

AP US Government & Politics Course Outline

Course Introduction/Description:

- AP US Government and Politics is designed for 12th grade Social Science students committed to college-level rigor. Students will form concentrated evaluations of the American Governmental legacy and the United States political process. This swift paced 34 week course will emphasize the structure and function of the United States Government as directly and indirectly provided in the Constitution. Further study will focus on the civil rights, liberties, and interests of peoples, parties, and various social groups. It is highly recommended that students who register for this course have attained an average of 85% or higher in their previous social science AP course OR a 90% or higher in their previous mainstream academic course. Further obligations for this course include extensive summer assignments that are required to be completed by the first day of class. Failure to complete the mandatory summer assignments will result in prompt dismissal from the AP course. Please recognize that this course is demanding for students throughout the summer and academic year.

Course Materials:

- Text: Edwards, G. C., Wattenburg, M.P., & Lineberry, R.
Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy, 14th AP edition.
New York: Pearson Inc., 2009.
- Web Resources: various resources are accessible via the class website in addition to the CollegeBoard site and the textbook site. Passwords provided in class.
- Supplementary: *Teaching the Constitution*. The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. New York: Oxford University Press., 2006.
 - Beschloss, Michael. *Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents from the National Archives*.
 - Ritchie, Donald A. *Our Constitution*.
 - Bodenhamer, David J. *Our Rights*.
 - Hall, Kermit L. & Patrick, John J. *The Pursuit of Justice*.
- Supplementary: Tomaselli, Valerie & Wood, Thalia. *American Government On File Revised Edition*. New York: Facts On File Inc., 2004.
- Current Issues: Items retrieved from the New York Times, The Harrisburg Patriot News, CNN.com, Foxnews.com, Msnbc.com, Politico.com. Huffington Post

Exams: There will be an exam at the conclusion of each unit throughout the course. Exams will consist of selected response and (FRQ's) free response questions. Formal assessment exams will carry a large weight of each marking period grade. During the fourth marking period there will likely be fewer exams due to the AP US Government & Politics Exam on May 10th.

Quizzes: Daily - There will be a five question quiz at the start of each class period. Quizzes will be selected response. Questions will be based upon prior lessons as well as content found in the reading due the day of the quiz.

Periodically – There will be a vocabulary quiz likely around the time that flashcards are due. Points will vary based on the number of terms per unit.

Assignments & Readings - Daily assignments are to be completed on time. Late assignments will **NOT** be accepted for a grade as this is a college level course and will be run in such a manner. Make sure you complete your assignments on time. Assignments are designed to benefit your comprehension and better prepare you for the exam in May. If you are absent the day an assignment is due, make sure you turn it in before the start of the school day on the first day you return. If there is an event that requires you to miss class such as athletics, the arts, or a field trip, all work is to be turned in **before** you attend the event. First period is a flex period and allows for any work to be completed and turned in prior to you leaving school for the day. If you are in the building and do not turn in assignments, then they will **not** be accepted the next class meeting.

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Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings - - - First 15-20 days

1. What influenced the Constitution/adoption of the Constitution (History)
 - a. Colonial Era (British rule/ideas of government)
 - b. The Declaration of Independence
 - c. Articles of Confederation & their strengths/weaknesses --- WEEK 1
 - d. Self-Government & Representative Government
 - e. Locke/Hobbes/Montesquieu (Sparknotes)
 - f. Federalist Papers (10, 51, 78)
 - g. Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist
 - h. New Jersey vs. Virginia Plan, Compromises
 - i. The Constitution (need to know the Articles & the Amendments)
 - j. Federalism

Unit 2: Civil Rights, Liberties, & Policy --- Political Beliefs/Behaviors - - - Next 24 days

1. Beliefs about government & leaders
 - a. Corrupt
 - b. Elite
 - c. Voice is not heard by gov't
 - d. Gov't is out of touch
 - e. Hate Congress but like their representatives
 - f. Pork Barrel...wasteful
 - g. Bureaucratic/Red Tape/Difficult to get anything accomplished
 - h. Provides services
 - i. Maintain order
2. How citizens learn about politics
 - a. Family
 - b. School
 - c. Media
 - d. Peers
 - e. Work & Occupancy
 - f. Religion
3. Public Opinion
 - a. Polling (be aware of sampling, margin of error & wording of question)
4. How citizens vote/voice
 - a. Campaign
 - b. Protest
 - c. Petition
 - d. Donate
 - e. Run
 - f. Involve in media: blog/tweet

