

AP U.S. Government and Politics Syllabus – Fall, 2023

Welcome to AP Government! It is my hope that this class will help you to better understand our system of government and help you to become more informed and more active citizens in our democracy. This class is a college-level course that meets all the requirement established by the College Board and it is my hope that at then end of this course you will be successful on the College Board’s AP exam and receive college credit.

AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam – Monday, May 6, 2024

Conference Period: 6th period (1:34 – 2:27 M, T, F and 1:52 – 3:25 Th)

Text: Government text: Edwards, George C., Martin P. Wattenberg, and Robert Lineberry. Government in America, 16th ed. New York: Pearson, 2014. (online access with password)

REQUIREMENTS

1. **READING:** In order for you to be successful in a college level course, it is absolutely essential that you remain current on all assigned readings. The required reading, along with lectures and class discussion, will figure prominently on tests and quizzes. Many of our class discussions will be done within small groups. It is expected that you will have read the appropriate material and that you are prepared to contribute to that discussion on the due dates. The required foundational documents (see list below) are required by the College Board and will feature prominently on the AP exam.
2. **EVALUATION:** 70% of your grade will consist of major grades and 30% of your grade will consist of minor grades.
 - a. **Major Grades:** These include 6 unit tests, an argumentative essay that will be written after Unit 3 is completed, and 1 project due during the 3rd cycle.
 - b. **Minor Grades:** Daily grades will include short quizzes, test reflections, current events assignments, and other minor assignments. Most units will include a free-response question that will count as 2 minor grades. It is expected that all homework assignments will be turned in the day they are due.
 - c. Major tests, chapter quizzes, and FRQ’s throughout the semester will serve as preparation for the Advanced Placement examination, both in content and in format.
 - d. Each six weeks grade will constitute 30% of your final average. A final examination comprising 10% of your semester average will also be required.
 - e. Progressive testing – approximately 33% of every test will consist of questions and material that have been covered in previous units. There are several purposes for this but the primary purpose is to continually review that material throughout the course. Any test grade on a subsequent test that is higher than a previous test grade from the same 6-weeks grading period will raise the previous test grade to the new test grade. For example, if the student earns an 80 on the Unit 1 test and an 85 on the Unit 2 test, the Unit 1 test grade will be increased to 85. Test grades that are lower than a previous test grade will not be decreased. Due to 6-weeks grading period requirements, test grades must start over at the beginning of a new grading period.

- f. Test retakes will occur in accordance with Westside High School policy. Any student who makes a 70 or below on a test will be permitted to retake the test once they have completed a test review for remediation. The grade on the retake will replace their grade on the initial test, to a maximum of 70.
 - g. Any assignments that are turned in late will receive the following penalties. Any assignment turned in 1 day late will receive a 15 point penalty. Any assignment turned in 2 days late will receive a 30 point penalty. Any assignment turned in more than 2 days late will receive a maximum grade of 50.
- 3. MATERIALS:** It is expected that you will maintain a notebook in which you will keep course handouts and notes on material presented in class. Be aware that material presented only in lectures will sometimes appear on exams in addition to information provided in the readings. You will need your laptop in class every day.

You should come to class prepared to take notes every day.

- 4. ABSENCES AND MAKE-UP WORK:** Because of the rapid pace of the class and the complexity of the material covered, it is expected that you will maintain regular class attendance. In the case of unavoidable absence for any reason, YOU are responsible for your own make-up work. This includes copying notes from missed lectures or presentations, obtaining class handouts from a make-up work folder, and making arrangements to take any missed quizzes **outside of class time**.

If you are absent on the day we take a test, you should make arrangements the day you return to make up the exam.

- 5. PROJECTS:** There will be 3 projects that will be incorporated into the course. The first is an elections project which will serve to help us understand the roles that various groups play in our electoral process. The second is a government-in-action (GIA) project that will be used to help understand how policies get enacted in the United States. These will both be group projects. The third project revolves around the assigned Supreme Court cases and will be an individual project that will count as a major grade during the third cycle.
- 6. CANVAS:** The Canvas site for this class will be updated frequently. Each unit's calendar will be posted on the site detailing due dates for all assignments. Assigned readings will be posted and other announcements will be made. There will be separate folders for notes, assignments, and reviews. They will all be organized by unit. It is expected that you will take advantage of this resource.
- 7. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** It is expected that you will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. This includes all assignments completed in this course. Academic dishonesty of any kind, including but not limited to giving away test questions or answers, copying another's answers to any assignment, or taking pictures of any quiz, test, or FRQ question or answer will result in loss of credit for the assignment, referral to the assistant principal, and notification to honors societies for appropriate consequences.

Please refer to the HISD Student Code of Conduct for further details or explanations.

8. HINTS FOR SUCCESS:

- Follow the calendar
- Organize study groups among yourselves – they work!!!
- Come in for extra help when you need it.
- Try to be aware of current issues in government and politics – read appropriate articles in newspapers and magazines listen to the news on TV and/or radio. This will help you understand what we are doing in class.
- That said, this is not a current events class. While current events will help us understand how our political process functions, we will not spend our time debating current issues. The issues change. The process really does not.
- Be open-minded. This course studies the process of government and politics in the U.S. This process is essentially the same regardless of the characters currently involved. You will disagree from time to time with these characters’ actions but your job is to understand how it works and why it works. If you are not open to understanding this process, the course will be more difficult.

