

**COURSE TITLE:** (AP) Government and Politics

**LENGTH OF COURSE:** Two Semesters

**GRADE LEVEL:** Twelve

**CREDITS:** 5

**TEXTS AND OTHER RESOURCES:**

1. Edwards, David V. *The American Political Experience*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 2014.
2. Barker, Lucius, and Barker, Twiley. *Civil Liberties and the Constitution*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986.
3. Dahl, Robert. *Democracy in the United States: Promise and Performance*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.
4. Gora, Joel M. *Due Process of Law*. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1979.
5. Hamilton, Alexander; Madison, James; and Jay, John. *The Federalist Papers*. Edited by C. Rossiter. New York: New American Library, 1961.
6. Lockhard, Duane, and Murphy, Walter F. *Basic Cases in Constitutional Law*. Washington, D.C.: C.Q. Press, 1987.
7. Shahuck, John H.F. *Rights of Privacy*. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1979.
8. Somerville, John, Santoni, Ronald. *Social and Political Philosophy*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963.
9. Wilson, James Q. *American Government: Institutions and Policies*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1986.
10. Woll, Peter, and Binstock, Robert H. *America's Political System*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Random House, 1984.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The (AP) Government and Politics course will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United

Stated. This course involves both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific case studies. It also requires familiarity with various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that inform the conduct of American political life. Students will be encouraged to take the AP exam (for college credit) in the spring of each year.

## **I. COURSE GOAL**

The course seeks to foster an understanding of the intellectual foundations of American government, as well as the formal and informal processes of republican democracy as practiced in the United States. In addition, the course seeks to provide students with the requisite skills in political analysis to successfully complete the AP Government & Politics examination.

## **II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- A. To provide students with the opportunity to read, interpret, and evaluate primary source material in the field of American government and politics.**
- B. To analyze the role of the “Great State Papers” in the final establishment of the constitution and the federal government while providing instruction in the constitutional underpinnings of the United States government,**
- C. To articulate the conceptual knowledge of United States government and constitutional law.**
- D. To analyze the workings and functionality of the three branches of government by studying the history and impact of the system of checks and balances.**
- E. To encourage greater student responsibility by supervising, guiding, and evaluating independent study projects.**
- F. To further develop students writing skills, enabling students to communicate their ideas clearly to others.**
- G. To foster critical thinking about the United States government and politics.**
- H. To enable students to read and retain factual information independently in order to allow class time for higher level thinking skills.**
- I. To analyze historical cause and effect relationships between the various institutions of government.**
- J. To promote authentic assessment of the skills currently being used in the field of political science.**
- K. To provide instruction in the area of poll taking and sampling by analyzing polls and voter information used by the media and by the federal and state governments. Data will be analyzed that is pertinent to the political decision-making process.**
- L. To understand that compared to a sampling of other nations, citizens of the United States are aware of and interested in their political system.**

- M. To provide instruction in the evolution of the American political system while promoting an understanding the differences in beliefs among the parties.
- N. To evaluate the scope of the impact of political action committees and political interest groups on the political process and current issues while analyzing the role and the impact by the media and special interest groups.
- O. To provide instruction in public policy making by analyzing the role of public policy specific to Social Security, health care, and environmental issues. Students will critique US public policy and write their own as it pertains to current policy demands and controversies.
- P. To evaluate the politics of liberty through the study of the evolution of civil rights and its role in the American political system .
- Q. To provide students with a current informational guide concerning career opportunities in the fields of political science and law.
- R. To further analyze the mechanics of government by making several visitations to our state and federal governments, and through a series of classroom lectures given by our elected officials.
- S. To prepare students for the (AP) Government and Politics examination.
- T. To diversify the evaluation of students to include free-response questioning by synthesizing data and document based material as well as project building, and written work, oral presentations, and debates

### **III. EVALUATION AND GRADING**

- 1. Tests
- 2. Quizzes
- 3. Homework
- 4. Class Participation
- 5. Final Exam
- 6. Attendance
- 7. Papers / Projects

### **IV. HOME STUDY**

Written and / or study assignments will be regularly assigned

### **V. COURSE TECHNIQUES**

- A. Assigned readings.

