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Room 624 D

AP Government: United States Government and Politics Course Syllabus **Course Description**

This course looks at the theories behind everyday practice of American Government. Students will have an understanding of U.S. government in addition to the rights and responsibilities of its citizens. Its specific purpose is to prepare students for the AP Government: United States Government and Politics Exam. This course is essentially college level and will require much outside work and reading.

Required Texts

Karen O'Connor and Larry J. Sabato. *American Government: Continuity and Change*. New York: Pearce Education, Inc.,

Peter Woll. *American Government: Readings and Cases*, 17 ed. New York: Pearce Education, Inc., 2008.

Ray Bradbury. *Fahrenheit 451*, 1991 ed. New York: Random House, Inc., 1953.

Teaching Strategies

This course will use multiple strategies to present the material to students. Lecture, discussion, timed activities, cooperative learning, and simulations will be used throughout the course to help prepare students for the AP United States Government and Politics Exam.

Assignments

Students will have a variety of assignments throughout the semester. For example many of the assignments will readings, discussions, outlines, among others. There will be numerous vocabulary quizzes throughout the year for students. At the end of every unit there will be a test and free response writing assignment.

Article of the Week

Students will read an Article of the Week based on the content of the course that week.

Public Policy Project

In this course, students will do a case study on a specific public policy of the U.S. Government. It is our final unit of the course. Additional resources and instructions will come later in the course.

Fahrenheit 451

In this class (2nd Semester Only) students will read the novel, *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. To assess their analysis, students will have to write a paper discussing events from the book in relation to what they have learned in the course about U.S. Government.

Writing

In this course there will be many writing assignments. A majority will be free response writings, designed to prepare students for the AP Government: United States and Politics Exam.

Grading

Grades are totaled on a cumulative basis. Every assignment will have a point total that will go towards the total. At the end of the marking period, the points earned will be divided by the points possible to determine a student's grade. The final semester grade is weighted between marking periods and the final exam. The weighting goes as follows

Semester Grade

Marking Period 1 – 40%

Marking Period 2 – 40%

20%

Final Exam – 20%

Weighting

Assessments (Tests, FRQ, Quizzes) – 80%

Assignments (Projects, Blog, Participation) -

Test Retake Policy

You are allowed to retake 1 test per marking period (Multiple Choice or FRQ). Requirements for this process will be handed out after our first exam.

Unit 1 – Political Landscape, The Constitution, Federalism – Ch.1, 2, 3

Unit 2 – Public Opinion, Political Parties, Voting, Campaigns – Ch.11, 12, 13, 14

Unit 3 – Supreme Court, Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, - Ch.10, 5, 6

Unit 4 – President, Bureaucracy, Media, Economic Policy – Ch.8, 9, 15, 18

Unit 5 – Congress and Interest Groups – Ch.7, 16

Unit 6 – Public Policy - Ch.17, 18, 19

Student Name _____

Student Signature_____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature_____

AP Standards

Within every unit, these AP Standards will be met through lessons, activities, and assessments.

-Describe and compare important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics.

-Explain 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).

-Interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics (including data presented in charts, tables, and other formats).

-Critically analyze relevant theories and concepts, apply them appropriately, and develop their connections across the curriculum.

Class Breakdown

Weeks 1-3

- I. Unit 1 – Government Roots and Culture, The Constitution, Federalism
 - A. What is American political culture?
 - B. What is political ideology?
 - C. What are different forms of government/democracy?
 - D. What theories and writings impacted our system of government?
 - E. What events led up to our independence and U.S. Constitution?
 - F. How is the U.S. Constitution organized?
 - G. What are the major concepts of the U.S. Constitution?
 - H. How has the concept of federalism changed over time?
 - I. How does American Political Culture view economic and political rights?
 - J. How has American Political Culture expanded civil rights and liberties since the Founding?
 - K. How has America changed since the Founding and how has it stayed the same?