~ limitations: money, constitutional limits/laws, time, registration

*** motor voter as a solution ***
5. Why citizens differ from others political views
 - a. Where citizens learn
 - b. Where they come from (immigration & ethnicity)
 - c. Race
 - d. Gender
 - e. Education
 - f. Religion
 - g. Social Class
 - h. Age
6. Non-voters and Can't voters
 - a. Closed Primaries
 - b. Laws

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Unit 3: Political Parties/Interest Groups/Mass Media - - - Next 24 days

1. Political Parties
 - a. Functions
 - b. Organization
 - c. Development (history of parties)
 - d. Effects on process
 - e. Election laws/systems (suffrage, “secret ballot,” Jim Crow laws)
 - f. Realignment of voters to political parties (voting trends of groups)
2. Campaigns & Elections
 - a. Presidential
 - b. Congressional
 - c. Primary vs. General (candidates tend to fluctuate platform from primary to general election...polarized during primaries, moderate during general election)
 - d. Raising funds & awareness
3. Interest Groups & PAC’s
 - a. Iron Triangles (Congress, Bureaucracy, & Interest Groups)
 - b. Various Interests
 - c. Effect on interest group
 - d. Impact of interest group
 - e. PAC’s in Political Process
 - f. Revolving Door
4. Mass Media
 - a. Functions
 - b. Services
 - c. Impact of media on politics
 - d. News media industry & consequences
 - e. TV, Print, Web, Radio
 - f. Regulation (FEC)

Unit 4: Institutions (4 subunits & tests) - - - 65-75 days

1. Congress – Legislative Branch
 - a. Formal/informal institutional arrangements of power & benefits (franking etc)
 - b. Relationships among the four institutions
 - c. Linkage between these institutions
 - d. Public opinion/voters
 - e. Interest Groups
 - f. Political parties & committees
 - g. Media - CSPAN
 - h. Federal Congressman’s connection to State/Local Gov’ts (federalism)
 - i. Congressional Staff
2. Executive Branch (Presidency) (Cabinet)
 - a. Formal/informal institutional arrangements of power & benefits
 - b. Relationships among the four institutions – signing statements on bills to law
 - c. Linkage between these institutions – gridlock
 - d. Public opinion/voters - polling
 - e. Interest Groups
 - f. Political parties
 - g. Media – press conferences, addressing the nation, state of the union
 - h. Executive Staff, Departments, Agencies

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3. Judicial Branch – Justice System (Supreme Court is only fed. Court created by Constitution)
 - a. Formal/informal institutional arrangements of power & benefits
 - i. Strict constructionist vs. Loose constructionist
 - ii. Various levels of courts
 - iii. Court appointments
 - iv. Civil vs. Criminal
 - v. Jurisdiction (original vs appellate)
 - vi. Standing to take a case to court
 - vii. Class action suit
 - viii. Amicus Curiae, Writ of Certiorari, Stare Decisis
 - b. Relationships among the four institutions
 - c. Linkage between these institutions – gridlock
 - d. Public opinion/voters - polling
 - e. Interest Groups
 - f. Political parties
 - g. Media – limited
 - h. Federal Court connection to State/Local Gov'ts (federalism)
4. Bureaucracy (most falls under the executive branch)
 - a. At every level of government
 - b. Formal/informal institutional arrangements of power & benefits
 - c. Relationships among the four institutions
 - d. Linkage between these institutions
 - e. Public opinion
 - f. Interest Groups – Iron Triangle (hand in hand)
 - g. Political parties
 - h. Media
 - i. Pendleton Acts & Hatch Act

Unit 5: Policymaking in Federal System - - - 16 days

- a. forming policy agendas
- b. institutions role in enacting policy
- c. role of courts & bureaucracy in policy implementation & interpretations
 1. regulation & deregulation
- d. linkage between policy process (who's benefiting, who's paying for it)
 1. political institutions/federalism
 2. political parties
 3. interest groups
 4. public opinion
 5. elections
 6. policy networks
- e. economic policy
- f. social welfare
- g. foreign policy
- h. military policy
- i. environmental policy

Final Exam Project – Tentative

1. Personal Legislation
OR
2. Thematic Park or Restaurant