- B. (AP) writing techniques and practices i.e., thesis cards, practice outlines, and timed writing with holistic grading**
- C. Limited lecture procedure**
- D. Resource personnel i.e., elected officials, lawyers, and college professors**
- E. Simulations i.e., N.J. Model Congress; N.J. Bar Mock Trial, and political science games**
- F. Independent and group research into the myriad experiences of government law**
- G. Video, films, and cassettes in consonance with unit studies**
- H. Periodic unit tests and quizzes**
- I. Visitations with federal and state governmental institutions**
- J. (AP) Government and Politics examination – (optional)**

## **VI. COURSE OUTLINE**

- I. Advanced placement writing techniques and practices**
  - A. Thesis cards**
  - B. Practice outlines**
  - C. Timed writing with holistic grading**
  - D. Magazine and newspaper journals**
  
- II. Constitutional underpinnings of democracy in the United States**
  - A. The politics of the founders of the United States**
    - 1. Social – political philosophic influences: Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Hobbes, Mill and Bentham**
    - 2. Colonial origins of American government: Jamestown, Mayflower Company, fundamental Orders of Connecticut, and Massachusetts Body of Liberties**
    - 3. The grievances against King George III and Parliament: Taxation and Intolerable Acts**
    - 4. The First Continental Congress: Agenda and accomplishments**
    - 5. The Second Continental Congress: leadership, agenda, and accomplishments**
    - 6. The Declaration of Independence; purpose and philosophy**
    - 7. The Articles of Confederation: provisions and defined weaknesses**
  - B. The politics of the framing of the U.S. Constitution**
    - 1. Constitutional Convention: delegates, plans, compromises, Federalist/Anti-Federalist, and ratification campaign**
    - 2. Disposition of Power: division of power, separation of powers, and confrontation of power – checks and balances**
    - 3. The Federalist, nos. 39, 46, 47, 51**
  - C. The politics of reform**
    - 1. Amending process: Article V**
    - 2. Bill of Rights: Amendments 1-10**
    - 3. Adopting the Constitution: precedents for a strong central government**
  - D. The politics of domain: changing demands and expectations**
    - 1. Growth of government**
    - 2. Citizen expectations**
    - 3. From expectations to demands: employment, unemployment, insurance health care, and social security**
    - 4. From demands on government to demands on citizens: identity routines – birth certificates, social security, passport, and voter registrations.**

- E. The politics of federalism
  - 1. Origin, operation, and significance
  - 2. Constitutional bases of federalism: expansion of the union and expansion of the powers of the national government – *McCulloch v. U.S.*
  - 3. Federalism and factions: *The Federalist*, No. 10.
  - 4. Alex de Tocqueville: federalism in America (critical analysis)
  - 5. Evolution of American federalism: dual, cooperative, creative, Nixon's New Federalism, and Reagan's New Federalism
  - 6. Privatization: States respond to federal cuts
  
- III. Political beliefs and behaviors
  - A. Political socialization
    - 1. Nature of socialization
    - 2. Theories of socialization
  - B. Political culture in America
    - 1. National political culture
    - 2. Political subcultures
    - 3. How political culture influences public opinion
  - C. Getting Opinions: How politics, experience, and authority influences opinions
    - 1. Extent of citizen ignorance
    - 2. Attentiveness of citizens
    - 3. Liberalism and conservatism
  - D. Discovering Opinions: Polling
    - 1. Mechanics of creating and administering a poll
    - 2. Evaluation of polls: strengths and weaknesses
    - 3. Do opinions influence politics and policy?
    - 4. Eagleton Institute of Politics: Recent polls conducted
  - E. Voters, non-voters, and political activists
    - 1. Registration requirements and legal restraints as obstacles
    - 2. Who participates and how much?
    - 3. Voting patterns: conscious reasons, psychological, social factors
    - 4. Voting and the types of political action
    - 5. Why do some people run for political office?
  
- IV. Political parties and interest groups
  - A. Federal structure of the parties.
  - B. Party ideology and membership: differences between the parties
  - C. What sustains our parties: constitutional provisions, historical provisions, and party report
  - D. What our two party system does to our politics?
    - 1. The spectrum of political positions
    - 2. Competition for the middle