Learning Objectives

- Understand concepts of federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances
- Understand the failures of the Articles of Confederation
- Describe why the Framers wanted a powerful legislative branch
- Compare and contrast the powers of the three branches of government: judicial, executive, and legislative

- Discuss how the Supreme Court has interpreted checks and balances and separation of powers
- Understand historical events surrounding the Constitutional Convention
- Know the different ideologies at the Constitutional Convention (Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist)
- Discuss why the Bill of Rights was created and needed in addition to the U.S. Constitution
- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of a federal system
- Look at how various institutions (media, families, schools) impact beliefs about government
- Analyze forms of media (TV/Radio/Newspaper/Internet) and how they impact and reflect peoples' view of government
- Discuss how and why people develop different views of government
- Identify ideological influences on the U.S. Constitution (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Iroquois)
- Compare and contrast different theories of democracy

Textbook

- O'Connor and Sabato, Ch.1-3
- The Living Constitution, Investigate Further, Explore Your World, Take a Closer Look

Assignments

- What Will AP Do For Me?
- Political Spectrum Test
- Has the Government Achieved Anything?
- Anti-Federalist #84
- Possible Amendments Activity

Readings

- Second Treatise
- Leviathan
- Declaration of Independence
- U.S. Constitution
- Merits of Federalism

Assessments

- Ch. 1 Buzzwords
- Ch. 2 Buzzwords
- Ch. 3 Buzzwords
- Unit 1 Test
- Unit 1 FRQ

Weeks 4-6

II. Unit 2 - Political Socialization, Elections, Political Parties and Campaigns

- A. How does public opinion influence voting behaviors?
- B. How do demographics influence political participation?
- C. What are the significant demographic trends in political participation?
- D. How does public opinion affect the three branches of government?
- E. How has the decline of political parties influenced elections and campaigning?
- F. How do political parties positively influence campaigns and elections and how do they negatively influence campaigns and elections?
- G. How have campaigns changed over time? How have they stayed the same?
- H. How has money influenced elections and campaigns in a positive and negative manner?

Learning Objectives

- Compare and contrast different methods of measuring public opinion and their effectiveness
- Understand the issue of voting, and how the right to vote has evolved in the U.S.
- Know the timeline of events that occurred in order for numerous groups to receive the right to vote
- Develop an understanding of what citizens vote today and why
- Summarize the variety of ways that citizens can participate in their government
- Analyze population statistics (age, sex, gender, race, etc.) and look at the impact on political beliefs
- Understand how political participation (of lack thereof) impacts government
- Compare and contrast national, state, and local elections
- Understand the development of political parties in the U.S.
- Discuss of the impact of the “first past the poll” system and its impact on diversity of political parties
- Analyze the similarities and differences between Republicans and Democrats
- Evaluate the role of third parties in the U.S. and their place in the political system
- Develop an understanding of campaign strategies and campaign financing
- Understand elections and the laws that govern them

Textbook

- O'Connor and Sabato Ch.10-13

-The Living Constitution, Investigate Further, Explore Your World, Take a Closer Look

Assignments

- Your Political Socialization
- Polling Alone
- Voting Trends Quiz
- Political Party Quiz
- Living Room Candidate Commercial Analysis

Readings

- Federalist #10
- Keys to the White House

Assessments

- Ch. 11 Buzzwords
- Ch.13 Buzzwords
- Ch.12 Buzzwords
- Ch.14 Buzzwords
- Unit 2 Test
- Unit 2 FRQ

Weeks 7-9

III. Unit 3 – Supreme Court, Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- A. What is the process that the Supreme Court uses to add cases to its docket?
- B. How are the justices politically insulated and how are they tied to public opinion?
- C. What guides the Court when granting a writ?
- D. How does the Judicial Branch make policy? How has that role changed over time?
- E. How are the Courts responsible for social change/civil rights
- F. How are the Courts responsible for changing federalism?
- G. How are the Courts responsible for the expansion of civil liberties?
- H. How has the role of the Court changed since the Founding?

