

Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics

Course Syllabus

Overview:

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course is designed to provide a traditional, college level course and will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. This course will emulate the academic rigor of a college-level course, while including the study of both the general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific examples. Throughout this course, students will examine and analyze the Constitution of the United States, gain a familiarity with the institutions, processes, beliefs, and policies that constitute the United States politics, and analyze current events. The students will use higher order thinking skills to formulate opinions, interpret the various trends in our society and political system, and will develop the skills needed for participation in public affairs at the local, state, and national level. Upon the completion of this course, it is expected that students will take the Advanced Placement examination.

Course Goals:

1. Explain how the exercise of a citizen's rights and responsibilities helps to strengthen a democracy.
2. Evaluate, take and defend positions about issues concerning American democracy.
3. Analyze the election process in the United States.
4. Explain how societal changes have brought changes in the U.S. Constitution, court interpretations, and in our philosophy.
5. Prepare students for the A.P. Examination in May.

Textbook:

American Government: Continuity and Change. O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato. 2008 edition

Supplemental Reading:

- Politics In America. Dye, Thomas, Prentice Hall, 1994
- American Government: Readings and Cases. Woll, Peter. Pearson, 2008
- Classic Readings in American Politics. Nivola, Pietro and David Rosenbloom, St. Martin's Press, 1986.
- Internet
- Newspapers – USA Today, The Washington Post, The Christian Science Monitor
- Magazines- The Week, Newsweek
- Other supplemental sources listed under each section

Reading:

The student should be aware that in this class there will be extensive reading and that each one must complete the assignment before the class period. * Tests will be based on an understanding of both readings and classroom discussion.

Units:

AP U.S. Government and Politics is comprised of four units which will be completed in the following sequence:

Unit 1 and Unit 2 - 1st semester

Unit 3 and Unit 4 - 2nd semester

Unit 1- Foundations of Government

chapter 1 - Political Landscape

chapter 2- The Constitution

chapter 3- Federalism

chapter 4- State and Local Government

chapter 5- Civil Liberties

chapter 6- Civil Rights

Unit 2- Institutions of Government

chapter 7- Congress

chapter 8- The Presidency

chapter 9- The Executive Branch and Federal Bureaucracy

chapter 10- The Judiciary

Unit 3- Political Behavior

chapter 11- Socialization and Public Opinion

chapter 12- Political Parties

chapter 13- Voting and Elections

chapter 14- Campaign Process

chapter 15- Media

chapter 16- Interest Groups

Unit 4- Public Policy

chapter 17- Social Welfare

chapter 18- The Economy

chapter 19- Foreign and Domestic Policy

Grading scale:

94-100-A

86-93-B

78-85-C

70-77-D

69- F

Grades will be assigned as follows:

Tests, projects, presentations, reports – 50%

Classwork and quizzes (announced and unannounced) - 40%

Homework- 10%

- There will be NO extra credit given in this class. Please remember that this is expected to be a college level course.
- All work is expected to be turned in on the due date.
- A grade of zero will be given for all work missed due to an unexcused absence.

- Homework assignments- It is your responsibility to complete these assignments prior to the start of the next class.
- Class participation will have an impact on your grade and will certainly lead to more stimulating discussion and debate.
- Students will be tested at the completion of each chapter. These tests will consist of two parts- multiple choice and essay.
- Quizzes (announced and unannounced) may be in a variety of different formats – multiple choice, document based, short answer, etc.
- Essays/Position Papers will be required throughout the duration of the course. These papers will be anywhere from two to three pages in length and will encompass a wide variety of topics.

Expectations:

- Students are expected to conduct themselves with a high level of decorum. They are to be respectful of others and their point of view, follow all school and county regulations, and are to pay attention, cooperate, participate, and give their best effort everyday.
- Students are expected to attend class every day on time, bring all the necessary supplies – text, folder for supplemental materials, a three – ring binder, and a blue or black ink pen.

Class Format:

Lectures, projects, transparencies, videos, critical writing assignments, tests, quizzes

Course Outline:

1st semester

Week of 4-7 September – Origin and root of American government

- O’Connor and Sabato, text, p. xxxv-xxxviii and p. 3-11.
- Handout-Sagan, Carl and Ann Druyan, “Real Patriots As Questions”

10-14 September – American Political Culture

- O'Connor and Sabato, text, p.12-29
- Dye, Thomas, Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How, p. 2-28
- Nivola, Pietro and David Rosenbloom, Classical Readings In America Politics, p.5-10 and p. 21-29.
- Ellis, Robert, American Political Culture

17-21 September – The origins of a new nation

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, 2008, p.31-46
- Woll, Peter, Federalist # 16 and # 17
- Nivola, Pietra and David Rosenbloom, Classical Readings In America Politics, p. 61-77.

