



Advanced Placement Government and Politics

OVERVIEW

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a challenging course that will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. This course includes both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific examples. It also requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute U.S. politics. Political theory and everyday practice that direct the daily operation of our government and shape our public policies will be explored. This course is taught at a college level and requires a substantial amount of reading and preparation for every class. The purpose of this course is to prepare the students for the AP Exam in U.S. Government and Politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Know important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics.
- Understand 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)
- Be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics.
- Write weekly essays to address analytical and interpretive free-response questions that will assist in the AP Exam.

THE AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS EXAM

The Advanced Placement exam will be given in May. This exam is 2 hours and 25 minutes in length and has both multiple choice and free-response sections. Forty-five minutes are allotted for the multiple-choice section, which contains 60 questions and accounts for 50 percent of the exam score. The free-response section consists of a 100-minute period with 4 questions.

COURSE TEXTS AND READINGS:

Textbook: Edwards, George C. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* - 12th ed. San Francisco: Pearson Longman, 2006.

Primary/Secondary Sources: Woll, Peter, ed. *American Government: Readings and Cases*. 15th ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2004



Other Materials:

Additional readings and activities will come from the *New York Times*, the *Economist*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and various web sites. The **current event journal** will be based on readings from these sources.

SUMMARY OUTLINE: AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS COURSE AND EXAMINATION

Content Area % goals of examination

I. Constitutional Underpinnings of U.S. Government.....5-15%

- a. Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution
- b. Separation of powers
- c. Federalism
- d. 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
 - i. Function
 - ii. Organization
 - iii. Development
 - iv. Effects on the political process
 - v. Electoral laws and systems
- b. Interest groups, including political action committees(PACs)
 - i. The range of interests represented
 - ii. The activities of interest groups
 - iii. The effects of interest groups on the political process
 - iv. The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process
- c. The mass media
 - i. The functions and structures of the media
 - ii. The impacts of media on politics



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 these four institutions and varying balances of power
- c. Linkages between institutions and the following:
 - i. Public opinion and voters
 - ii. Interest groups
 - iii. Political parties
 - iv. The media
 - v. Sub national 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:
 - i. Political institutions and federalism
 - ii. Political parties
 - iii. Interest groups
 - iv. Public opinion
 - v. Elections
 - vi. 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

*****The above curriculum guide comes from the College Board Acorn book.*****

Alternative Assignments/Activities: If you do not approve of a specific resource listed in this syllabus, please make your request to me in writing and an alternative assignment and/or materials will be provided. The request should include your name, the child's name the specific activity/materials in which you do not want your child to participate or to which you do not want them exposed, and the nature of your objection.



Email: tara.laroy@knoxschools.org

Assessments

Skills Assessment: Students will read AP Government and Politics textbooks and supplementary readings, complete historical outlines, research projects, practice process skills, analyze documents, engage in levels of questioning, write free response questions, and prepare for a College Board Advanced Placement exam. Due to the variety of skills covered in this class, a mixture of formative and summative assessments will be used to evaluate such as:

- ❖ Quiz/Test on each chapter within the units of study
- ❖ Reading assignments to prepare for Socratic Seminars
- ❖ Journal reviews using current articles to relate them to units of study
- ❖ Complete vocabulary notecards for each unit to be turned in / checked the day before the Unit test
- ❖ Read all supplementary readings assigned
- ❖ Selected assignments to constitute a quiz grade as indicated by the instructor
- ❖ Selected assignments completed with accuracy will be rewarded a daily grade
- ❖ Complete the College Board Advanced Placement Exam in May for opportunity to earn college credit

Class Participation: In order to succeed in this class, you will need to work hard from the beginning and maintain a good work ethic throughout the duration of the year. This is a year-long class which can have its advantages and disadvantages. However, this is a class that will push the academic boundaries for your child in their sophomore year.

Knox County Grading Scale

A 100-93% **B** 92-85% **C** 84-75% **D** 74-70% **F** 69% and lower

Grades for class:

35% - Homework and daily work (Bellringers, class work, etc.)

30% - Summative assessments (Tests, quizzes, Unit Notecards, etc.)

25% - End of Course Test

10% - Projects (Unit projects, debates, etc.)

- **Makeup Work:** Make up work is your responsibility. It is YOUR responsibility to turn in missed work!!! If there are assignments (TESTS included) NOT turned in at the end of every 4 ½ week grading period, they turn into zeros. I want to emphasize that it is a college-level class therefore YOU are responsible for making arrangements to get your missing work and/or notes. If you are having trouble, PLEASE do not hesitate to speak with me. I am here to support you anyway possible.

Make-up Policy and Student Grading



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Students must request make-up assignments within three (3) days after returning from an absence. Work must be completed within a reasonable, predetermined amount of time. It is up to the teacher to establish guidelines for a reasonable amount of time to make up any missed work. For any absence period of five days or over, work may be requested through the Guidance Office. Failure on the part of the student to initiate a request for make-up work within three days may result in lost credit opportunity for the assignments missed.

Student Expectations

Attendance: I understand that absences happen, and I also understand that history is probably NOT your favorite thing to talk and read about. However, if you do not have regular attendance, it makes it more difficult on you to “catch up.” DO NOT put yourself in a position of playing catch up...this IS a REQUIRED course to graduate. If you miss more than 15 minutes of any class, you are considered ABSENT!!! This includes if you are checked out early or you leave my room for any reason. You will know at least a week in advance when we will have a test. If you miss class the day before a test, you WILL STILL BE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE TEST!!!