- E. **Minor parties: ideological, single issue, regional economic protest, and factional parties**
  - F. **Third or multi-party alternative: some trends to watch**
  - G. **Interests: public, special and vested**
    - 1. **Anatomy of interest groups: membership, function, and regulation**
    - 2. **Major special interest groups: Washington lawyers, trade and professional associations, labor, big-small business, corporation, agricultural, religious, and public interest**
    - 3. **Lobby interaction with the major institutions of the national government: Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, the courts**
    - 4. **Pluralism versus elitism: the great debate**
  - H. **Mass media and the political process.**
    - 1. **Definition of mass media**
    - 2. **Politics of communication: how to watch the evening news**
    - 3. **Impact of the media on politics and government**
    - 4. **Impact of the government on the media: F.C.C. – regulation, deregulation, and the first Amendment**
    - 5. **Media access for the public: rules, practices, and new technologies**
    - 6. **Media responsibility in democratic politics**
- V. **The Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the federal courts: institutions and policy processes.**
- A. **Congress: structure, membership, power, processes, and functions**
    - 1. **Members of Congress: districts, reappointment, elections, qualifications, and historical overview**
    - 2. **What members of Congress do: casework, legislating, relating to constituents, and representing the people in theory and practice**
    - 3. **Powers of Congress: enumerated-(Article E. Sec. 8) specific and implied, concurrent power, and special power**
    - 4. **Structure of Congress: committee and subcommittee system, informal groups, and rules in the House and Senate**
    - 5. **Processes of Congress: role of party, leadership, rules, and norms**
    - 6. **Functions of Congress: policymaking, funding (budget resolution, authorization, and appropriations), and oversight**
  - B. **How a bill becomes law: sequence of activity**
    - 1. **Drafted and introduced**
    - 2. **Committee reference and vote**
    - 3. **Floor debate and vote**

4. **Compromise committee (option)**
5. **Interaction with the executive branch, judicial branch, and bureaucracy**
6. **Influences on voting behavior, lobbyists, cue giving, and cue taking, policy areas, and presidential support**
7. **Other types of committees: special or select**
- C. **How to find and interpret Congressional voting records**
  1. ***Congressional Directory***
  2. ***Almanac of Politics***
  3. ***Politics in America: Members of Congress in Washington and at Home***
  4. ***Vital Statistics on Congress***
  5. ***Congressional Record***
  6. ***Weekly Report***
  7. ***National Journal***
  8. **C-SPAN networks**
- D. **How to communicate effectively with members of Congress**
  1. **Letter writing: addressed properly, mention bill or issue in the first paragraph, keep your letter as brief as possible, write as soon as possible – don't wait until a bill or issue is passed/finalized, don't make threats or berate your representative, and say "well done" when its deserved.**
  2. **Options: phone, telegram, fax, or visit**
- E. **The presidency: the life of the president**
  1. **Presidential personality and experience: pre-presidential experience and character**
  2. **Roles and power: according to the Constitution and past presidents**
  3. **Presidential power: skills of persuasion, leadership, and coalition building**
  4. **Exercise of power requires resources: appointments, money access, support, and information**
  5. **Effective use of resources require personnel and organization: vice-president, cabinet, White House Staff, and Executive Office of the President.**
  6. **Carter, Reagan, and Bush: the lessons of personnel and organization**
- F. **The president and Congress**
  1. **The legislative presidency: chief legislator**
  2. **Help members of Congress with their constituents' problems: bi-partisan support**
  3. **Patronage: appointing to federal jobs people designated by members of Congress**
  4. **Adopting a program proposed or favored by a legislator**
  5. **Cycle of increasing effectiveness and cycle of decreasing influence**

- G. **The president and the people**
  - 1. **Popular confidence**
  - 2. **Expression of popular views**
  - 3. **What influences the president?: public opinion – impact on issues**
- H. **Is the president too powerful?**
  - 1. **Executive orders**
  - 2. **The relativity of presidential power**
  - 3. **Congressional limitations**
  - 4. **The impact of recent presidents: Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush**
  - 5. **Possible reforms: plural presidency, parliamentary government, and one six-year term**
  - 6. ***The Federalist*, no. 69**
- I. **The federal bureaucracy: historical development, functions, power, and impact**
  - 1. **How the bureaucracy developed: Andrew Jackson and the “spoils system”, buildings, bodies, budgets, merit systems, and limiting spoils**
  - 2. **Bureaucrats and their experience: why they are, where they are, what they do, and what they get**
  - 3. **Functions of a bureaucrat: assuring continuity, implementing decisions, making policy, and providing information**
  - 4. **Powers of the bureaucrats: sources of power and the president, power struggles among bureaucrats, bureaucratic power and Congress, “subgovernments”, and issue networks**
  - 5. **Impact of bureaucratic politics: effects on government and people**
- J. **Can bureaucracy be improved?**
  - 1. **Contract and reprivitization**
  - 2. **Sunset laws**
  - 3. **Ombudsmen or citizen advocates**
  - 4. **Whistle blowers**
- K. **Independent agencies: special segments of the bureaucracy, regulatory commissions, and administrative law**
- L. **The U.S. Supreme Court and the legal system**
  - 1. **Where the courts get the law to interpret: constitutional law, statutory law, common law, equity, and administrative law**
  - 2. **Types of Courts: federal, state and local**
  - 3. **Who serves on our courts: U.S. Supreme Court justices, other federal judges, and senatorial courtesy**
  - 4. **The life of a Supreme Court justice: how judges decide and how the Supreme Court works**
  - 5. **How to interpret and prepare a legal brief: title and citation, method of review, facts, issue(s), opinions, holding, disposition, and vote**

