

Syllabus for AP United States Government

2018-2019 academic year

TBR (To Be Revised)

Board Approval Date: August 27, 2018

NOTE:

College Board has revised the curriculum framework for this course effective for the upcoming year. Over the summer I will be attending a weeklong workshop, and my syllabus will be revised before school starts. However, the current College Board approved syllabus is included here to nonetheless give you a sense of the course.

NASD changes for 2018-19:

1. Final Exam Policy: While it is assumed you are taking this course with the expectation of taking the AP Exam, regardless if you do or not, per school policy you will be required to take the course final exam if your grade average is below a 90%.

2. Summer Assignment: There will be two summer assignments to be completed and turned in on the first day of school.

- Read the U.S. Constitution and complete the distributed “constitution packet”
- Read *Federalist #10* and *#51* (handout “in modern English”) and complete preliminary responses to the assigned questions.

3. Required Practice Exam: Per administrative policy, you will be required to participate in a practice administration of an exam.

College Board changes for 2018-19:

While there will obviously be much overlap to the current curriculum in the study of “political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States,” there will be more emphasis on political science skills and practices. We will still be reading and analyzing foundational documents, such as your summer assignment, but among the enhancements in the revisions: we will drill deeper into some key Supreme Court decisions; additionally, you will “develop evidence-based arguments, and engage in *an applied civics or politics research-based project.*”

The previous 6 units will now revolve around 5 “big ideas”:

- Constitutional Democracy
- Civil Liberties, Civil Rights
- American Political Culture and Beliefs
- Political Participation
- Interaction Among Branches

2017-2018 academic year

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Text:

Wilson, James Q., John J. Diluilo, Jr., and Meena Bose. American Government: Institutions and Policies. 13th ed.: Cengage Learning/Wadsworth Publishing, 2013.

Supplemental Resource Materials:

Woll, Peter, ed. American Government: Readings and Cases. 17th ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2008.

Serow, Ann G and Ladd, Everett C, eds. The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity. 5th ed. Baltimore: Lanahan Publishers, 2011.

We will frequently utilize contemporary stories (print, video clips) from various news media outlets, on-line sources, and Supreme Court cases.

Overview:

This course is an intensive study of the formal and informal structures of government and the processes of the American political system. The course is designed to prepare students to take the AP Exam for U.S. Government and Politics in May. As such, the course is taught on a college level and requires a substantial amount of reading and preparation for every class.

Student expectations/responsibilities:

1. Active learner: AP Government is a college level course. Thus, not all information found in *readings, assignments, research, projects, class activities, and tests* will be covered during class time. Your learning of the content will be inferred unless you open a line of communication with me.

2. Readings: In order to be successful in a college level course, it is essential that students maximize their time and complete all assigned reading prior to class discussions. The readings, as well as class activities, will figure prominently in quizzes and tests. ***Students are expected to read the assigned text and enrichment articles.*** You cannot simply “catch” the material by passively sitting in class.

3. Notebook: As the intent is preparation for the AP Exam in May, it will be to your great benefit to keep a three-ring binder, or electronic notebook, for your notes and enrichment readings. While structure will be provided, it is strongly encouraged that you supplement with your own personal notes. What we cover in September will be on the Exam in May. Your notes will be a valuable resource to study from.

4. **Participation:** Participation in class discussions, cooperative group activities, enrichment readings, and periodic projects enhances your learning, as well as your peers'. Related, students should feel free to raise questions concerning the readings, the instructor's discussion, and the comments of other students. *Meaningful participation* is strongly encouraged and enhances the quality of the class sessions.

5. **Current Events:** Knowledge of contemporary political events is essential for the analytical focus of the content. It is highly recommended that students expose themselves to daily sources of national "news", and a variety of political oriented media/perspectives. Some examples include: network news channels; on-line or print newspapers such as *The Morning Call* or *Washington Post*; magazines from across the spectrum such as *Time*, *The Nation*, *National Review*, *The Progressive*, and *The American Conservative*; internet sources such as aggregates like *RealClear Politics* and *Google News*. I would encourage multiple sources to help filter through inevitable media bias.