Classroom Rules / Procedures:

- 4 School and Class Expectations:
 - Be Safe.
 - Be Ready.
 - Be Responsible.
 - Be Respectful.
- **Behavior** – This is an AP class, behavior should not be an issue plain and simple.
- **Participation** – we will be discussing SENSITIVE historical issues and inevitably we will have differing opinions. At the end of the day, you MUST RESPECT everyone’s opinions and always remember IT IS OK TO AGREE TO DISAGREE.
- **Music** – Students will not be allowed to listen to music in any class this year. Appropriate music will be played from my computer during times that students are working.
- **Food** – Food will be allowed in my classroom as long as it does not become a distraction in the learning environment. Meaning, if you want to share then do so BEFORE class starts. Also, everyone is expected to clean up after themselves, do not leave trash around your desk area or the entire class will lose the privilege.
- **Cell Phones** – Cell phones can be put in the boxes on the desk with screen down, as we might utilize them for polleverywhere.com. Otherwise, if students have their cell phone out it will be sent to the cell phone jail in the back of the classroom.

Incentives:

- **Weekly Drawings:** Throughout each week, the class as a whole will compete with the teacher to earn chances for weekly drawings for incentives. The skeleton structure for this competition is as follows:
 - Teacher points can be awarded, but not limited to the following: students not meeting behavioral expectations (too long on transitions), students tardy to class, etc.



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- Student points can be awarded, but not limited to the following: perfect attendance (which includes NO tardies), all homework being turned in on time, class test or quiz average above 80, etc.
- If students have more points than the teacher at the end of every week, then teacher will randomize a drawing for a variety of prizes such as candy, homework passes, etc.

Honor Code/Plagiarism Policy:

According to Harbrace Handbook, 15th edition:

“Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else’s ideas, research, or opinion as your own without proper documentation, even if it has been rephrased. It includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Copying verbatim all or part of another’s written work;
2. Using phrases, figures, or illustrations without citing the source;
3. Paraphrasing ideas, conclusions, or research without citing the source;
4. Using all or part of a literary plot, poem, or film without attributing the work to its creator.”

CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a form of stealing and academic fraud. Students who are found guilty of plagiarism will have the option of either redoing the assignment within a specified time period and accepting a grade letter drop or taking a zero on the assignment. Parents should be involved in making the decision. Plagiarism in college will result in being kicked out of the institution, so let’s get in the habit of doing our own work now.

Board Policy I-431

Issued: 7/95 Revised 6/08

The Board affirms that it is essential that the teaching about religion –and not of a religion be conducted in a factual, objective, and respectful manner in accordance with the following:

- Music, art, literature, or drama with a religious theme or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs, provided it is essential to the learning experience in the various field of study and is presented objectively;
- The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history shall be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies shall never foster a particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs; and
- Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments, which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech, and debate.



Teacher Expectations

Communication: The best way to reach me is by email, tara.laroy@knoxschools.org. I check it several times a day and can respond quickly. You may also call the school phone (594-3792) and leave a message for me. The best way to communicate with me is via email.

Aspen Parent Gradebook Access:

The most effective way to communicate with students and parents is through the online gradebook. In order to give timely feedback, I will update grades at least once a week. Students and parents should be checking gradebook on a regular basis. Please do not wait until the end of a grading period to check a student's grade. If there is a question or discrepancy, please do not hesitate to contact me immediately. I encourage you to access this regularly. If you do not know your username and/or password, please contact the school at (865) 594-3792.

Canvas:

Canvas is a great tool provided to us by the Knox County School System. We will be using Canvas throughout the year, so students **must have access to it and know their log-in information daily**. It is another great way of communication. Please access the Canvas page for this class and visit it often. This page contains due dates, copies of most assignments, and more.

Tutoring & Extra Help: I am available to help after school, usually until 5:00. I will leave school earlier if you are not in my room after-school. If you want or need to stay after-school, let me know so I can make sure that I stay in the building.

- LaRoy

Tentative Schedule



Week of...	Chapters and Topics
August 8-12	Constitutional Underpinnings (Unit I)
August 15-19	Constitutional Underpinnings
August 22-26	Constitutional Underpinnings
August 29-Sept 2	Constitutional Underpinnings
Sept 5-9	Political Beliefs (Unit II)
Sept 12-16	Political Beliefs
Sept 19-23	Political Beliefs
Sept 26-30	Political Beliefs
Oct 3-7	Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media (Unit III)
Oct 10-14	Fall Break
Oct 17-21	Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
Oct 24-28	Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
Oct 31-Nov 4	Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
Nov 7-11	Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
Nov 14-18	Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
Nov 21-25	Congress (Unit IV)
Nov 28-Dec 2	Congress
Dec 5-9	Congress
Dec 12-16	President (Unit IV)
Dec 19-23	President
Jan 9-13	Review of President and more President
Jan 16-20	Bureaucracy (Unit IV)
Jan 23-27	Bureaucracy
Jan 30-Feb 3	Bureaucracy
Feb 6-10	Federal Courts (Unit IV)
Feb 13-17	Federal Courts
Feb 20-24	Bureaucracy and Federal Courts Flex week (in case of snow days)
Feb 27-March 3	Policy Making and Public Policy (Unit V)
March 6-10	Policy Making and Public Policy
March 13-17	Spring Break
March 20-24	Policy Making and Public Policy
March 27-31	Civil Rights and Liberties (Unit VI)
April 3-7	Civil Rights and Liberties
April 10-14	Civil Rights and Liberties
April 17-21	Civil Rights and Liberties
April 24-28	APGoPo Test Review
May 1-5	APGoPo Test Review
May 8-12	APGoPo Test on May 8 th
May 15-19	APGoPo Project and EOC