

Advanced Placement Government and Politics

Mrs. Teri Blair

2017-18

Course Introduction:

AP United States Government and Politics is a college level course offered to students who wish to be academically challenged and plan to take the AP exam in the spring. It is a survey course that provides an introduction into the operation of American national government. As such, we will examine:

- The American system of government and its origins
- Political opinions, interests, and behaviors
- Political organizations, to include parties, interest groups and mass media
- The institutions of government and their role in making and enforcing public policy
- Civil liberties and civil rights
- Primary source materials and contemporary news analyses

In exposing you to these areas, it is our goal to foster the development of the analytical perspectives for interpreting, understanding, and explaining the political processes and events in this country.

Textbook: Government In America: People, Politics, and Policy (AP Edition)

Content Standards:

This college-level United States Government and Politics course is written to the content standards outlined by the College Board's United States Government and Politics Course Requirements.

Course Description:

This is an inquiry-based course where you will discover and utilize knowledge about the American political system via the textbook, supplemental readings, primary sources, political websites, and group discussions. Acting as a facilitator, I will guide you through the process. However, as the learner, you are responsible for learning and applying the content information by completing all assigned readings and activities. Daily activities will require you to analyze and apply information, and will be graded twice weekly. Unit vocabulary mastery will be assessed each Friday. Both formal and informal assessments will be used to evaluate your performance throughout the course. Informal assessment will include an evaluation of the quality and timeliness of your participation in class activities. Formal assessment will involve multiple-choice quizzes, written essays, and Unit exams.

Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of AP United States Government and Politics, the student will be able to identify and explain the formation, function, players, organizations, and institutions that make up the American system of government based on the following themes:

- U.S. Constitution—the U.S. Constitution is a living document that revolves around interpretations of our democratic ideals.
- Civil Rights and Liberties—the government's responsibility is to protect civil rights and liberties for all citizens.
- Federalism—our government is more responsive to the people due to the division of power between the states and the federal government.
- Separation of Powers—distributing political authority among three branches of Government protects against potential abuse of power through a system of checks and balances.
- Civic Responsibilities—A democratic government's ability to protect every one's rights requires the participation of citizens in the political process.
- The Media's Role—the media has a great amount of influence on American politics.

Current Events:

One of the most effective ways to learn about politics and reinforce what you have learned is to pay attention to current political events. Therefore, it is expected that you will be actively and consistently reading major newspapers and magazines, and watching and listening to major national news networks via TV, radio, and the internet, while understanding that all these sources are presented with “journalistic slant.” Always consider the source of the article and the intent of the writer when receiving information. However, the more you pay attention to current events and how they relate to what you have learned, the more effective you will be during class discussions.

Expectations of the Student:

Students taking Advanced Placement Government and Politics are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner that reflects sound ethics, honor, and good citizenship. It is the student's responsibility to attend class regularly, maintain academic honesty, and abide by the classroom rules. The use of technology (laptops and tablets) is acceptable and encouraged if certain guidelines are adhered to. These guidelines will be negotiated and established with each activity.

AP Government and Politics Exam Format:

The AP Government and Politics exam will be administered on the morning of May 10, 2018. To prepare for this excruciatingly difficult (yet entirely passable) test, the curriculum for this course is divided into six content units. Following is a breakdown of the curriculum, and summary of how the content is represented on the AP Exam:

60 Multiple Choice Questions	45 Minutes	50% of Grade
4 Free Response Questions	1 hour, 40 minutes	50% of Grade

Unit 1: The Constitution	10%
Unit 2: Political Culture	15%
Unit 3: Political Process	15%
Unit 4: Institutions and Government	40%
Unit 5: Public Policy	10%
Unit 6: Civil Rights and Liberties	10%

Class Grading Policy:

The following formula will be used to calculate 9-weeks and Semester Grades

9-Weeks Grade:

Daily Grades (Reading Assignments, Document Analyses, and Class Activities)	30%
Quizzes (Content and Vocabulary)	30%
Unit Exams	<u>40%</u>
	Final Grade

Semester Grade:

1 st 9-Weeks Grade	40%
2 nd 9-Weeks Grade	40%
Semester Exam	20%
AP Bonus Points	<u>+5</u>
	Final Grade

Content Pacing

Following is a (very) tentative time frame for mastering the AP Government and Politics course this school year. Keep in mind that the months and dates may shift and the reality of high school emerges. However, all content objectives must be mastered before May 10.

First Semester:

August 8-September 1	Unit 1: Introduction and Constitution	Unit 1 Test
September 5-22	Unit 2: Political Culture	Unit 2 Test
September 25-November 3	Unit 3: Political Process	Unit 3 Test
November 6-December 15	Unit 4: Political Institutions (Part 1)	Unit 4 Test
Semester Test		

Second Semester:

January 4-26	Unit 4: Political Institutions (Part 2)	Unit 4 Test
January 29-February 23	Unit 5: Civil Rights and Liberties	Unit 5 Test
February 26-March 23	Unit 6: Public Policy	Unit 6 Test
March 26-May 9	Adjustment for Weather, Illness, Ballgame, and Testing Days	
May 10	AP Government and Politics Exam	
May ?	Semester Exam	

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Please feel free to contact me any time for questions or assistance:

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I have read and understand all the requirements and responsibilities for taking Advanced Placement Government and Politics.

Student

Parent