

AP United States Government and Politics Course Syllabus

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Congratulations on becoming a senior and choosing to challenge yourself with this course. This is a freshman level college course that is structured to maximize success on the AP examination in May. The curriculum is demanding and you will need to put forth your best effort on a daily basis. You will be given reading assignments nearly every period. **There is no summer assignment for AP Government.**

Course Description: This course will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. This course includes both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific examples. It also requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute U.S. politics.

Class Rules:

- Respect everyone and everything!
- Everyone must participate!
- Always come prepared to learn!

Academic Grading:

I use the following grading scale:

A= 90-100%	C-=70-74%
B=84-89%	D=64-69%
B-=80-84%	D-=60-64%
C=74-79%	F=59% and Below

Your semester grade will be weighted as follows:

1. Chapter Exams (25%)
 2. Final Exam (20%)
 3. FRQ/DBQ Writing (20%)
 4. Reading Quizzes and Vocabulary (15%)
 5. In Class Assignments/HW/Participation (20%)
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- a. **CHAPTER TESTS:** are based upon class notes, class assignments, ahha book activities and chapter reading.
 - b. **VOCABULARY:** This section of grading will consist of vocabulary terms in your text book. One every Unit.
 - c. **FRQ WRITING:** This area of grading will be based on all your Free-Response Question writing assignments.
 - d. **READING QUIZZES:** Daily Quizzes. You may use any notes you take during your reading. These will be given nearly every period. Reading quizzes will be placed in your mailbox and are to be completed at home and returned for credit.
 - e. **PACKETS/DAILY WORK/HOMEWORK:** Assignments, Packets, Homework, quick writes (journals), group work, peer grading etc..
 - f. **FINAL EXAM:** A cumulative test over everything covered in that particular semester. 20% of your semester grade.

Attendance: Regular attendance is **ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL** in this class. I will strictly enforce the attendance and tardy policies of the school. All make up tests and quizzes must be made up during the IC period at the end of the day.

Daily Procedures:

- a. Please bring the appropriate materials to class.
- b. I can't overstate the importance of taking excellent notes. They will be of great help in reviewing for unit tests and more importantly helping you prepare for the AP test in May.
- c. I do not want to hear or see any cell phones out unless we are using them in class. I will confiscate them. We will use them at times in class to research and for other activities.
- d. Every student will be expected to take an active part in class on a daily basis. When you enter this room be prepared to think, ask questions, and make comments.
- e. Bottled water is accepted in the classroom. It must have a lid please.
- f. If you are struggling with the class please see me for some help during IC. I also have prep periods 3* and 6*.

Late Work/Make-Up Policy: All late work will receive a maximum of 70% credit. No late work will be accepted after the Chapter test! All tests must be made up within one week from the date of the exam or they will become a zero. Make up tests must be completed during the IC, 3* or 6* unless other arrangements are made with me. All make up work will be placed in your mailbox. Forms must be completed to turn in late or make-up work.

Materials:

Notebooks: Your notebook needs to be a three ring binder with 6 dividers. One will need to be labeled references and the other 5 dividers will be labeled by the units (listed below in the curriculum outline). You must bring your notebook every day! You will also need a spiral notebook and a composition book.

Textbooks: *AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS TODAY: (2013-2014)*
AUTHORS: Schmidt, Shelley, Bardes, Ford

Secondary Text: Fast Track to a 5.

Goals: Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Know important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics.
- Understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the components of political behavior, the principles used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures.
- Be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics.
- PASS THE AP EXAM!

Some parting words:

"The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of opinion, is that it is robbing the human race...If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth."

-John Stuart Mill, *Essay on Liberty*, 1859.

Curriculum Outline:

I. Constitutional Underpinnings: Chapters 1-3

(5-15% of the AP test.)

- a. Sources that influenced the formulation/adoption of the Constitution.
- b. Separation of Powers
- c. Theories of Democratic Government
- d. Federalism

II. Political Process: Chapters 6-10

(20-40% of the AP test)

- a. Citizens beliefs about government and leaders.
- b. How citizens learn about politics
- c. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion.
- d. How citizens vote and participate in political life.
- e. How and why citizens differ in terms of political beliefs and behaviors
- f. Political Parties and elections (organization, developments, effects)
- g. Interest groups and PAC's (characteristics, activities, effects)
- h. The Mass Media (function and impact)

III. Institutions: Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, federal courts: Chapters 11-14

(35-45% of the AP test)

- a. Major formal and informal institutional arrangements of powers.
- b. Relationships among these institutions.
- c. Links between these and parties, groups, media, and public opinion.

IV. Public Policy: Chapters 15-17

(5-15% of the AP test)

- a. Policy making in a federal system.
- b. Policy Agendas
- c. Role of institutions in policy enactment
- d. Role of bureaucracy and courts in policy implementation and interpretation.
- e. Links between policy processes and parties, interest groups, public opinion, federalism, institutions and elections.

V. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights: Chapters 4,5

(5-15% of the AP Test)

- a. Development of rights and liberties by judicial interpretation.
- b. Substantive rights and liberties.
- c. Impact of 14th Amendment on rights/liberties.

VII. REVIEW AND STUDY GROUPS FOR AP EXAM