

AP US GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

You have elected to participate in a class that is demanding and involves a great deal of reading and writing. The class is also expected to give you an idea of the expectations college instructors will have of you.

Contact Information

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Required Materials

Writing materials & highlighter

1 ½" - 2" Binder with filler paper

The AP Government & Politics Test

One of our main tasks will be to prepare you for the AP Government & Politics test to be taken in May. The test is composed of 60 multiple-choice questions (45 minutes & 50% of score) and 4 free-response questions (100 minutes & 50% of score). The FRQs cover all areas of the curriculum and are often cross-curricular.

Policies & Procedures

In Class Assignments & Participation

- It is expected that everyone will participate in planning, discussions, debates, and projects.
- Not everyone will participate to the same degree but everyone must contribute.
- If I feel you are not participating enough in class I will bring it to your attention.
- Courtesy and respect for the opinions of others is mandatory. When others are recognized to speak, listen.
- If you have an **excused** absence, it is your responsibility to obtain all work missed. You have the same number of days you were absent plus one to complete make-up work. Work turned in beyond this deadline will receive a zero in the grade book.
- Participation points for discussions and in class activities cannot be made up.

Homework

- All homework is due at the beginning of class.
- Late work will be accepted for one day for half credit. If you choose to turn in work late, it is due by the start of the next class.
- Homework is only to be completed in class when permission is given.
- It is your responsibility to make your work legible. If I cannot read it, I will not grade it.

Formal Assessments

- All tests and quizzes will be taken in the same format as the AP exam. Major tests may last two days to allow sufficient time to approximate the test experience.
- Quizzes may or may not be announced.
- All tests will be cumulative, again, to simulate the AP exam experience. This means that multiple-choice questions from previous tests may show up on a later test. As stated previously, FRQs cover all areas of the curriculum and may require knowledge from previous units to answer correctly.

Miscellaneous

- Go to the restroom before the bell rings.
- Be in your seat ready to begin when the bell rings.
- Have materials ready to turn in or to begin work.
- Remain seated and attentive until I dismiss you, not just until the bell rings.
- No food is permitted in the classroom.
- Water with a cap/lid is permitted.
- Electronic devices are not to be used during class unless direct permission is given.

Course Readings

Text

Magleby, D., Obrien, D., Light, P., Burns, J., Peltason, J., & Cronin, T. (2014). Government by the People: 25th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Supplemental Text

Serow, A., Ladd, E. (2011). The Lanahan Readings in the American Policy: 5th ed. Baltimore, MD: Lanahan Publishers, Inc.

These readings will be supplemented with classroom handouts throughout the year.

Current Events Readings

Students will be responsible for keeping up with current events on a weekly basis, reading articles from the Plain Dealer, Akron Beacon Journal, New York Times, or Washington Post, and news magazine excerpts from Time or Newsweek.

Data

Students will be using tables, charts, graphs, and cartoons as necessary within the class.

Free-Response Questions

Students must answer numerous free-response questions. FRQs will be presented within each chapter and unit throughout the year.

Course Plan

Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government

- Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution
- Separation of powers
- Federalism
- Theories of democratic government

Text Readings

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: Constitutional Democracy
- Chapter 2: Constitutional Foundations
- Chapter 3: American Federalism

Unit 2: Political Beliefs and Behaviors

- Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders
- Processes by which citizens learn about politics
- The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion

- The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life
- Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors

Text Readings

- Chapter 4: The American Political Landscape
- Chapter 7: Public Opinion, Ideology, Participation, and Voting

Unit 3: Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media

- Political parties and elections
 - Functions
 - Organization
 - Development
 - Effects on the political process
 - Electoral laws and systems
- Interest groups, including political action committees (PACs)
 - The range of interests represented
 - The activities of interest groups
 - The effects of interest groups on the political process
 - The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process
- The mass media
 - The functions and structures of the media
 - The impacts of media on politics

Text Readings

- Chapter 5: Interest Groups
- Chapter 6: Political Parties
- Chapter 8: Campaigns and Elections
- Chapter 9: Media and U.S. Politics

Unit 4: Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts

- The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power
- Relationships among these four institutions and varying balances of power
- Linkages between institutions and the following:
 - Public opinion and voters
 - Interest groups
 - Political parties
 - The media
 - Subnational governments

Text Readings

- Chapter 10: Congress
- Chapter 11: The Presidency
- Chapter 12: The Federal Bureaucracy and the Public Policy Process
- Chapter 13: The Judiciary

Unit 5: Public Policy

- Policymaking in a federal system
- The formation of policy agendas

- The role of institutions in the enactment of policy
- The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation
- Linkages between policy processes and the following:
 - Political institutions and federalism
 - Political parties
 - Interest groups
 - Public opinion
 - Elections
 - Policy networks

Text Readings

- Chapter 16: Making Economic Policy
- Chapter 17: Making Social Policy
- Chapter 18: Making Foreign and Defense Policy

Unit 6: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

- The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation
- Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties
- The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties

Text Readings

- Chapter 14: Civil Liberties
- Chapter 15: Civil Rights