

ADVANCED PLACEMENT UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

The AP Government course is one semester. This college level course prepares students to complete the AP Exam.

Objectives/Proficiencies:

Students will be able to demonstrate the following:

- Understand facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics
- Understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the parts of a political actor, the principles used to explain various governmental structures and procedures, and the political effects of each of these structures and procedures)
- Analyze and interpret simple data and other subject matter that are relevant to U.S. government and politics
- Identify the ideologies that help form the foundation of the U.S. political system
- Recognize the reasons, needs, and underlying factors that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution
- Define the most important concepts embodied in the Constitution (e.g. federalism)
- Explain the governmental structure established by the Constitution
- Comprehend the mechanisms that facilitate the communication of interests and preferences by the like-minded citizens (e.g. political parties, interest groups)
- Understand the origins and development of civil liberties and civil rights in the United States
- Define the process by which public policy is made within the federal system
- Be prepared for the Advanced Placement Exam in US Government and Politics administered by the College Board.

*CR 8 – The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials, such as Federalist papers and contemporary books.

Texts & Readings

Dilulio, Jr., John J., and Wilson, John Q., (2006) American Government. 10th Edition, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston and New York.

Bose, Meena, and Dilulio, Jr., John J., (2007) Classic Ideas and Current Issues in American Government, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston and New York.

Etzioni, Amitai, (2004) How Patriotic is the Patriot Act?, Routledge, New York and London.

Flippen, Royce, Editor (2006) The Best American Political Writing, Thunder's Mouth Press.

Lasser, William, (2004) Perspectives on American Politics, Houghton Mifflin 4th Ed.

Nye, Joseph Jr., (2002) Soft Power, The Means to Success in the Political World, Public Affairs, New York.

Rosenberg, Gerald N., The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change? The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

Woll, Peter (2002) American Government, Readings and Cases. Longman 14th Ed.

News Week Magazine – Weekly for each student

Summary Outline:

*CR 1 – The course provides instruction of foundations of government.

I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government

Readings:

Dilulio:

Chapter 1: The Study of American Government

Chapter 2: The Constitution

Chapter 3: Federalism

Bose and Dilulio:

1.2: The Declaration of Independence (1776)

1.4: Madison – Federalist #10 and #51 (1787-1788)

2.2: *McCulloch v. State of Maryland* (1819)

2.3: Hard Road Ahead: Block Grants and the “Devolution Revolution” (1995)

- A. Considerations in the early history of the United States that determined the direction of the completed and flexible Constitution.
- B. Separation of powers
- C. Federalism
- D. Theories of democratic government

*CR 2 The course provides instruction in political beliefs and political behaviors.

II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors

Readings:

Dilulio:

Chapter 4: American Political Culture

Chapter 7: Public Opinion

Chapter 8: Political Participation

Flippen:

Mosley, Walter, “A New Black Power,” (The Nation, 2/27/06)

Bose and Dilulio:

3.2: Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital – Putnam (1995)

- A. The power of political culture on beliefs and actions
- B. The different ways individuals learn about and become steeped in politics
- C. The many ways citizens can and do participate in political life
- D. Influences on political behaviors
- E. Factors that influence citizens to develop differences from others in terms of political beliefs and actions

*CR 3 – The course provides instruction in political parties, interest groups, and mass media.

III. Political parties, interest groups, and mass media

Readings:

Dilulio:

Chapter 9: Political Parties

Chapter 10: Elections and Campaigns

Chapter 11: Interest Groups

Chapter 12: The Media

Bose and Dilulio:

7.4: Reforming the Electoral System (2004) Stephen J. White

8.2: Spin Cycle: How the White House and Media Manipulate the News (1998) Howard Kurtz

Lasser:

6.1: The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System – E.E. Schattschneider

- A. Political parties and elections
 - 1. What parties do for politics
 - 2. How parties are organized, developed, and change with the times
 - 3. Effects of parties on the political process
 - 4. How elections affect policy
- B. Interest groups, and political action committees (PAC)
 - 1. What interest groups do and their operation
 - 2. Effects of interest groups and political actions committees on the political process
- C. The mass media
 - 1. The functions and structures of the media
 - 2. How media affects politics and elections

*CR 6 – The course provides instruction in civil rights and civil liberties.

IV. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Readings:

Dilulio:

Chapter 5: Civil Liberties

Chapter 6: Civil Rights

Bose and Dilulio:

13.3: Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

Lasser:

4.1: Plessy v. Ferguson

Etzioni, Amitai:

(2004) : How Liberty is lost: Chapter 1, pp. 9-25

Woll:

#24: Roe v. Wade

- A. The role of the Supreme Court and Congress in the development of civil rights and liberties
- B. The application of civil rights and liberties to the states and the impact of the 14th amendment
- C. Rights in court and criminal situations
- D. How the Patriot Act has changed and impacted civil rights and liberties

*CR 4 – The course provides instruction on institutions of the national government.

V. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the court system

Readings:

Chapter 13: The Congress

Chapter 14: The Presidency

Chapter 15: The Bureaucracy

Chapter 16: The Judiciary

Flippen:

“The Great American Pork Barrel,” Harper’s Magazine – Ken Silverstein (2005)

Rosenberg:

Chapter 1: The Dynamic and Constrained Court pp. 9-26

Bose and Dilulio:

11.4: Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It (1989) James Q. Wilson

- A. The informal and formal arrangements of power within the institutions of our federal government
- B. The integral part of the role played by Congressional committees and caucuses

- C. How the presidency evolved; including the powers of the president
- D. The ways the bureaucracy help run the government and the way it can work independently as well as work with the controls placed on the it
- E. The role the judiciary plays in the balance of powers as well as organizational structure of the courts

*CR 5 – The course provides instruction in public policy.

VI. Public Policy

Readings:

Bose and Dilulio:

Chapter 17: The Policy-Making Process

Chapter 18: Ecomic Policy

Chapter 19: Social Welfare

Chapter 20: Foreign and Military Policy

Chapter 21: Environmental Policy

Nye:

Chapter 1: The Changing Nature of Power – pp. 1-31

- A. Policy making in our federal system
- B. The Politics of Money and Budgeting in a federal system
- C. Social Programs and the role they play in our political system
- D. The importance and understanding of a strong foreign and military policy in the world in which we live
- E. Linking all political groups and processes together to understand public policy

*CR 9 – The course requires students to answer analytical and interpretive free response questions.

Grading:

- 60% Tests –Objective and 1 or 2 free response questions on each test
- 25% Essays, quizzes and general assignments
- 10% Current Events quizzes, readings, and reportings to class
- 5% Discussions on special topics in current events and topic specific to a Unit. I.E. – Patriot Act: violation of rights or necessary for security?

Pre-AP Exam

The students will have 6 review sessions outside of class. The students will have two full practice exams that will simulate the AP exam in order to prepare for the final exam.

Post AP Exam

There will be 1 week of writing bills and resolutions like Congress, and then an oral defense of their bills in class. Similar to a mock congress.

*CR 7 – The course provides students with practice in analyzing and interpreting data and information relevant to US Government and Politics.

Using Graphs, Maps, and Charts

Four times a quarter the students have daily assignments that are specifically political cartoons, charts, graphs, and political maps that must be interpreted.