

AP United States Government and Politics Syllabus-2020

Overview of the Course

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 are 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. Through the development of this set of political knowledge, disciplinary practices, and reasoning processes, by the end of the 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.

This semester-long course will meet for 80-minutes every A day. The course will be organized around the following units of study (due to the short amount of time between the beginning of this course and the AP Exams, units will be 2-3 weeks only)

- Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy
- Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government
- Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
- Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs
- Unit 5: Political Participation

The course also consists of:

- A unit exam at the end of each unit
- Final research paper completed as homework and during class after the AP exam is completed

Overview of the AP Exam

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will be comprised of the following sections:

- *Multiple-Choice Questions*: Number of Questions: 55
- *Free-Response Questions*: Number of Questions: 4

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.

Required Course Texts and Additional Resources

Each student will be assigned a copy of the following textbook at the beginning of the course:

Burns, James M. and Pelatson, J.W, et al., *Government by the People*. 12th Ed. (Prentice Hall: New Jersey) 2004.

In addition to the course textbook, supplemental readings, including court cases and foundational documents, as well as current new, will be required.

Required Supreme Court Cases

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 required Supreme Court cases:

- Marbury v. Madison (1803)
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Schenck v. United States (1919)
- Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
- Baker v. Carr (1961)
- Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)
- Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)
- New York Times Company v. United States (1971)
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)
- Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- United States v. Lopez (1995)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010) [CR15]

The list above is not an exhaustive list of the Supreme Court cases that will be analyzed and discussed in this course.

Required Foundational Documents

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of nine required foundational documents to help understand the context and beliefs of the founders and their critics and the debates surrounding the writing and ratification of the US Constitution.

- The Declaration of Independence
- The Articles of Confederation
- Federalist No. 10
- Brutus No. 1
- Federalist No. 51
- The Constitution of the United States
- Federalist No. 70
- Federalist No. 78
- “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE THE AP US GOVERNMENT & POLITICS EXAM. The 2020 exam will be **Monday morning, May 4, 2020**. Register immediately at www.TotalRegistration.net Please see me privately if payment is an issue—we don’t want anyone to miss the test due to finances.
- Following the AP exam, students will spend several class lessons learning about local and NY State government.
- They will also be completing a 10-page research paper on a government related question of your choice that will serve as the final exam for this course.
- Finally, students are required to complete 20 hours of GOVERNMENT-RELATED community service before the end of the semester. The contract (plan) for service will be due 3rd quarter, with the hours due by the end of classes. See Ms Seim if you need help finding ideas to complete your service.
- Students must attend 2 public meetings during the semester, one during each quarter.