Learning Objectives

- Know the different views on the role of judges
- Understand the selection/nomination process of a federal judge
- Evaluate how the Supreme Court operates and hears cases
- Analyze famous opinions (majority/dissenting) of the Supreme Court
- Evaluate possible amendments to the U.S. Constitution
- Understand liberties and individual rights and their effect on their citizens
- Analyze major Decisions of the Supreme Court and their impact on the following,

1. Freedom of speech, assembly, and expression
 2. Rights of the accused
 3. Rights of women and minorities
- Understand the evolution of the 14th Amendment, specifically segregation
 - Evaluate the pros and cons as the Supreme Court as an instrument of change

Textbook

- O'Connor and Sabato, Ch.9,4,5
- The Living Constitution, Investigate Further, Explore Your World, Take a Closer Look

Assignments

- West Wing - *Supremes / Short List*
- Historical Supreme Court Cases
- Hear Ye, Hear Ye
- Freedom of Religion IQ Test
- Rule of 4 Discussion
- Obscenity Scenario
- School Search Exercise

Readings

- Federalist #78
- Plessy vs. Ferguson
- Brown vs. Board of Ed

Assessments

- Ch. 9 Buzzwords
- Ch. 4 Buzzwords
- Ch. 5 Buzzwords
- Unit 3 Test
- Unit 3 FRQ

Weeks 10-12

- IV. Unit 4 – The Presidency, the Media, Bureaucracy, and Economic Policy
- A. How has the role of the Presidency changed since the Founding?
 - B. How has the media transformed the powers of the President?
 - C. How has media influenced Presidential elections and campaigns?
 - D. How does the media influence public opinion?
 - E. What is the organization of the bureaucracy?
 - F. How is the bureaucracy checked by the 3 branches of government?
 - G. How does the bureaucracy act like the 3 branches of government?

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the different role of the President
- Explain how the powers of the President have grown over time
- Analyze the purpose of the Vice President and how it's role has changed over time
- Explain the basics of the budget process and how conflicts between the President and Congress are solved
- Discuss the role of the media in the political system
- Compare and contrast the practices of politics during the evolution of the media
- Understand the goals and incentives for the media
- Evaluate the consolidation of media outlets and the impact that has on our political process
- Analyze the organization of the Bureaucracy
- Compare and contrast the functions and limits of the Bureaucracy

Textbook

- O'Connor and Sabato, Ch.7, 14, 8, 17
- The Living Constitution, Investigate Further, Explore Your World, Take a Closer Look

Assignments

- Ranking the Presidents
- Limits on the President
- 270 To Win
- Foreign Policy - President vs. Congress Activity
- Alphabet Soup of Democracy
- Budget Analysis
- Whose Got the Bias

Readings

- Presidential Farewell Addresses
- Bureaucratic Power

Assessments

- Ch.7 Buzzwords
- Ch.14 Buzzwords
- Ch.8 Buzzwords
- Ch.17 Buzzwords
- Unit 4 Test
- Unit 4 FRQ

Weeks 13-15

V. Unit 5 – Congress and Interest Groups

- A. How do interest groups positively influence the legislative process?
How do interest groups negatively influence the legislative process?
- B. How is Congress organized?
- C. What motivates Congress' decision making?
- D. How does hyperpluralism influence the law making process?
- E. How has Congress struggled with the President for power since the founding?

Learning Objectives

- Understand the major powers of Congress
- Compare and contrast different types of politicians
- Know the process of how a bill becomes a law
- Evaluate the impact of the committee system and seniority rule
- Know the major officers of Congress and their responsibilities
- Analyze the importance of congressional oversight
- Discuss the roles of lobbying and interest groups
- Find what interests are represented with PACs and which ones are not
- Understand how interest groups work, and why they work
- Analyze how certain groups use political influence to receive political gains

Textbook

- O'Connor and Sabato, Ch.6,15
- The Living Constitution, Investigate Further, Explore Your World, Take a Closer Look

Assignments

- Legislative Lingo
- Policy Making Analysis
- Gerrymandering Game

Readings

- Electoral Connection
- Going Home
- The Rise of Washington Establishment

Assessments

- Ch. 6 Buzzwords
- Ch.15 Buzzwords
- Electoral Connection

-Unit 5 Test
-Unit 5 FRQ

Weeks 16-17

Public Policy Project - see rubric

Weeks 18

Final Exam Review