6. **Note cards:** while it may seem rote, chapter terms and court cases will be assigned. For this purpose the use of study index cards is suggested. However, other methods (e.g., electronic document, etc.) may better fit your learning style. Regardless, the AP Exam is a timed exam, and knowing specific terms and cases will quicken response time, and allow more time for analytical response questions.

7. **Behavior:** Our course has a demanding curriculum, and a demanding time schedule within which to cover it. We do not have time to deal with inappropriate behavior that distracts fellow students and the teacher from acquiring the knowledge to successfully pass the AP Exam.

Grades:

Grades are figured on a cumulative point basis. Each test, quiz, and most assignments will be worth a given number of points according to the quality and level of completion of the work. At the end of the Marking Period, a grade average is determined by dividing points-earned by the total points possible. Unit tests will typically have two components: multiple-choice, and an FRQ (free response question). Tests will eventually be timed, gradually getting to the proportion of time allotted in the May AP Exam: 45 seconds per multiple choice question, and 25 minutes per FRQ. *There will be no retakes for tests.* Each unit test will cover materials from the textbook, homework, outside readings, and class activities. It is your responsibility to get your work completed, and turned in, after any absence.

Course Content and Time Frame

The AP Exam covers six units with a predetermined percentage of questions coming from each unit. Consequently, our class content will be divided into six units and the amount of instructional days will be apportioned accordingly. Allotting for Keystones, assemblies, snow days, and other things beyond my control I based the below on 140 days of instructional time, and time to review for the exam. In May, after the Exam we will have a short unit on "State and Local government", or explore relevant contemporary issues.

Unit I - Constitutional Underpinnings of the United States Government (10%)

- A. 14 to 16 instructional days
- B. Chapter 1 (Study of Government)
Chapter 2 (The Constitution)
Chapter 3 (Federalism)
Federalist Papers Nos. 10 and 51
“Gonzales v. Raich” (Woll)
“Federalism”, Christopher Burckett (AP Special Focus materials)
- C. Content Focus
 1. Explain what is political power
 2. Compare and contrast direct and representative democracy
 3. Determine how power is distributed in a democracy
 4. Examine the writing of the Constitution (read the U.S. Constitution)
 5. Assess how the framers dealt with the issues of democracy, liberty, and slavery
 6. Judge the motives of the framers (use the Declaration of Independence)
 7. List and discuss the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation
 8. Explain why separation of powers and federalism became key parts of the Constitution (analyze Federalist papers 10 and 51)
 9. Judge the motives of the Framers
 10. Discuss the meaning of federalism
 11. Appraise the relationship between federalism and public policy
 12. Evaluate the effect of devolution on relationships between the national and state governments
 13. Outline the ways in which national and state powers have been interpreted by the courts
 14. Analyze and contrast dual versus cooperative federalism, incorporating *Gonzales v. Raich*, *Wickard v. Filburn*, *U.S. v. Lopez* and *U.S. v. Morrison* cases

Unit II - Political Beliefs and Behaviors (15%)

- A. 21 to 23 instructional days
- B. Chapter 4 (American Political Culture), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 7 (Public Opinion), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 8 (Political Participation)
“Public Opinion and American Democracy”, V.O. Key, jr. (Lanahan)
- C. Content Focus
 1. Discuss what is meant by public opinion
 2. Define political culture and list some of the dominant aspects of political culture in the United States
 3. Determine the origins of political attitudes and cleavages in public opinion
 4. Examine the reasons for nonvoting
 5. Identify who participates in politics
 6. Describe how control of the elections has shifted from the states to the federal government
 7. Analyze and interpret numeric, statistical, and graphic information by completing chapter “data check” worksheets, and analyzing on-line (Gallup, Pew, etc.) poll data
 8. Analyze, compare and contrast the self-identified results from on-line surveys on political typology, ideology, and philosophy.

