

# Advanced Placement US Government & Politics

## I. Overview of the Course

Advanced Placement (AP) United States Government & Politics is designed to offer students the equivalent of an introductory college level course in United States government and politics. This course will focus on the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute United States politics. Students will gain an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States both by studying the general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and by analyzing specific examples.

## II. Course Objectives (Curriculum Requirements)

**Goals:** Students successfully completing this course will

1. know important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics.
2. understand typical patterns of politics processes and behavior and their consequences (including components of political behavior, the principles used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures).
3. **be able to analyze and interpret data relevant to U.S. government and politics.**

### AP Topics:

- I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government
- II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors
- III. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
- IV. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts
- V. **Public Policy**
- VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

**VA Standards of Learning:** This course will also cover the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) for VA and US Government.

The VA SOLs require students to examine fundamental constitutional principles, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the political culture, the policy-making process at each level of government, and the operation of the United States market economy. The standards identify the personal character traits that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in the civic life of an increasingly diverse democratic society. They also emphasize the intellectual skills required for responsible citizenship and require students to practice these skills.

## III. Required Texts

### Textbook:

Edwards, George C., Martin P. Wattenberg and Robert L. Lineberry. Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy. 12<sup>th</sup> ed., AP ed., Pearson Longman: New York, 2006.

### Supplemental reading materials:

- Stinebricker, Bruce, ed. *Annual Editions: American Government*, 2006-2007.
- A variety of other readings and primary and secondary sources will be used during the course. The teacher will provide these resources and materials or students will have access to them via the media center or Internet.  
Readings and primary and secondary sources will include
  - relevant statistical information and data presented in maps, charts, tables, graphs, etc.
  - news articles about relevant current events.

## IV. Grading

Your academic progress will be evaluated through a variety of assessments.

Marking Period (Quarter) Grades will be based on:

- Tests and Quarterly Assessments
- Quizzes
- Essays
- Research papers
- Projects.

The Semester Grade will be calculated as follows:

40% = First Quarter (9 Weeks)

40% = Second Quarter (9 Weeks)

20% = Exam.

The *Advanced Placement Exam* is administered in May to all students enrolled in AP US Government and Politics. If you perform well, you may earn college credits.

## V. Expectations

While this course is offered to any student who wishes a challenge and to prepare for college, there are high performance expectations. You are expected to

- complete assigned readings from the textbook and from supplemental sources, as well as comprehend, remember, discuss, and apply what you have read.
- take responsibility for your learning in the course. Due to the amount of material that is tested on the AP examination, and the limited amount of class time available, you will be responsible for covering some material on your own time.
- compose and write essays that include a well-developed thesis statement and relevant supporting examples.
- analyze and interpret data and other information relevant to U.S. government and politics.
- analyze contemporary news
- analyze and apply content knowledge, rather than simply reciting or recognizing facts that have been memorized.
- prepare for the AP examination by developing skills in answering multiple-choice questions that require application of knowledge rather than simple recall.

Pages of Reading PER CLASS	Hours of study PER CLASS	Tests, essays, papers, PER QUARTER	Major Projects
10 – 20	1 – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 – 8 reading based quizzes</li> <li>• 2 AP formatted tests for each unit/chapter</li> <li>• Essays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 extended take home</li> <li>▪ 2 – 4 per test</li> <li>▪ 3 – 5 in class (using AP writing prompts)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Quarterly Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 research paper per semester</li> <li>• 1 major project per quarter</li> </ul>

## VI. Course Outline

AP US Government and Politics is a full academic year course (two semesters) and is organized into four quarters that are each nine weeks long.

Please note the following abbreviation in the course outline: *SOL* refers to the VA Standards of Learning, which are notated by *GOVT*.

Quarter 1		
AP Outline Topics	Topics and/or Strands	Time Estimate
Topic I	<p><b><u>Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings</u></b></p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <p>A. Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution  B. Separation of powers  C. Federalism  D. Theories of democratic government</p> <p><u>Assignments and Assessments</u></p> <p>A. Readings  1. Textbook: Chapters 1 – 3  2. <i>Locke, Second Treatise</i>, Federalist 51, Marbury v. Madison  B. Writing Prompts  C. <b>Analysis of relevant contemporary news</b>  D. Assessments  1. Quizzes  2. Unit Test</p>	<p>5.5 weeks</p> <p>14 extended block sessions</p>
Topic II	<p><b><u>Unit 2: Political Beliefs and Behaviors</u></b></p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <p>A. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders  B. Processes by which citizens learn about politics  C. Nature, sources and consequences of public opinion  D. Ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life</p>	<p>2.5 weeks</p> <p>5 extended block sessions</p>

