

Advanced Placement United States Government & Politics

2007-2008 Course Syllabus

Course Description:

AP United States Government and Politics is an intensive semester long course which allows students to acquire a critical perspective of politics and government in the United States. Students will learn general concepts used to interpret American politics and analyze specific case studies. Students will also become familiar with various institutions, groups, beliefs and ideas that constitute the American political perspective. Through the analysis of concepts and ideals typical patterns of political processes, behavior, and their consequences will be revealed. This semester long college-level course prepares students to take the AP United States Government and Politics Exam given at the end of the school year. A student receiving a grade of three or higher (five is the highest possible grade) may be eligible for college credit.

Methods of Assessment:

Students will be graded using a variety of different assignments. The approximate percentages will be used for the categories listed below to determine grade averages.

Tests/Free Response Essays	60%
Quizzes (include interpretation of maps and graphs)	15%
Class work/Homework	10%
Current Events/Discussion	15%

A student will earn grades based on quality and completion of work. Grade averages are determined at the end of the nine week period by adding the total points earned and dividing by the total number of points possible. See the example provided in the chart.

Assignment	Points Possible	Points Earned
Discussion	25	22
Chapter Quiz	30	25
Current Events	20	20
Essay	100	85
Group Presentation	75	75
Unit Test	100	85
Totals	350	312

Example Points Earned 312 / Points Possible 350 = Grade of 89%

Methods of Instruction:

The AP United States Government and Politics class involves rigorous lessons, a great deal of homework and many tests to prepare students with the skills necessary to succeed in college. Tests and quizzes will evaluate student's understanding of visually presented information and data from maps and graphs at regular intervals throughout the course. The basic methods of instruction for this course consist of lecture and classroom / group discussions. Supplementary materials include audio-visually, students' textbook on-line resources, oral presentations, and analysis of current events. Many lectures are presented through the use of Power Point presentations.

Text and Materials:

1. Dilulio, John J., James Q. Wilson. American Government, 9th ed. Boston, New York, 2004.
2. Schmidt, Steffen W., Mack C. Shelley, and Barbara A. Bardes. American Government and Politics Today. Belmont, CA; Thomson Wadsworth.
3. Woll, Peter, ed. American Government: Readings and Cases. 14th Ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2002.
4. Supplementary news articles from the New York Times and other major newspapers.
5. TV news sources such as CNN, CSPAN, and BBC.
6. Numerous reliable online news websites.
6. News magazine excerpts from Time, Newsweek, and the Economist.

Current Events:

Students will be required to analyze a variety of contemporary news sources to make connections between course concepts and daily events (inside the U.S. and throughout the world). Students will need to keep up with the daily events of our nation and world by skimming news paper stories, listening to NPR or another news program, watching CNN, or accessing another reliable news source.

Course Plan:

Unit One: Constitutional Underpinnings of the United States

Week One

Chapter 1 Direct vs. Representative Democracy	
Four Theories of Influence- Elitism and Pluralism	pp. 1-15
Chapter 1 Quiz	
Chapter 2 Framers Concerns- Factions, Separation of Powers, & Federalism	pp. 16-30
Constitution and Liberty	pp. 31-47
Chapter 2 Quiz	
Focus Exercise Understanding Federalist Papers #10 and #51	
Free Response Essay Question Rubric	

Week Two

Chapter 3 Federalism: Good or Bad?	pp. 49-54
Debate on the Meaning of Federalism: McCulloch v. Maryland	pp. 55-59
Federal-State Relations	pp. 59-75
Chapter 3 Quiz	
Unit One Exam- Multiple-Choice and Free-Response Questions	
Discussion/Justification of Exam	

Unit Two: Political Beliefs and Behaviors

Week Three

Ch.4 American Political Culture- Belief and Behavior Systems Held by Specific Ethnic, Minority, and Other Groups	pp. 76-100
Chapter 4 Quiz	

Week Four

Ch.5 What is Public Opinion?

Origins of Political Attitudes- Family, Religion, Gender, and Schooling

Table 5.2 Gender Gap p. 109

Analyze Demographic Features of the American Population

Political Ideology pp. 102-129

Table 5.6 How Liberals and Conservatives Differ p. 121

Chapter 5 Quiz

Week Five

Ch.6 Political Participation

Analyze Graph Figure 6.2 Voter Participation in Presidential Elections, 1860-2000 p. 137

Rise of the American Electorate-Women, African Americans, and Eighteen-Year Olds pp. 130-140

