

AP U.S. Government and Politics – Course Overview

Instructor: Mrs. Lisa Lane

Room 205

Conference: 7th period/ 2:38-3:32

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Course description

AP U.S. Government and Politics offers a college preparatory program for students intending to continue their education at a college level. Students will study the principles and concepts of American democracy and the American political system. Students will have the opportunity to take the Advanced Placement Exam in U.S. Government and Politics. The AP U.S. Government and Politics course will satisfy the Government requirement for graduation.

Readings

Coleman, John J., Kenneth M. Goldstein, and William G. Howell. Understanding American Politics and Government. Brief Edition. Longman, 2010.

In order for students to be successful in a college level course of this type, it is essential that they maximize their time and complete all assigned reading prior to class discussion. The required reading, along with lectures and class discussions, will figure prominently in the formal evaluation on quizzes and examinations. The required reading will be substantial, but not overly burdensome if the students will organize and plan accordingly.

Grading

- Examinations, group presentations, and projects count 60%.
- Quizzes and daily assignments count 40%.

Examinations

Consist of 60 multiple choice questions and free response questions. (This format is used on the AP Exam). Students making below a 70 will be allowed to correct exams and earn a maximum grade of 80.

Group Presentations

For the purpose of assigned readings outside of the textbook, students will be placed into groups. Each group will lead a discussion on selected readings throughout the course. The purpose of these presentations will be to further the students' understandings of the assigned readings. The presentations will be limited to 15 minutes; the presentation format is left to the discretion of the presenting group. Each student in the group will receive an individual grade based on his/her contribution to the overall presentation.

Retest Policy

A student has the opportunity to retake a test to earn a maximum grade of 70. Specific times to be arranged between student and teacher.

Electronic devices

No electronic devices are to be out unless otherwise instructed by the teacher.

Bathroom Passes

2 bathroom passes will be awarded for the semester. At the end of the semester, the passes may be redeemed and the lowest daily grade removed from the gradebook.

Tardies

Arrival after the tardy bell = **tardy**. Arrival 10 minutes or after the bell = **absence**.

Late work

Simply put, no late work is accepted due to the nature of the course; however, discretion of teacher will apply.

Make-up work

You have the number of days that you are absent + 1 to turn in your make-up work. It is your responsibility to obtain that make-up work. You may make up missed quizzes and tests before school starts or directly after school at 3:31 p.m. (Specific time will be arranged between student and teacher).

Extra-Curricular Absences

It is the student's responsibility to ask the teacher for work that will be missed **BEFORE** absences for extra-curricular events. The student must have all work complete upon his or her return and must be prepared to take any scheduled test or quiz.

Graded-Work Folders

Students will keep all graded work in a folder that will remain in the classroom. No other materials should be stored in this folder. Parents wishing to see their child's work may schedule an appointment with the teacher.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

Progress reports will be given every three and six weeks. Report cards will be issued every nine weeks. Progress reports and report cards must be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher within two class days (bonuses awarded).

Classroom Rules

- Please be seated before the tardy bell rings.
- Please bring assignments and supplies to class every day.
- Please respect the rights and property of others:
 - Raise your hand to speak unless told otherwise.
 - Do not talk while others are talking.
- Please use appropriate language and behavior at all times.
- Please follow the guidelines are outlined in student handbook:
 - Compliance with the dress code is mandatory.
 - Cell phones are to be turned off and out of sight.

Consequences

- 1st Offense: Warning – documented
- 2nd Offense: Documented
- 3rd Offense: Documented and serve morning detention
- 4th Offense: Office referral

Class Supplies

- 2” Notebook
- Notebook paper
- 1 folder with 2 inside pockets
- Black or blue pen (for tests)
- Colored pen for notes (optional)
- Pencils
- 3 x 5 lined index cards – white or colored

Please sign and return this form to Mrs. Lane.

I have read and understand the AP Government course overview, rules, and procedures. I understand what is expected of me both academically and behaviorally. I will abide by these requirements and rely on self-motivation to succeed in this class. If at any time I have a concern or fall behind in this class, I will discuss it with my teacher immediately.

Student's signature

Date

I have read and understand the AP Government course overview, rules, and procedures. I understand what is expected of my student both academically and behaviorally. I will contact the teacher if at any time I have a concern or my child falls behind in this class.

Parent's signature

Date

Course Outline

- I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government (5-15%)**
 - A. Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution
 - B. Separate of powers
 - C. Checks and balances
 - D. Federalism
 - E. Theories of democratic government

- II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors (10-20%)**
 - A. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders
 - B. Processes by which citizens learn about politics
 - C. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion
 - D. The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life
 - E. Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors

- III. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media (10-20%)**
 - A. Political parties and elections
 - 1. Functions
 - 2. Organization
 - 3. Development
 - 4. Effects on the political process
 - 5. Electoral laws and systems
 - B. Interest groups, including political action committees (PACs)
 - 1. The range of interests represented
 - 2. The activities of interest groups
 - 3. The effects of interest groups on the political process
 - 4. The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process
 - C. The mass media
 - 1. The functions and structures of the news media
 - 2. The impacts of the news media on politics
 - 3. The news media industry and its consequences

- IV. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts (35-45%)**
 - A. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power
 - B. Relationships among the four institutions and varying balances of power
 - C. Linkages between institutions and the following:
 - 1. Public opinion and voters
 - 2. Interest groups
 - 3. Political parties
 - 4. The media
 - 5. State and local governments

V. Public Policy (5-15%)

- A. Policymaking in a federal system
- B. The formation of policy agendas
- C. The role of institutions in the enactment of policy
- D. The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation
- E. Linkages between policy processes and the following:
 - 1. Political institutions and federalism
 - 2. Political parties
 - 3. Interest groups
 - 4. Public opinion
 - 5. Elections
 - 6. Policy networks

VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (5-15%)

- A. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation
- B. Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties
- C. The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties