de Tocqueville: Democracy in America

Learning About Rights and Responsibilities- Washington Post

Shay's Rebellion

Can the People Be Trusted to Govern Themselves?

PowerPoint: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu

PowerPoint: teacher-all chapters. Put on-line

Constitutional Power Grab

Constitutional Numbers

Document-Based Activities-Due Process-Using the Internet to Study Civil Rights and Liberties/Miranda Rights.

Canon: The Enduring Debate, Debating the Issues: Racial profiling and fighting Terrorism

Standard Deviant Government: video

Origins of government, types of government, monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy, direct democracy, indirect democracy, Components of American Democracy, popular consent, popular sovereignty, majority rule, individualism,

Socratic Seminar based on Woll reading

Assessments:

Chapter essays with short essays

PowerPoint-Philosophers impacting development of the Constitution

Government Treasure Hunt-online activity

Citizenship Test

Fish Bowl Activity-peer evaluation

Federalist # 10 Writing Assignment

Timed unit essay. Collegeboard rubric

Cornell notes

Unit II: Institutions of Government (7 weeks)

Objectives:

Students will understand the three major branches of government and how they are organized. They will also learn how they function as separate branches, controlled by a system of checks and balances. Students will understand the interdependency of these branches to stabilize the powers within each branch. Students will also be able to recognize the evolving government and how the U.S. Constitution has been interpreted to allow these changes.

Reading:

Text : O'Connor-The Constitution, Chapter 7-10

Chapter 7- ***Constitution***

- The Constitution and the legislative branch of government
- How Congress is organized
- The members of congress
- How members make decisions
- The law-making function of congress
- Congress and the president
- Congress and the judiciary

Chapter 8- ***The Presidency***

- The roots of and rules governing the office of the President of the United States
- The constitutional powers of the president
- The development and expansion of presidential power
- The presidential establishment
- The president as policy maker
- Presidential leadership and the importance of public opinion

Chapter 9-*The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy*

- The executive branch and the development of the federal bureaucracy
- The modern bureaucracy
- How the bureaucracy works
- Making agencies accountable

Chapter 10-*The Judiciary*

- The Constitution and the creation of the federal judiciary
- The American legal system
- The federal court system
- How federal court judges are selected
- The Supreme Court today
- Judicial philosophy and decision making
- Judicial policy making and implementation

Additional Readings & Resources:

Advanced Placement: U.S. Government & Politics, 2: Why Great Men Are Not Chosen President.

Lanahan Readings. *Pork: A Time-honored Tradition Lives On*
Canon. Enduring Debate. *Checking and Balancing*
"All the President's Men"

PBS- *Presidents* series (segments from modern day presidents.)

PBS-*Supreme Court*

Assignments and Activities:

Cornell Notes-study guides for each chapter

Creating a Bill/defending and promoting position

State of the Union essay analysis.-video of speech

c-span or whitehouse.gov

Essay- student selected case. Supreme Court Case Analyses

Standard Deviant Video; all three branches

C-span in the classroom: three branches of government

Writing/debating a bill

Supreme Court Justice report.

Cornell notes/per chapters

Survey: politicalcompass.org with evaluation

Assessments:

Unit II Essay Exam-Collegeboard rubric-timed response

Essay. In response to the State of the Union

Research: landmark Supreme Court case

Multiple Choice Exam w/short essays

Chapter tests with short essays.

Cornell notes

Unit III: The Electoral Process (8 weeks)

Objectives:

Students will analyze political parties with regard to the mechanisms that allow citizens to organize and communicate their interests and concerns. Students will focus is on the historical evolution of the US party system, the functions and structure of political parties, and the effects they have on the political process. Explore the historical evolution of the U.S. party system. Compare the functions and structures of political parties, and their effects on the political process.