Forms, Causes, and Meaning of Political Participation pp. 140-148

Chapter 6 Quiz

Unit Two Exam- Multiple-Choice and Analytical Free Response Questions

Discussion/Justification of Exam

Unit Three: Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media

Week Six

Ch.7 Political Parties

The Rise and Decline of the Political Party pp. 150-162

National Party Structure pp. 162-167

State and Local Parties pp. 167-174

Minor Parties and Their Impact pp. 175-183

Parties Versus Voters pp. 179-180

Chapter 7 Quiz

Week Seven

Ch.8 Elections and Campaigns pp. 184-192

Primary vs. General Campaign pp. 192-200

Campaign Finance and Reform pp. 200-208

Characteristics and Roles of PACs in the Political Process

What Decides the Election? pp. 208-216

The 2000 Election- Interpret data from maps, charts and graphs at presidenelect.org

The Effects of Elections on Policy pp. 216-221

Understanding the 2004 Election pp. E1-E24

Chapter 8 Quiz

Week Eight

Ch.9 Kinds of Interest Groups pp. 223-231

Interest Groups and Social Movements pp. 231-236

Activities of Interest Groups and Their Affect on Political Process and Public Policy	pp. 237-245
Regulating Interest Groups	pp. 245-246
Chapter 9 Quiz	

Week Nine

Ch.10 Media in American Political History	pp. 251-262
Effects of the Media on Politics	pp. 263-267
Chapter 10 Quiz	
Interpreting Political News	pp. 267-274
Unit Three Exam- Multiple-Choice and Free Response Questions	
Discussion/Justification of Exam	

Unit Four: Institutions of the National Government

Week Ten

Ch.11 Evolution of Congress/Legislative Branch	pp. 281-288
Who is in Congress?	pp. 289-294
Do Members Represent Their Voters?	pp. 294-297
Organization of Congress- Mock Congress with Bill Proposal	pp. 297-310
How a Bill Becomes Law	pp. 310-318
Ethics and Congress	pp. 320-324
Ch.11 Quiz	

Week Eleven

Ch.12 Evolution of the Presidency/Executive Branch	pp. 329-240
Powers of the President	pp. 340-358
President's Program	pp. 359-371
Ch.12 Quiz	

Week Twelve

Ch.13 American Bureaucracy and Growth	pp. 373-378
Federal Bureaucracy Today	pp. 378-391
Congressional Oversight	pp. 391-397
Reforming Bureaucracy	pp. 397-401
Chapter 13 Quiz	

Week Thirteen

Ch.14 Development of the Federal Courts/Judicial Branch	pp. 403-410
Structure and Jurisdiction of the Federal Courts	pp. 411-420
Supreme Court in Action	pp. 420-422
Powers of the Federal Courts	pp. 422-427
Chapter 14 Quiz	
Checks on Judicial Power	pp. 427-432
Unit Four Exam- Multiple-Choice and Free Response Questions	
Discussion/Justification of Exam	

Unit Five: Public Policy

Week Fourteen

Ch.15 Setting the Agenda and Making a Decision	pp. 435-441
Classifying and Explaining the Politics of Different Policy Issues	pp. 441-446
Business Regulation	pp. 446-453
Perception, Beliefs, Interests, and Values	pp. 453-457

Week Fifteen

Ch.16 Taxing and Spending	pp. 459-463
Economic Theories and Political Needs	pp. 463-466
Economic Policy Making	pp. 466-469
Federal Budget- Principles and Practices (Concord Coalition Budget Simulation)	pp. 469-477
Ch.17 Social Welfare in the U.S.	pp. 480-494
Ch.20 Foreign Policy and Public Opinion	
How the Worldview Shapes Foreign Policy	
Structure of Defense Making Decisions	
Unit Five Exam- Multiple-Choice and Free Response Questions	
Discussion/Justification of Exam	

Unit Six: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Week Sixteen

Ch.18 Politics, Culture, and Civil Liberties	pp. 497-502
Interpreting and Applying the First Amendment	pp. 503-508
Church and State- Establishment Clause/ Exercise Clause	pp. 510-513
Rights of the Accused- Miranda v. Arizona	pp. 513-519

Week Seventeen

Ch.19 Campaign in the Courts -Impact of Fourteenth Amendment	p. 526
Can Separate Schools Be Equal? – Brown v. Board of Education	pp. 529-533
Campaign in Congress	pp. 534-539
Key Provisions of Major Civil Rights Laws/Cases- Plessy v. Ferguson	p. 537
Women and Equal Rights	pp. 539-543
Affirmative Action	pp. 544-549
Unit Six Exam- Multiple-Choice and Free Response Questions	
Discussion/Justification of Exam	

Week Eighteen

Review for AP United States Government & Politics Exam	
Take AP United States Government & Politics Exam	