Required foundational documents	Required Supreme Ct cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federalist #10 • Brutus #1 • Declaration of Independence • Articles of Confederation • Constitution + Amendments • Federalist #51 • Letter from a Birmingham Jail • Federalist #70 • Federalist #78 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCulloch v. Maryland • U.S. v. Lopez • Engel v. Vitale • Wisconsin v. Yoder • Tinker v. Des Moines • New York Times v. U.S. • Schenck v. U.S. • Gideon v. Wainwright • McDonald v. Chicago • Brown v. Board of Education • Citizens United v. FEC • Baker v. Carr • Shaw v. Reno • Marbury v. Madison

Unit 1 – Foundations of American Democracy (15-22%) (10 days)

Chapters 1-3

- Ideals of Democracy – Declaration of Independence
- Types of Democracy – Fed 10; Brutus 1
- Government Power & Individual Rights – Fed 10; Brutus 1
- Challenges of Articles of Confederation – Articles of Confederation
- Ratification of the U.S. Constitution – Constitution
- Principles of American Government – Fed 51; Constitution
- Relationships Between the States and the Federal Government
- Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism – McCulloch v. Maryland; U.S. v. Lopez
- Federalism in Action

Test – Foundations of American Democracy

Unit 4 – American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (10 – 15%) (10 days)

Chapters 6, 8

- American Attitudes about Government and Politics
- Political Socialization
- Changes in Ideology
- Influence of Political Events on Ideology
- Measuring Public Opinion
- Evaluating Public Opinion Data
- Ideologies of Political Parties
- Ideology and Policy Making
- Ideology and Economic Policy
- Ideology and Social Policy

Quantitative Analysis FRQ

Test – American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Unit 5 – Political Participation (20 – 27%) (15 days)

Chapters 9, 8, 10, 7

- Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior
- Voter Turnout
- Political Parties
- How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt
- Third Party Politics
- Interest Groups Influencing Policy Making
- Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes
- Electing a President
- Congressional Elections
- Modern Campaigns
- Campaign Finance
- The Media
- Changing Media

Concept Application FRQ

Test – Political Participation

Unit 2.1 – Interactions Among Branches of Government part 1: Congress and the President (25 – 36% with Unit 3) (9 days)

Chapters 11 and 12

- Congress: Senate and the House of Representatives -- Constitution
- Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress
- Congressional Behavior
- Roles and Powers of the President -- Constitution
- Checks on the Presidency

- Expansion of Presidential Power – Fed 70
- Presidential Communication

Test – Congress and the President

Unit 2.2 – Interactions Among Branches of Government part 2: The courts and the bureaucracy (7 days)

Chapters 14 and 15

- The Judicial Branch – Fed 78; Marbury v. Madison
- Legitimacy of the Judicial Branch
- The Court in Action
- Checks on the Judicial Branch
- The Bureaucracy
- Discretionary and Rule-Making Authority
- Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable
- Policy and the Branches of Government

Test – The Courts and the Bureaucracy

Argument FRQ

Unit 3 – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (13 – 18%) (13 days)

Chapters 4, 5

- Bill of Rights
- First Amendment: Freedom of Religion – Engel v. Vitale; Wisconsin v. Yoder
- First Amendment: Freedom of Speech – Tinker v. Des Moines; Schenck v. U.S.
- First Amendment: Freedom of the Press – New York Times v. U.S.
- Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms
- Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Security
- Selective Incorporation
- Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused – Gideon v. Wainwright
- Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy
- Social Movements and Equal Protection – “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
- Government Responses to Social Movements – Brown v. Board of Education
- Balancing Minority and Majority Rights
- Affirmative Action

SCOTUS FRQ

Test – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

SCOTUS Portfolio Project

College Board Project Guidelines:

Curricular Requirement 14: Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP U.S. Government and Politics course framework that culminates in a presentation of findings. (See AP U.S. Government and Politics Course Audit Curricular Requirements on AP Central.)

The project can involve student participation in nonpartisan service-learning opportunities, government-based internship programs, or a choice from a teacher-approved list of research project ideas.

While the project is not part of the AP Exam grade, it does provide students with the opportunity to engage in a sustained, real-world activity that will deepen their understanding of course content and help them develop the disciplinary practices that are assessed on the exam.

Project Guidelines: A relevant project applies course concepts to real-world political issues, processes, institutions, and policy making. For example, students might investigate a question by collecting and analyzing data; participate in a relevant service learning or civic event; or develop a sustained, applied investigation about local issues. Students would then communicate their findings or experiences in a way that conveys or demonstrates their understanding of course content.

You have flexibility in how to set up, connect, and assess student performance on the project. The following are important considerations.

The project must require students to:

- Connect course concepts to real-world issues
- Demonstrate disciplinary practices
- Share/communicate their findings in an authentic way (e.g., presentation, article, speech, brochure, multimedia, podcast, political science fair)

The project may be:

- Undertaken either by individuals or small groups of students
- Completed before or after the AP Exam or integrated throughout or at a specific point in the course
- Partisan based, if so chosen by the student(s)

Thank you for signing up for this course. I have no doubt that we're going to have a great semester.