Unit III - Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media (15%)

- A. 21 to 23 instructional days
- B. Chapter 9 (Political Parties), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 10 (Elections and Campaigns), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 11 (Interest Groups), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 12 (The Media)
“A Theory of Critical Elections”, V.O. Key, jr (Woll)
“Feeding Frenzy”, Larry Sabato (Lanahan)
- C. Content Focus
 - 1. Compare and contrast political parties in the United States and abroad
 - 2. Recognize the rise and decline of the political party in the United States
 - 3. Assess the reasons for the two party system and the failure of minor parties
 - 4. Discuss the differences between Presidential and Congressional campaigns
 - 5. Judge the affect of money on the election process (including analyzing impact from the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*)
 - 6. Appraise election outcomes and its effect on the political system
 - 7. Examine interest groups and their effects on the political system
 - 8. Rate the influence on the media on the political process
 - 9. Identify the structure of the media and the rules governing it
 - 10. Analyze and interpret numeric, statistical, and graphic information by completing chapter “data check” worksheets, and analyzing on-line poll data including contemporary results on “Real Clear Politics”, “Open Secrets” and FEC websites

Unit IV - Institutions of the National Government (40%)

- A. 52 to 56 instructional days (13 to 14 each on Congress, Presidency, Bureaucracy, and the Judiciary)
- B. Chapter 13 (Congress), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 14 (Presidency), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 15 (Bureaucracy), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 16 (Judiciary)
“The Problem of Divided Government in an Era of Polarized Parties”, Jeffrey A. Fine, (AP Professional Development material)
“Constitutional Democracy and Bureaucratic Power” (Woll)
- C. Content Focus
 - 1. Trace the evolution of Congress
 - 2. Examine the process of getting elected to Congress
 - 3. Determine the organization of Congress
 - 4. Identify the powers of Congress
 - 5. How a bill becomes a law
 - 6. Explain the evolution of the Presidency
 - 7. Assess the office and power of the Presidency
 - 8. Appraise the distinctiveness of the American bureaucracy
 - 9. Describe the growth of the federal bureaucracy
 - 10. List the bureaucratic pathologies
 - 11. Describe the development of the federal courts
 - 12. Analyze the structure of the federal courts

13. Examine the Supreme Court in action
14. Judge the power of the judicial branch of government
15. Compare and contrast judicial restraint and judicial activism
16. Understand links between these four institutions and Unit III
17. Analyze and interpret numeric, statistical, and graphic information by completing chapter “data check” worksheets, and analyzing contemporary on-line resources

Unit V - Public Policy (10%)

- A. 13 to 14 instructional days
- B. Chapter 17 (The Policy-Making Process)
Chapter 18 (Economic Policy), including “data check” worksheets
Chapter 19 (Social Welfare)
Chapter 20 (Foreign and Military Policy)
Chapter 21 (Environmental Policy), including “data check” worksheets
“Blowback”, Chalmers Johnson (Lanahan)
- C. Content Focus
 1. Explain how certain issues at certain times are placed on the public agenda for action within our federal system
 2. Overview of foreign policy, economic policy, environmental policy, and social welfare policy (majoritarian, client, interest group politics)
 3. Describe the formation and enactment of public policies by the institutions of Unit IV (Congress, President, Bureaucracy, Courts)
 4. Examine the impact of federalism, parties, interest groups, and elections on the policy making process
 5. Analyze and interpret numeric, statistical, and graphic information by completing chapter “data check” worksheets, and analyzing contemporary on-line resources

Unit VI - Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (10%)

- A. 13 to 14 instructional days
- B. Chapter 5 (Civil Liberties), including “datacheck” worksheets
Chapter 6 (Civil Rights)
“With All Deliberate Speed”, Charles Ogletree (Lanahan)
- C. Content Focus
 1. Discuss the relationship of the Bill of Rights to the concept of majority rule
 2. Explain how the structure of the federal system affects the application of the Bill of Rights
 3. Discuss the changing conception of the due process clause of Amendment XIV, including incorporation
 4. Explain the distinction between protected and unprotected speech and expressions under the First Amendment
 5. Describe the principle of separation of church and state
 6. Summarize the legal struggles of minorities to secure rights, especially under the fourteenth amendment
 7. Explain the concept of selective incorporation
 8. Analyze and interpret numeric, statistical, and graphic information by completing chapter “data check” worksheets, and analyzing contemporary on-line resources