

AP US Government and Politics Syllabus

Liberty High School

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Course Overview: The Advanced Placement Program (AP) US Government and Politics is a year long college level course that explores the formal and informal structure of the US Government and the politics that influence its implementation. The purpose of this course goes beyond the normal expectations and requires analysis and the interpreting of literature and data on how our government functions. Students who take this course should note that you will be required do at least 2 to 3 hours of homework each night, if a student is not comfortable with this requirement they should think about taking another course. The ultimate goal for the course is to prepare the students for AP Exam and introduce college level curriculum.

Course Objectives:

Students should gain a greater understanding of:

- the constitutional foundation of the United State's government and the general themes of the government.
- the political beliefs, opinions, ideologies and their influence and origin
- how mass media, interest groups and political parties influence the daily functioning of government.
- the institutions that make up US Government and how the bureaucracy functions on a daily basis
- how public policy is created and the factors that influence the policy agenda
- the development of civil rights and civil liberties and Supreme Court Decisions that have impacted citizens rights.
- how to analyze and interpret data that from various forms of literature. i.e., textbook, supplemental reader, handouts and Internet activities.
- how to analyze primary resources i.e., Federalist Papers, New York Times articles, and OP/ED's
- the proper style and thought process that is recommended by the AP Board for U.S. Government and Politics.

Teaching Strategies:

The teacher will use lecture and seminar for the majority of daily curriculum. Student will also be exposed to graphic organizers, debates, primary resources and current events. The course will rely heavily on formal assessment, final, midterms and chapter quizzes. Another component is the Get Connected

Activities or Internet activity, which utilizes government websites as a source of information.

Writing Components:

Students will be expected to write on major thematic topics in each unit. The writings should be analytical in thought and should be based on in class lectures and seminars and out of class research and readings. Student should feel confident in their ability to answer Free Response Question on the AP Exam by the end of the course.

Course Readings:

Textbook:

Edwards, George C. III, Martin P. Wattenberg, and Robert L. Lineberry.
Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy, 12th ed. New York:
Longman, 2006

Reader:

Cigler, Allan, and Burdett Loomis: American Politics 6th ed. Boston: Houghton
Mifflin Co., 2005

Grading:

Grades will be based largely on quizzes, chapter tests, and unit exams. Homework/class work, projects and participation will also be factored into your grade.

Quizzes, tests, exams	60%
Homework/Class Work	20%
Projects	20%

A- 100-90

B- 89-80

C- 79-67

D- 66-60

F- 59- 0

Homework

Although there will not be a huge amount of homework, there will be some from time to time. Homework can include some book work, an internet activity, or a current event activity. Homework is expected to be turned in on the due date and **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Current Events

I strongly suggest that you pay attention to current national political events. We will draw on these events to help better understand the political system. Your knowledge of current issues will be beneficial to you. I suggest watching a variety of news shows.

Participation

To get the most out of this class, you will be expected to participate in lectures and debates. I encourage you to voice your opinion, ask questions, and choose sides in debates. In our discussions I expect you to act civil and treat each other and other's opinions with respect.

Class Rules

1. All school rules will be enforced (cell phones, dress, tardy, cheating, etc)
2. Respect me, your classmates, and property (**ESPECIALLY TEXTBOOKS**)
3. Be prepared
4. I dismiss you not the bell

Violation of rules will result in the following consequences:

1. Verbal warning
2. Student-Teacher conference and contact parent
3. Student will receive referral and or class suspension

Bathroom

Your use of the bathroom will be at my discretion with the following rule: You may not go to the restroom 10 minutes after the tardy bell and 10 minutes before the bell.

Course Plan

Unit 1: Constitutional Foundation of the United States Government

- I. Influences of the formation of the Constitution
- II. The theory and practice of separation of power
- III. Federalism and Intergovernmental relationships
- IV. The theory and practice of democratic government

Unit 2: Political Culture, Attitudes, Ideology, Participation

- I. The American people and how they feel about their government.
- II. The process of American Political Socialization
- III. Public opinion shaping society
- IV. Voting behavior and the ways citizens participate in government.
- V. American Political Ideology
- VI. Parties, Interest Groups, Media

Unit 3: Congress

- I. Powers
- II. Organization and Structure
- III. Influences
- IV. Legislative Process
- V. Problems and Criticisms

Unit 5: Executive Branch

- I. Powers and Roles
- II. Organization and Structure
- III. Relationship w/ Other Branches
- IV. Influences

Unit 6: Supreme Court

- I. Powers and Roles
- II. Organization and Structure
- III. Relationship w/ Other Branches
- IV. Problems and Criticisms
- V. Influence

Unit 7: Policy and Bureaucracy

- I. Policy Agenda: Influences
- II. How Policy is Made and Carried Out
- III. Organization and Structure of Bureaucracy
- IV. Major Policy Types

Unit 8: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

- I. Bill of Rights
- II. Incorporation
- III. Major Court Cases

AP Exam Review

- I. AP Course Outline Review
- II. Free-Response Writing Guide and Possible topics
- III. Charts/Data analysis Work Shop