	<p>E. Variety of factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of their beliefs and behaviors</p> <p><u>Assignments and Assessments</u></p> <p>A. Readings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Textbook: Chapters 6, 7, 10</li> <li>2. Supplemental Readings: Topical readings from <u>Annual Editions</u>, InfoTrac, and <b>selected news sources</b></li> </ol> <p>E. Writing Prompts</p> <p>F. <b>Analysis of Data – maps, charts, graphs, etc. relevant to unit topic</b></p> <p>G. <b>Analysis of relevant contemporary news</b></p> <p>H. Assessments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quizzes</li> <li>2. Unit Test</li> </ol>	
Review and <b>Quarterly Assessment</b>		1 week, 2 sessions
<b>Quarter 2</b>		
AP Outline Topics	Topics and/or Strands	Time Estimate
Topic III	<p><b><u>Unit 3: Political Parties, Interest Groups and Mass Media</u></b></p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <p>A. Political Parties and Elections</p> <p>B. Interest Groups and PACs</p> <p>C. Roles of PACs in the Political Process</p> <p><u>Assignments and Assessments</u></p> <p>A. Readings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Textbook: Chapters 7 – 11</li> <li>2. <i>Federalist 10</i>, <b>readings from selected news sources</b> and websites</li> </ol> <p>B. Writing Prompts</p> <p>C. <b>Analysis of Data – maps, charts, graphs, etc. relevant to unit topic</b></p> <p>D. <b>Analysis of relevant contemporary news</b></p> <p>E. Assessments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quizzes</li> <li>2. Unit Test</li> </ol>	<p>3.5 weeks</p> <p>8 extended block sessions</p>
Topic IV	<p><b><u>Unit 4: Institutions of National Government: The Congress</u></b></p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <p>A. Major formal and informal institutional arrangements of powers</p> <p>B. Relationships between Congress and the presidency, bureaucracy, and federal courts institutions and varying balances of power</p> <p><u>Assignments and Assessments</u></p> <p>A. Readings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Textbook: Chapters 12 – 16</li> <li>2. <i>Federalist 78</i>, Topical readings from <u>Annual Editions</u>, InfoTrac and selected</li> </ol>	<p>4.5 weeks</p> <p>12 extended block sessions total</p>

	<p><b>news resources</b> and websites</p> <p>B. Writing Prompts</p> <p>C. <b>Analysis of Data – maps, charts, graphs, etc. relevant to unit topic</b></p> <p>D. <b>Analysis of relevant contemporary news</b></p> <p>E. Assessments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quizzes</li> <li>Unit Test</li> </ol>	
Review and <b>Semester Exam</b>		1 week, 2 extended block sessions
<b>Quarter 3</b>		
AP Outline Topics	Topics and/or Strands	Time Estimate
Topic IV	<p><b><u>Unit 4: Institutions of National Government: The Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts</u></b></p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <p>A. Major formal and informal institutional arrangements of powers</p> <p>B. Relationships between these institutions and varying balances of power</p> <p>C. Linkages between these institutions and the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ public opinion and voters</li> <li>▪ interest groups</li> <li>▪ political parties</li> <li>▪ media</li> <li>▪ subnational governments</li> </ul> <p><u>Assignments and Assessments</u></p> <p>A. Readings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook: Chapters 12 – 16</li> <li>Topical readings from <u>Annual Editions</u>, InfoTrac, and <b>selected news resources</b> and websites</li> </ol> <p>B. Writing Prompts</p> <p>C. <b>Analysis of Data – maps, charts, graphs, etc. relevant to unit topic</b></p> <p>D. <b>Analysis of relevant contemporary news</b></p> <p>E. Assessments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quizzes</li> <li>Unit Test</li> </ol>	4 weeks  10 extended block sessions
Topic V	<p><b><u>Unit 5: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties</u></b></p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <p>A. Development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation</p> <p>B. Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties</p> <p>C. Impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties</p> <p><u>Assignments and Assessments</u></p> <p>A. Readings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook: Chapters 4 – 5</li> </ol>	4 weeks  10 extended block sessions

	<p>2. Topical readings from <u>Annual Editions</u>, InfoTrac, <b>selected news resources</b>, selected court cases, the Bill of Rights and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment</p> <p>B. Writing Prompts</p> <p>C. <b>Analysis of Data – maps, charts, graphs, etc. relevant to unit topic</b></p> <p>D. <b>Analysis of relevant contemporary news</b></p> <p>E. Assessments</p> <p>1. Quizzes</p> <p>2. Unit Test</p>	
Review and <b>Quarterly Assessment</b>		1 week, 2 extended block sessions
<b>Quarter 4</b>		
AP Outline Topics	Topics and/or Strands	Time Estimate
Topic VI	<p><b><u>Unit 6: Public Policy</u></b> <u>Content</u></p> <p>A. <b>Policy-making in federal system</b></p> <p>B. <b>Formulation of policy agendas</b></p> <p>C. <b>The role of institutions in the enactment of policy</b></p> <p>D. <b>The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation</b></p> <p><u>Assignments and Assessments</u></p> <p>A. Readings</p> <p>1. Textbook: Chapters 17 – 20</p> <p>2. Topical readings from <u>Annual Editions</u>, InfoTrac, and <b>selected news sources</b></p> <p>B. Writing Prompt</p> <p>C. <b>Analysis of Data – maps, charts, graphs, etc. relevant to unit topic</b></p> <p>D. <b>Analysis of relevant contemporary news</b></p> <p>E. Assessments</p> <p>1. Quizzes</p> <p>2. Unit Test</p>	<p>2 to 3 weeks (based on AP test dates)</p> <p>5 to 7 extended block sessions (based on AP test dates)</p>
Review and <b><u>AP Test</u></b>		1 to 2 weeks, 2 to 5 extended block sessions (based on AP test dates)
SOL GOVT 8a-c	<b><u>Unit 7: State and Local Government</u></b>	2 to 3 weeks, 5 to 7 extended block sessions (based on AP test date)
Review and <b>Semester Exam</b>		1 week, 2 extended block sessions