Reading:

Text: O'Connor-Political Behavior, Chapter 11-16

Chapter 11- ***Public Opinion and Political Socialization***

- What is public opinion
- Efforts to influence and measure public opinion
- How political socialization and other factors influence opinion formation
- Why we form political opinions
- How public opinion is measured
- How polling and public opinion affect politicians, politics, and policy

Chapter 12- ***Political Parties***

- What is a political party?
- The evolution of American party democracy
- The functions of the American parties
- The basic structure of American political parties
- The party in government
- The modern transformation of party organization
- The party in the electorate
- Third-partyism

Chapter 13 - ***Voting and Elections***

- The purpose of elections
- Kinds of elections
- Presidential elections
- Congressional elections
- Voting behavior
- Reforming the electoral process

Chapter 14 - ***The Campaign Process***

- The structure of a campaign
- The media and campaigns
- Campaign finance
- Bringing it together: the 2004 presidential campaign and election

Chapter 15 - ***The Media***

- The evolution of journalism in the United States
- The U.S. Media today
- How the media cover politicians and government
- The media's influence on the public
- The public's perception of the media
- Government regulation of the electronic media

Chapter 16 - *Interest Groups*

- What are interest groups?
- The roots and development of American interest groups
- What do interest groups do?
- What makes an interest group successful?

Additional Readings and Resources:

Hardball

American Polity: Kurtzman-Spin Cycle-

"Outfoxed"-DVD

Assignments and activities:

Chapter reading Cornell Notes

Hardball Dialectic Journal

Nominations, Primaries, and Elections Simulation

Socratic Seminar based on *Hardball*

Survey: Political opinion

Research any interest group/political power

Unit Essay-timed writing-collegeboard rubric.

Chapter tests with short essays.

Cornell notes

Assessments

Chapter tests with short essays

Unit essay: timed writing using Collegeboard rubric

Propaganda PowerPoint project

Chapter reading Cornell Notes

Political Party website analysis/oral report

The Living Room Candidate website campaign commercial analysis

Political Party guest panel

Socratic Seminar, Woll reading

Unit IV: AP Review (4 weeks)

Final dates to be determined

In-class exercise: AP released exam multiple choice with immediate discussion and feedback regarding "why this answer?" This will establish a diagnostic baseline for ongoing AP exam review.

Students will Research/Write out Answers to 35 Previous U.S. Government Free Response Questions. Teacher Follow Up with Rubric/Answer; Discussion; Teacher Created Review Exercises.

Current Event/AP Outline Matrix

Practice Test-65 Question released M/C and Free Response essay

Selected Topics: See Units of Study

TEACHING STRATEGIES

This is a large lecture course and, as such, the teaching strategies used focus on giving students opportunities to analyze and respond in class, to write mini-essays of 50 words or so reacting to provocative statements, and to do short role-play simulations.

Instructions are given throughout the course on the following:

- Essay organization diagram for free-response questions
- Essay tasks for AP Exam free-response questions
- List of directive terms used in free-response questions
- Reminders for answering timed essay questions
- Essay frame
- Generic free-response scoring guidelines

STUDENT EVALUATION

Quizzes are given on the reading assignments. Occasional outside-of-class assignments may also count as daily grades.

Test formats are objective (multiple choice), free-response questions (Essay Exams). Most objective tests consist of 60 to 65 multiple-choice questions and a 25-minute essay question, and are timed to approximate the time allowed on the AP Exam.

Homework is accepted before students begin to take the unit exam. The homework consists of unit terms and/or outlines; questions about readings, notations, and/or assigned primary and secondary sources; charts that pertain to the unit and applicable historical maps, diagrams or political cartoons. Well-completed terms and course themes demonstrate a student's effort and most students find this to be indispensable in maintaining a high grade point average.

The unit exams are a requirement of the AP Government and Politics course. A final semester comprehensive exam for all material covered will be given at the end of the term. The AP Government and Politics exam is comprehensive, covering material from the entire semester. Students who are enrolled in the course are expected to take the AP United States Government Exam. Class time and after school reviews are held prior to the AP Exam. In addition, many students participate in informal study group review sessions.