

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) GOVERNMENT 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, PRE-IB CLASSES, FALL 2019

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Room: 2211

Planning Blocks: 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a course in American national politics and government and it follows the Advanced Placement Government and Politics [year 2018 curriculum revision established by the College Board](#). My full College Board-approved syllabus and year-long curriculum map can be found in your Canvas class under the course module, **Introductory Materials**. This class also covers the required [VA standards of learning for VA and US Government as well](#). At the end of this course, students will have the opportunity to take the College Board's Advanced Placement US Government and Politics Exam, but there is no state required SOL exam for the class.

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level, year-long course that not only seeks to prepare students for success on the AP Exam in May, but also provide students with the political knowledge and reasoning processes to participate meaningfully and thoughtfully in discussions and debates that are currently shaping American politics and society. It is important to note that this course is not a history course; it is a political science course that studies the interconnectedness of the different parts of the American political system and the behaviors and attitudes that shape this system and that become the byproduct of this system.

AP U.S. Government and Politics accomplishes these goals by framing the acquisition of political knowledge around enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics that can be applied to a set of disciplinary practices through the use of a set of reasoning processes. By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze current and historical political events like a political scientist and develop factually accurate, well-reasoned, thoughtful arguments and opinions that acknowledge and grapple with alternative political perspectives.

**Overview of the AP Exam:** The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam is offered in May will be comprised of the following sections:

A one hour and 20-minute long section of **multiple-choice questions (worth 50% of the overall exam score)**. There are 55 questions and students are asked to:

- Analyze and compare political concepts
- Analyze and interpret quantitative, text-based, and visual sources
- Apply course concepts, foundational documents, and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of hypothetical and real-world scenarios

A one hour and 40-minute long section of **free-response questions (worth 50% of the overall exam score)**. There are 4 questions where students are asked to:

- Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios
- Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
- Analyze quantitative data
- Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence

As the breakdown of the AP Exam highlights, success in this course and on the AP Exam requires far more than the memorization of political knowledge. Success in this course and on the AP Exam requires connection-making with the aim of being able to analyze political information, regardless of the format the information is presented, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned opinion regarding this information. The different pieces of the course fit together in pursuit of this aim through course content and big ideas, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices. See these below.

**Course Content and Big Ideas:** The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics. The big ideas that connect the content in the course units include:

- Constitutionalism,
- Liberty and Order,
- Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy,
- Competing Policy-Making Interests, and
- Methods of Political Analysis.

**Reasoning Processes:** The reasoning processes are the thought processes that will facilitate connection-making and analysis in the pursuit of effectively executing the disciplinary practices in the course. In other words, the reasoning processes form the cognitive bridge between the course content/big ideas and the disciplinary practices. The reasoning processes in this course include:

- Definition/classification - demonstrating knowledge of course concepts;
- Explaining process - explaining political processes;
- Explaining causation - explaining causes and effects of political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors; and
- Explaining comparisons: explaining similarities and differences among political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

**Disciplinary Practices:** The disciplinary practices are the tasks students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices gives students the tools to analyze political information, regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The disciplinary practices in this course include:

- Practice 1 - apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context;
- Practice 2 - apply Supreme Court decisions;
- Practice 3 - analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics;
- Practice 4 - read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources; and
- Practice 5 - develop an argument in essay format.

Every AP Exam question fuses course content, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices. Thus, in-class and outside of class assignments will focus on the acquisition of course content and the application of course content to disciplinary practices using reasoning skills.

**Units of Study and Course Calendar:** Depending upon your course section, this year-long course will meet for 85 minutes every other day for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, or 7<sup>th</sup> periods and 45 minutes every day for 3<sup>rd</sup> period. The course is organized around the following required units of study:

- Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy (begins in Qtr. 2 and ends just before Winter Break)
- Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government (begins after Winter Break and continues on through Qtr. 3)
- Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (begins at beginning of Qtr. 4 and is taught after the Judicial Branch sub-topics of Unit 2)
- Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (begins at the beginning of Qtr. 1 and ends midway through Qtr. 1)
- Unit 5: Political Participation (begins about halfway into Qtr. 1 and ends right after the General Election in November)

Please note, **because of the election cycle, I present units 4 and 5 first**, followed by the other three. All units integrate public policy topics throughout the unit.

