

AP U.S. Government and Politics Course Syllabus

“To live under the American Constitution is the greatest political privilege that was ever accorded to the human race.” Calvin Coolidge

“It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.” Sir Winston Churchill

“Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves are its only safe depositories.” - Thomas Jefferson

Welcome to AP U.S. Government and Politics. This course is designed to provide a college-level experience and preparation for the AP Exam in U.S. Government and Politics on Thursday, May 10th, 2018, at 0800. This course is concerned with the nature of the American political system, its development over the past two hundred years, and how it continues to function today. It examines in detail the structure and purpose of the Constitution, the principle processes and institutions through which the political system functions, and the creation and implementation of public policy. An emphasis is placed on interpreting documents, mastering a significant body of factual information, and writing critical essays.

This is a challenging course and will require a great deal of work on both your part and mine. Students will be expected to learn and retain information that is in their readings, but is not always directly addressed in class. Please feel free to contact me through e-mail with questions or concerns throughout the year.

INSTRUCTOR

Mrs. Chris Lane

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google classroom code: kdy9ozd

TEXT BOOK

- *Government in America: People, Politics and Policy*
- Various readings, either in print or digital (online)

EXPECTATIONS:

Respect. Treat everyone in the classroom with respect.

Punctuality. Be on time for class and on time for assignments.

Participate. This is a participation class and a portion of your grade will be based on participation.

Prepared. Be ready for class, assignments, projects, and participation.

Honest. Always. In discourse as well as in your work and tests. Cheating or plagiarizing will not be tolerated.

Only use blue or black ink pens (no pencils or other colored pens)

No shredded spiral edges for material handed in

Maintain a binder with all course material and notes

CURRENT EVENTS

Students are responsible for keeping up with daily events in the nation and the world. There will be many opportunities to discuss current political events within the class. On a daily basis, students will need to skim the front page of a major newspaper (ex: *The Washington Post*), either in print or online, and/or watch news programs on such channels as CNN or PBS, in order to keep informed. Current events assignments will be required throughout the course of the year.

USING GRAPHS, MAPS AND CHARTS

Students will be tested on their understanding of quantitative and visually presented information (maps and graphs) at regular intervals in the quiz and test assignments.

GRADING

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- tests and projects: 45%
 - quizzes: 25%,
 - homework: 15%
 - participation/class work: 15%.
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- Essays will vary in length depending on the topic and are graded on content, use of documentary and outside supporting evidence, grammar, spelling, and evidence of critical thinking.
 - An essay can be counted as test, quiz or homework grade.
 - Work turned in late will be marked down one grade for every day that it is late. After two days it will be marked as a zero
 - There will be at least two test grades and two quiz grades per quarter.
 - CHEATING AND PLAGERISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC ZERO along with an invitation to meet with the honor committee. Resubmitted work cannot earn a score higher than a 60%
 - There will be weekly multiple choice quizzes on the previous week's information. Notes will also be checked weekly and constitute a large portion of the homework grade.

THE AP EXAM:

The AP Exam is 2 hours and 25 minutes long. It consists of a 45-minute multiple choice section of 60 questions (five possible answers for each) which account for 50% of the final exam score. There is also a 100-minute free response (essay) section of 4 mandatory essays which collectively account for the remaining 50% of the final exam score. You must answer ALL the essay questions; you will have no choices. The exam is scheduled for Tuesday, May 13 at 8am.

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

The following is an outline of the major content areas covered by the AP exam in U.S. Government and Politics. There are 6 major categories which will be covered by the end of the year.

