SYLLABUS

ADVANCE PLACEMENT

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

AP Government and Politics is a highly structured, very demanding college-level course. Students are required not only to thoroughly read the textbook, but also to augment this material through research, examination of political and government data, and reading of supplemental articles and then critically apply the findings to the political nature of current governmental policies and analyze the ramifications of these policies. One of the primary objectives of this course is to expose students to all areas of information covered on the AP Examination. Thus it is imperative that a high-level academic environment exist and that the student is dedicated to learning, is highly motivated, and is willing to put forth both in and outside of the classroom the time and effort required for a course of this intensity. Students should remember than an extra 0.5 is part of this course, thus quality work is expected for grades rendered.

The Advanced Placement Program is intended for qualified students who wish to complete studies in secondary school equivalent to a one-semester college introductory course in American Government and Politics. The course is designed to give students a critical perspective on politics and government in the United States. The class involves both the study of general concepts used to interpret American politics and the analysis of specific case studies. It also requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that make up the American political reality.

The Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics program is designed to teach U.S. constitutional government based on principles of philosophy, political beliefs and behavior, political parties and interest groups, national institutions and policy processes, and law. Emphasis is given to the relationship of the citizen to the structure and function of the American constitutional system.

This course serves as an introduction to the U.S. national government. It is taught with the conviction that students want to know not only who governs but what difference it makes who governs. In short, the course attempts to demonstrate how our government institutions and political processes help explain why some policies and not others are adopted.

**The major units of study are:**

1. Foundations of American Democracy (15-22% of the Exam)
2. Interactions Among the Branches of Government (25-36% of the Exam)
3. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (13-18% of the Exam)
4. American Political Beliefs and Behaviors (10-15% of the Exam)
5. Political Participation (20-27% of the Exam)

**Course Content and Big Ideas**

The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics. The big ideas that connect the content in the course units include:

• Constitutionalism (CON)

• Liberty and Order (LOR)

• Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD)

• Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)

• Methods of Political Analysis (MPA)

**Reasoning Processes**

The reasoning processes are the thought processes that will facilitate connection-making and analysis in the pursuit of effectively executing the disciplinary practices in the course. In other words, the reasoning processes form the cognitive bridge between the course content/big ideas and the disciplinary practices. The reasoning processes in this course include:

• Definition/Classification: Demonstrating knowledge of course concepts

• Explain - Process: Explaining political processes

• Explain - Causation: Explaining causes and effects of political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors

• Explain - Comparison: Explaining similarities and differences among political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors

**Disciplinary Practices**

The disciplinary practices are the tasks students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices gives students the tools to analyze political information, regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The disciplinary practices in this course include:

• Practice 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context

• Practice 2: Apply Supreme Court decisions

• Practice 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics

• Practice 4: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources

• Practice 5: Develop an argument in essay format

**READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Students must understand at the outset that there is extensive reading, and that it must be completed in advance of the material being covered in class. Class time is not used simply to go over assigned readings. Instead, the readings are intended to serve as the point of departure for class sessions and discussions. Therefore, it is imperative for students to complete the assigned reading before a topic is taken up in class. It requires a tremendous amount of work. It is impossible to touch upon every concept in the text (in a 45 minute class period) that will be relevant for successful completion of this course and the AP Exam. It is up to the student (YOU) to help in this endeavor.

We will try to cover as much as possible in class, but as in other college level classes, not all can be covered in the class time, therefore you must be responsible for all assigned readings and assignments. As an incentive for keeping up, there will be daily timed writings over the previous night’s assigned reading or research. Students are also encouraged to become familiar with current events through the reading of newspapers, news magazines, and news-oriented broadcasts.

**NOTEBOOK**

You will need to keep a notebook for this class. You should put all your notes, assignments, handouts, etc. in your notebook as you will refer to it on a regular basis and need it to study for the final exam and AP exam.

**GRADING**

Attendance, completion of all assignments, classroom participation (quality, not quantity), completion of a civic engagement project, and performance on exams are all important contributors to the success of an AP course. All assignments must be handed in on time. Papers must be written or typed using proper grammar, spelling, and capitalization. The class format will include lectures, discussion, issue analysis, document and data analysis and interpretation, critical writing, political cartoon analysis, group work, panels, debates, guest speakers, timed writings, tests and quizzes.

**CHEATING/PLAGIARISM**

At the college level, students are permanently expelled for this offense. Needless to say, this subject is taken seriously. If a student is caught cheating or has plagiarized, a grade of zero will be given for the test or assignment and a parent conference will be immediately scheduled.

**TESTS**

All tests include questions from class lectures, study guides, Supreme Court cases, foundational documents, films, readings, current events, as well as from the textbook.

**AP EXAM**

The AP Government test for this year will be on Monday, May 6, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.

**Exam Format**

**Section I**

**Multiple Choice** — 55 Questions | 1 Hour, 20 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

* **Quantitative Analysis:** Analysis and application of quantitative-based source material
* **Qualitative Analysis:** Analysis and application of text-based (primary and secondary) sources
* **Visual Analysis:** Analysis and application of qualitative visual information
* **Concept Application:** Explanation of the application of political concepts in context
* **Comparison:** Explanation of the similarities and differences of political concepts
* **Knowledge:** Identification and definition of political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors

**Section II**

**Free Response** — 4 Questions | 1 Hour, 40 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

* **Concept Application:** Respond to a political scenario, explaining how it relates to a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior
* **Quantitative Analysis:** Analyze quantitative data, identify a trend or pattern, draw a conclusion for the visual representation, and explain how it relates to a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior
* **SCOTUS Comparison:** Compare a nonrequired Supreme Court case with a required Supreme Court case, explaining how information from the required case is relevant to that in the nonrequired one
* **Argument Essay:** Develop an argument in the form of an essay, using evidence from one or more required foundational documents

**Textbook**: Edwards, George C., Wattenberg, Martin, and Robert Lineberry. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*, 18th edition. Boston: Pearson, 2022.

**Supplemental text**: Griffin, Cathy and Joseph Stewart, Jr. *Test Prep Series for AP Government and Politics: United States*, 18th edition. Boston: Pearson, 2022.

**Supplemental newsmagazine**. “New York Times Upfront” Bi-weekly magazine.

**Primary Source Documents including**: The Declaration of Independence, The Articles of Confederation, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, Federalist & Anti-Federalist Papers, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” current court documents, bills and laws, various writings and addresses by the Founding Fathers and U.S. Presidents, Supreme Court briefs, maps, charts and graphs of political and government data, etc.