## CLASS RESOURCES, TEXTS, AND WEB MATERIALS:

**Website & Social Media Communications:** This course syllabus and my contact information can be found on Dr. East's [school webpage](#). All other class materials will be provided to students via the **Canvas** learning management system. You can access the Canvas portal via [myaccess.apsva.us](http://myaccess.apsva.us) (this link is also on the left-hand side of the WLHS homepage). You must know your APS student ID to access these materials. If you are having trouble with this, contact your guidance counselor or Craig Spraggins, the school technology officer. Here is his [Mr. Spraggins' webpage](#) if you need to reach him. We have the ability to send reminders to students via Canvas (if students add their phone numbers to their Canvas student profile, ask me to show you how to receive these).

### **Course Textbooks and Materials Access:**

Our textbook for this class is recently published and includes information about the 2016 election. It is called **American Democracy Now, AP Edition**, by Harrison et. al., 5<sup>th</sup> edition. You will be assigned a textbook on the first day of class and need to bring it back and forth to school until we get confirmed access to the online textbook. Online access requires a special code, hopefully I'll have that code by the start of the year. Once I have it, you may look for a document in Canvas that tells you how to access the textbook online.

Beyond the county-provided materials, I also suggest that you purchase an AP review book. Many are well done, but I especially like a book by Larry Krieger called **AP U.S. Government & Politics Crash Course**. I have a version of it on Kindle and hardcopy. Recently, it was selling for \$8.50 online at Amazon.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED FOR CLASS:**

1. 1" three-ring binder used to hold AP Gov. materials only ... you will carry this between home and school and change out materials every quarter, leaving the previous quarter's materials at home until you need them at the end of the year.
2. Loose leaf paper for use in binder (buy a package, put some in your binder, and bring the rest to class so that we can create one communal set that all can use here in class)
3. Divider pages and tabs for your binders
4. Pencils (mechanical is preferred since the pencil sharpener is always breaking)
5. Red pen (we often grade work together and you'll want this for corrections)
6. Highlighter (yellow preferred)
7. Earbuds for use with your computer
8. Optional. One box of 8 colored pencils.

### **METHODS OF ASSESSMENT:**

Student assessment in this class includes both summative and formative assessments.

Formative assessments are those types of activities that monitor student learning during the presentation of new instructional units. They are zero value or lower weight assessment activities that help students and teachers identify student strengths and weaknesses in understanding concepts or utilizing certain skills. Examples of these activities include in-class practice preview or review activities that appear in student notebooks, quizzes, short homework exercises, or worksheet/practice assignments.

Summative assessments are those types of activities that evaluate student mastery of skills or content knowledge at the end of a lesson or instructional unit. These assessments can include final group mini-projects, quizzes, unit tests, final drafts of research papers, self-directed study assignments, or processing assignments that are taken up for formal grading (processing assignments are those assignments that show that a student has developed a working understanding of the lesson's essential content).

**Specific assessments used in this class:** \*\*\* Grades reflect student achievement not student behavior.

Students and parents will be able to view all course grades online via the school's Synergy grading site. **PLEASE see your counselor if you cannot access your grades via Studentvue.**

- **15% Homework** – homework generally consists of short quizzes about required readings (from the textbook or other sources); work to turn in with answers to study questions on required readings, handwritten vocabulary logs; and/or handwritten current events logs.
  - **Current events logs** – handwritten summaries and reactions to the day's top government and politics current events. These can be local, national, or international news topics that you hear about from a multitude of sources. You must log at least one event per week and you will turn those two logs in on bi-weekly schedule on the last class day of each week (be it a Thursday or a Friday). The requirements and formats for these logs are described in canvas.
  - **Required Reading and Vocabulary Logs** – at the start of each unit I will provide you with a new unit plan in a canvas page called “**Start Here Daily**”. These plans include projected dates of lesson topics, due dates for required readings, tentative dates for unit tests, and lists of required vocabulary terms per unit. Vocabulary terms are best explained either through my lectures or your textbooks. AP Quizlets are the weakest source to get your vocabulary from.
  - **I will NOT accept late homework without prior arrangement or without proof of some emergency.** You either have homework with you, or you don't, on the day it is due. I forgot it at home will not suffice as an excuse. By “**prior arrangement**”, I mean that you must tell me a reason why something **might** be late **before** it is late and, importantly, **obtain my approval to turn it in late**. This means you need to be looking ahead; panicked emails the night before something is due will not move me to mercy. If you have sought approval to turn something in late; generally, I have no issue with it being late because we have made **arrangements (a plan for when you will turn it in)**.
    - If you haven't gone through this process, I won't accept late work (unless of course, some proven emergency caused the work to be late). If you have an excused absence on a day when it is due, you must submit that late work as soon as you return. I will not accept it later.
    - You will have many little homework assignments in any given quarter, missing one or two or even three will not sink your grade; missing many, however, will come back and bite you in the grade book.
  - **You may not make up unscheduled pop-quizzes of homework readings.** If you miss a reading quiz because of any absence, I will simply remove the quiz from your overall homework grade calculation.
- **10% Class Organization & Participation** – You should keep neat, well-organized binders that include work organized into 3 sections and **arranged by date; with most recent materials in the front of each section. I may evaluate these binders without notice, so be organized and have them with you at all times!**