- *Percentage Goals listed for Exam Content Area (multiple-choice section)*

- I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government.....5–15%
 - A. Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution

- B. Separation of powers
- C. Checks and balances
- D. Federalism
- E. Theories of democratic government
- II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors.....10–20%
 - A. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders
 - B. Processes by which citizens learn about politics
 - C. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion
 - D. The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life
 - E. Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors
- III. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media.....10–20%
 - A. Political parties and elections
 - 1. Functions
 - 2. Organization
 - 3. Development
 - 4. Effects on the political process
 - 5. Electoral laws and systems
 - B. Interest groups, including political action committees (PACs)
 - 1. The range of interests represented
 - 2. The activities of interest groups
 - 3. The effects of interest groups on the political process
 - 4. The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process
 - C. The mass media
 - 1. The functions and structures of the news media
 - 2. The impacts of the news media on politics
 - 3. The news media industry and its consequences
- IV. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency,.....35-45% the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts
 - A. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power
 - B. Relationships among these four institutions and varying balances of power
 - C. Linkages between institutions and the following:
 - 1. Public opinion and voters
 - 2. Interest groups
 - 3. Political parties
 - 4. The media
 - 5. State and local governments
- V. Public Policy.....5–15%
 - A. Policymaking in a federal system
 - B. The formation of policy agendas
 - C. The role of institutions in the enactment of policy
 - D. The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation
 - E. Linkages between policy processes and the following:
 - 1. Political institutions and federalism
 - 2. Political parties

3. Interest groups
4. Public opinion
5. Elections
6. Policy networks

VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties5–15%

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Readings	Topic
1	5-8 Sep	Chapter 1	Intro to Gov. in America
2	11-15 Sep	Chapter 2	<u>The Constitution</u>
3	18-22 Sep	Chapter 2	<u>The Constitution</u>
4	25-29 Sep	Chapter 2	<u>The Constitution</u>
5	2-6 Oct	Chapter 3	<u>Federalism</u>
6	9-13 Oct	Chapter 4	<u>Civil Liberties and Public Policy</u>
7	16-20 Oct	Chapter 4	<u>Civil Liberties and Public Policy</u>
8	23-27 Oct	Chapter 5	<u>Civil Rights and Public Policy</u>
9	30 Oct – 2 Nov	Chapter 5	<u>Civil Rights and Public Policy</u>
10	6-10 Nov	Chapter 6	<u>Public Opinion and Political Action</u>
11	13-17 Nov	Chapter 7	<u>Mass Media and the Political Agenda</u>
12	20-21 Nov (Thx)	Chapter 8	<u>Political Parties</u>
13	28 Nov – 1 Dec	Chapter 8	<u>Political Parties</u>
14	4-8 Dec	Chapter 9	<u>Nominations and Campaigns</u>
15	11-15 Dec	Chapter 10	<u>Elections and Voting</u>
16	Final Exams		
17	Christmas Break		
18	2-5 Jan	Chapter 11	<u>Interest Groups</u>
19	8-12 Jan	Chapter 12	<u>Congress</u>
20	16-19 Jan	Chapter 12	<u>Congress</u>
21	22-26 Jan	Chapter 13	<u>The Presidency</u>
22	29 Jan - 2 Feb	Chapter 13	<u>The Presidency</u>
23	5-9 Feb	Chapter 14	<u>The Congress, The President and the Budget</u>

24	12-16 Feb	Chapter 15	<u>The Federal Bureaucracy</u>
25	20-23 Feb	Chapter 16	<u>The Federal Courts</u>
26	26 Feb – 2 Mar	Chapter 16	<u>The Federal Courts</u>
27	5-9 Mar	Chapter 17	<u>Economic Policymaking</u>
28	12-16 Mar	Chapter 18	<u>Social Welfare</u>
29	19-23 Mar	Chapter 18	<u>Social Welfare</u>
30	26-29 Mar	Chapter 19	<u>Healthcare and the Environment</u>
31	Easter Break		
32	9-13 Apr	Chapter 20	<u>National Security</u>
33	16-20 Apr	Chapter 21	<u>The New Face of State and Local Government</u>
34	23-27 Apr	Review	
35	30 Apr – 4 May	Review	
36	7-11 May	AP Exam	
37	14-18 May	TBD	
38	21-25 May	TBD	
39	29-31 May	TBD	
40	Final Exams		