- M. Roles of the Supreme Court justices and functions of the legal system in our society
    1. Constitutional power: Article III
    2. Judicial decisions, lawmaking, review, and opinions
    3. John Marshall: *Marbury v. Madison*
    4. Principles of judicial restraint and practices of judicial activism: 1953 to present
    5. Limitations on the Supreme Court
    6. The Supreme Court as a political institution
    7. *The Federalist*. No. 78
  - N. The Warren court, the Burger court, and the Rehnquist court
    1. Judicial activism: school desegregation, reapportionment, criminal – justice reform, obscenity law, birth control, and abortion
    2. Political complexion: presidential appointments
    3. Supporting the legal position of minorities and outsiders
- VI The politics of liberty: civil liberties, civil rights, and human rights
- A. Liberties and rights
    1. Civil liberties as freedom from the state
    2. Civil rights as the opportunity to take part in the state
  - B. Rights as an American citizen
    1. Natural rights to civil liberties
    2. Bill of Rights: focus on individual rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights – See Unit, VI, E
    3. Major claims to new liberties and rights
  - C. What are your rights as a member of a group?
    1. Civil liberties to civil rights
    2. Equal opportunity to affirmative action
  - D. What are your rights as a human being?
    1. Development of the idea of human rights
    2. Human rights in the international political system
    3. Human rights in the American political system
  - E. Landmark decisions rendered by the Supreme Court in its mission to protect the rights of the people: (abbreviated list)
    - Gitlow v. New York* 1925
    - Brown v. Bd. Of Education* 1954
    - Engel v. Vitale* 1962
    - Abington Township v Schempp* 1963
    - West Virginia Bd. Of Education v. Barnette* 1943
    - Near v. Minnesota* 1931
    - New York Times v. United States* 1971
    - Tinker v. Des Moines School District* 1969
    - Mapp v. Ohio* 1961
    - Gideon v. Wainright* 1963
    - Escobedo v. Illinois* 1964
    - Miranda v. Arizona* 1966
    - Korematsu v. U.S.* 1944
    - Bakke v. The Regents of the University of California* 1978

**Roe V. Wade 1973**  
**Webster v. Reproductive Health Services 1989**  
**Baker v. Carr 1962**  
**Gomillion v. Lightfoot 1960**  
**Harper v. Virginia 1966**  
**Loving v. Virginia 1967**  
**Malloy v. Hogan 1964**  
**Robinson v. California 1962**  
**Furman v. Georgia 1972**  
**Edwards v. South Carolina 1963**  
**Feiner v. New York 1951**  
**Street v. New York 1966**  
**Roth v. United States 1957**  
**Miller v. California 1974**  
**O'Brien v. United States 1968**

## **VII. COURSE PROFICIENCIES**

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. explain the ideological foundations of American government.
2. explain the historical context of Constitutional safeguards against concentrations of power.
3. describe the contemporary functioning of the system of checks and balances.
4. sequence and explain the formal and informal processes by which legislation is enacted.
5. identify and describe political cultures and subcultures.
6. explain the derivation and efficacy of polls.
7. explain the role of public opinion in contemporary politics.
8. analyze the effect of mass media on the formation of public policy and the conduct of elections.
9. describe the structure and leadership of Congress.
10. describe the job of congressional representatives in light of public expectations.
11. explain the role and impact of public interest groups on the formation of public policy.
12. critique the efficacy of the two party system.
13. describe the role of third parties.
14. explain the role of fundraising, political action committees, and campaign finance reform in the electoral process.
15. model modern bureaucracies.
16. utilize graphic organizers to portray the structure of the federal bureaucracy.
17. explain the role of the bureaucracy in the formation of public policy.
18. explain the role of the federal judiciary in American politics.
19. trace the evolution of civil rights in the American political system.
20. explain the significance of major Supreme Court decisions for the evolution of civil liberties and the expansion of federal power.

21. describe the shifting balance of power in the American system of federalism.
22. analyze the formal and informal powers of the presidency.
23. compare various styles of presidential leadership.
24. explain the various roles fulfilled by the president in light of public expectations.
25. trace the evolution of the American presidency.