Grades will be given for organization and participation at least 2 times per quarter. Evidence of excellent class organization and participation includes a well-kept binder (see below), your active participation in whole class or small group discussions, participation in quick zero-point formative assessments (like Kahoots, etc.), regular attendance, promptness, and respectful, helpful interaction with others during all activities.

Required binder organization (checks for **binder possession** and organization will occur without notice as well):

- 1) a section for **daily work & lecture notes**: review/preview question work, daily notes on ruled paper or annotated handouts, worksheets associated with lectures or readings, and all returned work (including any tests or quizzes I let you keep).
  - 2) a separate section for **vocabulary logs**. I will show you a suggested format for these logs when I give you your first vocabulary list.
  - 3) a separate section detailing required info. on **foundational documents & supreme court cases** (I will explain as we encounter them).
  - Optional, 4): a separate section for any **current events logs you decide to keep**. Tip: take notes during others current events discussions and this will help you with related topics on quizzes or tests.
- **20% Daily Work** – these are daily activities (like self-guided study questions, reflection questions, video summary questions, web research, short answer essay questions that have previously appeared on the AP tests, or concept processing activities, etc.). These activities are taken up individually for formal grading and evaluation at the end of a class period. This may be individual work, partnered, or team work. Some of this work is completed daily; some of this work may need a few in-class days to prepare and/or may be graded in parts. Partners and group members may not always share the same grade, if I feel like someone is not putting in their fair share of effort!
  - **25% Project Grades** – mini-projects that allow students to further explore instructional content, synthesize, or apply instructional information. This may be individual work, partnered, or team work. Partners and group members may not always share the same grade, if I feel like someone is not putting in their fair share of effort! You may have 2 – 3 project grades per term.
  - **30% Unit Tests** -- these are tests that check for recall, recognition, understanding, and/or synthesis and application of instructional content. Check the **“Start Here Daily”** links in canvas unit modules for all upcoming testing dates. All tests will have short answer questions as some part of the test. You may have 2 – 3 unit tests per term.

#### **The Grading Scale:**

Letter Grade	Percentages	Quality Points	AP & IB Quality Points
A	90,91,92,93,94,95,96,97,98, 99, 100	4.0	5.0
B+	87, 88, 89	3.5	4.5
B	80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86	3.0	4.0
C+	77, 78, 79	2.5	3.5
C	70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76	2.0	3.0
D+	67, 68, 69	1.5	2.5
D	60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66	1.0	2.0
E	0 – 59	0.0	0.0

**Quarterly grades** will be rounded up when the average yields a percentage point that is .5 or higher. This grading scale is in accordance with the standards set by Arlington County Public Schools.

**End of year exams:** You have the opportunity and option of taking the AP exam for this class. The exam is offered to you at no cost and you could earn college credit by earning a high enough score on the exam. **Students that take the AP exam will not have to sit for the class final exam.** Students that take the exam will also automatically earn the GPA quality point you achieved by your participation in this class. Arlington Public Schools (APS) pays for the examination fees for all AP courses. **Any student who registers for an AP course, but does not take the corresponding exam, will be required to reimburse APS for their examination fee(s).** The cost of each exam is established by College Board. **Students that do not take the AP exam must sit for a final cumulative exam that I design, and you will be dropped from the AP Course (losing the quality point addition for taking an AP class).**

### **Final Grades:**

- You must pass a US government class to graduate in VA.
- Student grades reflect student achievement and not behavior.
- If you take the AP Exam, your final course grade is determined by averaging your four quarter grades
- If you do not take the AP exam, you will take a final exam, which weighs as an additional grade (final average determined by QTR1 + QTR2 + QTR3 + QTR4 + final exam grade).

