

AP US Government & Politics Syllabus

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I. Introduction:

This is essentially a college course that is rather demanding, and is one that requires you to put forth your best effort on a DAILY basis. Due to the challenging nature of the course, an extra grade point will be added to the grade that you earn here. As per MVHS' ESLR's, you will have ample opportunity to demonstrate that you are *Engaged learners, Critical thinkers, Responsible Twenty-first Century citizens, and Effective communicators.*

II. Textbook:

American Government [10th Edition], James Q. Wilson/John J. Dilulio, Jr.

Houghton Mifflin, 2006

Supplemental Reader:

Perspectives on American Government [4th Edition], William Lasser. Houghton Mifflin, 2004

III. Course of study:

- A. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government (ch. 1-3, Federalist 51)
- B. Political Beliefs and Behaviors (ch. 4, 7, 8, 10)
- C. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media (ch. 9, 11, 12, Federalist 10)
- D. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts (ch. 13-16, Federalist 78)
- E. Public Policy (ch. 17-21)
- F. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (ch. 5, 6)

In your binder, separate your notes for these units by tab dividers so that you will be organized to prepare for the AP test. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!

IV. Attendance:

- A. Regular attendance is ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL in this class.
- B. I will strictly enforce the school attendance policy.
- C. If you have an unexcused tardy, you will not be able to take the daily quiz, and will therefore earn a zero on that quiz.
- D. Fourth tardy whether excused or not will be considered unexcused.
- E. Please note: You must not make plans for extracurricular activities that necessitate your absence from class after March and until the exam in May. I give exams that you will not be allowed to make up. This is not negotiable.
- F. Any trips or events to be excused from class must be signed off by me or you will not be able to make up work or tests.

V. Classroom management:

- A. I CANNOT OVERSTATE THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING EXCELLENT CLASS NOTES. THEY WILL BE OF GREAT HELP NOT ONLY FOR TEST PREPARATION THIS SEMESTER, BUT ALSO FOR REVIEWING FOR THE AP TEST IN MAY.
- B. Each one of you is expected to take an active part in class on a daily basis. When you enter the room, be prepared to think, ask questions, and make comments.
- C. DO NOT BRING FOOD OR DRINK TO CLASS (except water).
- D. I do not want to SEE or HEAR electronic devices such as cell phones or IPODs. If I either SEE or HEAR them, I will send you to your Assistant Principal. I do not need to HEAR such devices to send you. Merely SEEING students check messages, send text messages, play games, or otherwise fiddling around with them will result in a referral.
- E. If you have difficulties with this class, feel free to drop by for extra help.
- F. If special problems arise, see me as soon as possible so that we can work things out.
- G. If you are having a bad day, let me know before class begins so that I can accordingly make allowances.

VI. Homework:

- A. Expect nightly reading assignments. TAKE THESE SERIOUSLY! You will be "in the dark" during lectures and discussions if you do a poor job of reading or (OMG!) do not do the reading at all! You will also bomb the daily quiz that is based upon the previous night's reading.
- B. Late work is not accepted, except in the case of an excused absence. This must be excused by the next time I see you.

VII. Cheating:

This is defined as gaining an unfair advantage, or trying to do so.

Consequences:

A zero on the assignment, possible transfer to another class, and the loss of respect from me, and a conference with your parents as well.

VIII. Office hours:

I am here every morning by 7:00, however if you need help or need to make up something I will arrange in advance an earlier appointment. I generally do not stay after school; I will however make appointments at that time on need-to basis.

IX. Grades:

- A. I use the following grade scale:

A+ - A- = 100-90%

B+ - B- = 89-80%

C+ - C- = 79-70%

D+ - D- = 69-60%

F = 59% and below

I DO NOT ROUND UP!

B. Your semester grade will be based upon the following factors:

1. Chapter vocabulary quizzes
2. Unit tests

Most unit tests will consist of a multiple choice section (50%) and a free response section (50%). The tests will be timed in order to help you get a feel for the actual AP Exam. If you miss a unit test due to an excused absence, you must make it up within a week; and you must make an appointment to do so. Make-up tests are different from tests given to the entire class.

3. Daily quizzes
 - a. Each daily quiz will be based upon the previous night's reading assignment. You may use any notes that you take. These quizzes are cumulatively worth many points, so your grade will suffer if you consistently do poor on them. If you miss a quiz due to an excused absence, you must make up the quiz the very next class.
 - b. There will be three vocabulary quizzes during each unit. The third quiz will always be the class before the unit test.
4. Final Exam
 - Fall semester: Comprehensive
 - Spring Semester: 5 Actual Exams

X. Class materials: You will need to obtain the following items by August 17, 2015

- A. One 2" 3-ring binder
- B. Package of 6 tab dividers
- C. Blue or black ink pens
- D. College Ruled Notebook Paper
- E. Highlighters, post-it notes, red pen, pencil

XI. Current Events:

You must turn in a current event each day. They must be related to the unit we are studying or something extremely relevant to government and politics. For example: Supreme Court decisions, the presidential race, etc.

When you are reading, consider the following:

- Does this political issue illustrate the struggle for power between the three branches of government?
- Does this political issue illustrate the struggle for power between the states and the federal government?
- Does this issue illustrate something about American political culture?
- Does this issue illustrate the difference between conservative, liberal, populists and libertarians?
- Does this issue illustrate the process of structure of government in some way?
- Does this issue illustrate the power of a particular interest group?
- Does this issue illustrate a political trend-for example, the rise in primaries, the increased use of initiatives, etc.?
- Does this issue illustrate the differences between Republicans and Democrats?
- Consider the Focus question given with each unit as well.