

ADVANCED PLACEMENT US GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS SYLLABUS

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Course Description: Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics is a college level course designed to give students a thorough understanding of the principles and processes of American democracy. By becoming more informed citizens and by developing the skills necessary to interpret, analyze, and evaluate political data and information, students will become more able to competently engage in the democratic process.

The AP Exam

I. What is it? One of the main goals of the course is to prepare students for the Advanced Placement Government and Politics Exam which will be administered in May. Students enrolled in the course are expected to take the AP exam. A grade of 4 or 5 out of a possible 5 will be accepted as college credit by most colleges or universities. A grade of 3 will be accepted as college credit by some colleges or universities. To learn what grade a specific college or university is accepting for college credit, you will need to contact the institution directly. The cost of taking the Advanced Placement test will be \$94. Students who demonstrate "acute financial need" may have this amount reduced by \$32 per exam. This cost certainly compares favorably with the hundreds or thousands of dollars that a student would spend at a college or university to earn this credit in addition to the time that the student would have to spend in a semester long college course on American Government.

II. The structure of the exam.

Exam Overview

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam is three hours long, divided into two sections as shown in the table below.

Section	Number of Questions	Timing	Percentage of Total Exam Score
I: Multiple Choice	55 questions	1 hour and 20 minutes	50%
II: Free Response	4 questions	1 hour and 40 minutes	50%
Concept Application		20 minutes (suggested)	12.5%
Quantitative Analysis		20 minutes (suggested)	12.5%
SCOTUS Comparison		20 minutes (suggested)	12.5%
Argument Essay		40 minutes (suggested)	12.5%

III. Preparing for the exam. The most important thing you can do to prepare for the AP exam is to come to class and perform to the best of your ability. Although it is impossible for me to cover every single skill, concept, or piece foundational knowledge that could ever possibly be evaluated on the test, this course is specifically designed to prepare students for the AP exam. Students should keep all of their course packets. I firmly believe that your collection of course packets is among the best resources you will ever find to help you prepare for the AP exam. Acquiring a review guide such as Barron's Guide to the AP Government Exam, Cracking the AP U.S. Government & Politics Exam, 5 Steps to a 5, or others is also helpful. They have useful information about the test, practice questions, and unit reviews. Finally, acquiring, taking, and then studying from practice tests is extremely helpful. We will do some practice test-taking in class and will discuss the kind of thinking you need to use to determine the correct answer to each question. Knowing the correct answer to a question is important, but it is more important to understand how the correct answer can be identified so that you are able to identify other correct answers on your own on exam day. Talking through these questions with me is an excellent way to develop these skills. Following the steps listed here will give you a great chance of succeeding on exam day.

V. Additional things to consider. Please note, the final exam for this class will be administered prior to the exam week published on the school calendar. The purpose of administering the final exam early is to help balance the number of instructional days between AP Government and AP Macroeconomics. Otherwise, since the AP exams are administered mid-May, we would have approximately 55 instructional days for AP Macroeconomics compared to approximately 85 instructional days for AP Government.

VI. Daily Attendance. It is critically important that you have a high attendance rate in class and that you are on time. Missing one day of AP is like missing multiple days of a regular class. Uncontrolled absences, like illness, are understandable and unavoidable. However, please think very carefully about field trips, scheduling appointments, family vacations, or other things that may take you away from our important day-to-day business in class.

VII. Class Materials. Each student will be receiving two packets of material (either all at the beginning of the year or bit by bit throughout the semester): AP US Government and Politics Course Activities Packet, and the AP Government Supplemental Readings packet. The three packets comprise most of the material, including homework assignments, that we will use in class. In the event that a student loses a packet, he or she will need to copy the material from our Website; additional copies likely will not be made for students. Though it is not required, a large three ring binder would be helpful in keeping work for this class organized. Please make sure that you have your class packets, textbook, planner, and notebook in class every day.

Units of Study and Exam Dates:

We will conclude each unit of study with an exam composed of questions similar to what you can expect on the actual AP Government exam in the spring. The dates shown below are tentative and may change.

Test 1: UNIT 1-1: The Constitution. <i>Mon, Sept 9</i>	Test 2: UNIT 1-2: Federalism. <i>Tues, Sept 17</i>
Test 3: UNIT 2: Political Beliefs, Behaviors; <i>Thurs, Sept 26</i>	Test 4: UNIT 3: Elections and the Media; <i>Mon, Oct 14</i>
Test 5: UNIT 4-1, The Branches, Part 1: Congress Part 1, <i>Tues, Oct 22</i>	Test 6: UNIT 4-1, The Branches, Part 2: Congress Part 2, <i>Wed, Oct 30</i>
Test 7: UNIT 4-2, The Branches: The Executive and the Bureaucracy, <i>Tues, Nov 12</i>	Test 8: Unit 4-3: The Branches: The Judicial Branch and Civil Liberties, <i>Mon, Nov 25</i>
Final Exam: UNIT 5: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights and All Previous Units; <i>Thurs, Dec 19 (PRIOR TO FINAL EXAM WEEK)</i>	

Assignments: Homework will be assigned almost every night. Completion of every homework assignment is not suggested, but expected. In the event that homework is late it will be accepted for ½ credit up to the current exam date. Students will be made aware of all assignments which they are responsible for completing throughout the semester. Due dates will always be made clear, and students will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete these assignments.

Grade Weights: Everything entered in my gradebook will go in 1 of 2 possible categories, each of which will count as a certain percentage of the students overall term grade. These percentages and the types of activities that will be placed in each category are listed below.

1. Tests - Tests/Quizzes/Projects - 60%
2. Homework - Homework assignments, Reading assignments, Reading Quizzes, Classwork - 40%.

Overall Semester Grades will be calculated using the following distribution:

1 overall term grade = 80% Final Exam = 20% NOTE: Automatic A for a 4 or 5 on the AP Gov test!

Academic Integrity: Students in class are expected to complete and turn in their own work. Students are not to work on last night's homework once the bell has rung or it will be considered late for ½ credit. Students who copy any aspect of another student's work or allow any aspect of their own work to be copied by another student will both receive zeros on the assignments. Such behavior may also result in a referral to an administrator, and/or a phone call to the parent/guardian. Severe cases of intellectual theft may result in failure of the class.

Class Testing Protocols: Cell phones and all electronic devices will be collected prior to any class assessment. If a student is found at any time during a test, to have the mobile device out, or cheats in any other way, the student will receive a 0 on the assessment and will be referred to the principal for disciplinary action.