### **OTHER CLASS POLICIES:**

\*\* I strictly follow all APS grading procedures as stated in the APS student and faculty handbooks. I mention just a few here.

### **Absences, Late Work, Make-Up Work Policies:**

- All work is due at the start of class on the day of its assigned due date. When work is late because of excused absences or prior arrangements with me (***see the note about late work under Homework***), it is your responsibility to make up those missed assignments. You should find out what you missed from our Canvas classroom while you are gone. Please also come see me too as soon as you come back to school.
- If a student has been absent for any reason, the family must notify the school as soon as practical, but no later than two (2) days after he or she returns to school. The notifications must be done in writing to the attendance office, and they are subject to monitoring and verification.
- Students with an excused absence, have one week from the last day of the absence to submit work assigned during their absence; work assigned before their absence is due the day they return.
- Full credit for make-up or late work is only given when the due date's absence is excused or if you have made prior arrangements with me (***see the note about late work under Homework***). **You will not be allowed to make up any missed quizzes, unit tests, daily work, or project grades due to unexcused absences. You will receive a 0 for these types of assignments if you miss with unexcused absences.** See the complete APS policy on Make-Up Work in the Student Handbook

### **Retake Policy for Missed Work:**

In the case of excused absences, students will be allowed to retake exams up to one week after the student returns. Arrange exam time with the teacher as this may have to happen outside of class, either before school, after school, or during General's Period. Again, I will not allow you to re-take unit exams or quizzes due to unexcused absences.

### **Extra Credit Policy:**

As a general rule, I do not give extra credit. However, in previous years, I have offered some limited extra credit that I applied to towards students' lowest test score in quarters 3 and 4 for students that regularly attend exam review sessions during GP. I may do that this year; stay tuned 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.

### **Tardy Policy:**

Three unexcused tardies (UC's) during one quarter will result in a detention assigned by the teacher. Parents will be notified. Each additional tardy will result in another detention. Five unexcused tardies will result in a referral to the student's administrator and may result in Saturday School.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:**

Students will be asked to sign an honor pledge for each major assignment turned in. By signing the pledge, students will be acknowledging their understanding of the honor policy as described in their student handbook and that they have not violated that policy in any way.

"ON MY HONOR, I PLEDGE THAT I HAVE NEITHER GIVEN NOR RECEIVED INFORMATION ON THIS ASSIGNMENT."

**Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy:**

Students will not have cell phones (computers or other electronic devices) on their person, their desk, charging, or visible in any way ***unless specifically permitted for instructional purposes***. You and your parents/guardians will be asked to sign off indicating they understand this policy. See the last page of this syllabus. Consequences for violating this policy are outlined below.

- Upon the first offense the student will hand over their device until the end of class. If a student refuses, administration will be notified.
- Upon the second offense the device will be turned over to the main office for the student to pick up at the end of the day.
- Any offense beyond that will require a parent or legal guardian to come in and pick up the device from the student's administrator.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASS BEHAVIOR:**

This class will operate under four basic rules.

1. Everyone, including the teacher, will be treated with respect.
2. Putdowns and intentionally hurtful comments or actions will not be tolerated.
3. No one will be allowed to disrupt the learning process of anyone else.
4. Everyone, including the teacher, will be on time and prepared

It is the student's job to take responsibility for his or her own education. I will not hunt you down to let you know what you missed while absent, and I will not accept excuses. Education is one of the most vital instruments in your life and you, as a student, must accept responsibility for your own actions and decisions. As a teacher, I will provide you with the raw materials to gain a thorough understanding of the subject matter, but it is your job as a student to dedicate the necessary time and effort to mastering this information. As you prepare for your future, I hope you will take advantage of my offers to help you hone your study skills, critical thinking skills, and content mastery. I can be a valuable resource for you, but it is ultimately your decision to utilize me as a resource.

**Students:** Please read this AP Government syllabus with your parents/guardians. Once you are finished, keep the rest of the syllabus for your binder, but return this last page to Dr. East with signatures affirming that all of you understand all of the classroom policies, including the cell phone and electronic device policy, described within the syllabus. **\*\* Just bring this last page. You should keep the rest of your syllabus in your class binder.**

My parents/guardians and I have read, discussed and understand all of the procedures and policies mentioned in Dr. East's course syllabus.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name  
(print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Class Period

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Name  
(print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Parent Information**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to call me is \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #s: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_