24- 28 September – The basic principles of the Constitution

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, 2008, p.46-65
- Roche, John, “ The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action”
- Tribe, Lawrence and Michael Dorf, How not to read the Constitution
- Ferrarini, Taruni and Mark Schug, “History Matters: An Institutional Approach Examination of U. S. Constitution”
- video- The Constitution: That Delicate Balance - #11

1-5 October - The origins of the Federal System

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p.95-107
- Dye, Thomas, Politics In America, p.103-134
- Woll, Peter, American Government: Readings and Cases,p.74-83
- Video – McCulloch v Maryland and Gibbons v Ogden

8-12 October - The Changing Nature of Federalism

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p.107-121
- Handout- Federalist # 78
- Bear, Samuel, "Federalism, Nationalism, and Democracy In America "
- Riker, " Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance "

15-19 October – The Evolution of State Government

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p.123-139
- Woll, Peter, American Government: Readings and Cases, p.84-104
- Visit to the state capitol, governor's mansion, and Supreme court building

22-26 October – Local Government

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 139-155
- Handout- Jett, Carolyn," Colonial Law"
- Handout- Bush, Dr. Richard, "Pandemic In Northumberland County"
- Handout- Bush, Dr. Richard, "Northumberland County's Population Trends and Patterns
- Presentation – Supt of Schools
- Visit to the local county clerk's office and the historical society

29 October-2 November- Bill of Rights

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 157-175
- Internet: www.aclu.org, www.findlaw.com, www.law.cornell.edu/topics/first_amendment.html
- Woll, Peter, American Government: Readings and Cases, p.112-132 and page 143-150
- Debate – civil liberties issues

- Video- The Constitution: That Delicate Balance - # 8 and 9

6 – 9 November – Rights of criminal defendants

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 175-187
- Woll, Peter, American Government: Readings and Cases, p.143-150
- Video- The Constitution: That Delicate Balance – Butch Barnes case

12-16 November – Right to privacy

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 187-195
- Woll, Peter, American Government: Readings and Cases, p.158-166
- Dye, Thomas, Politics In America, p. 531-568
- Internet: www.privacy.org and www.epic.org
- Simulations

19-20 November – Slavery and Congress

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 197-202
- Woll, Peter, American Government: Readings and Cases, p. 133-136
- Debate- affirmative action

26-30 November – Push for Equality

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 204-237
- Dye, Thomas, Politics In America, p. 575-602
- Nivola, Pietro and David Rosenbloom, Classic Readings In American Politics, p. 5- 10
- Video- The Constitution: That Delicate Balance - #11

3- 7 December – How Congress is organized

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p.239-264
- Woll, Peter, American Government: Readings and Cases, p.321-341
- Handout- “ Congress: Politics on Capitol Hill “, p. 343-393
- Research and compare various congresses

10- 14 December – Lawmaking function of Congress

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 264-277
- Handout- Huntington, Samuel, “ Congressional Responses to the Twentieth Century”
- Handout- Polsby, Nelson, “Strengthening Congress in National Policy Making “
- Handout- Sundquist, James, “ Missing Capabilities: Political Leadership and Policy Integration”
- Video- Congress

17-20 December – Origins of the office of the president

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 279-285
- Handout- Federalist # 70
- Rossiter, Clinton, “ The Presidency Focus of Leadership”
- Presentations- presidents
- Video- The constitution: That Delicate Balance - # 1

3and 4 January- Constitutional Powers of the President

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 286-298

- Handout- Barber, James, “ The Presidency What Americans Want “
- Handout- Bryce, James, “ Why Great Men Are Not Chosen President”

7 - 11 January – Roles of the president

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 298-313
- Handout – Neustadt, Richard, “ The Power to Persuade”
- Handout – Cronin, Thomas, “ The Swelling of the Presidency”
- Handout – Stephanopoulos, George, Too Human, p.376-408
- Video: The Candidate

14– 18 January – Origins and growth of the Federal Bureaucracy

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 315-322
- Handout – Wilson, James, “ The Rise of the Bureaucratic State”
- Handout – Hecl, Hugh, “ Political Executives: A Government of Strangers”
- Woll, Peter, “ Constitutional Democracy and Bureaucratic Power”

22- 24 January – The Modern Bureaucracy

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p.322-345
- Dye, Thomas, Politics In America, p.449-479
- Internet: www.fedworld.gov
- Debate – Department of Homeland Security

2nd semester:

28 January – 1 February – Creation of the Federal Judiciary

- O' Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 347- 371
- Handout – Corwin, Edward, “ The Higher Law’ Background of American Constitutional Law”
- Handout – Federalist # 78
- Video: Marbury v Maryland

4 – 8 February – Judicial Philosophy, Policy, and Implementation

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 371-387
- Dye, Thomas, Politics In America,p. 491-525
- Ivins, Molly and Gerry Spence, The Betrayal of America,p.41-63
- Internet: www.uscourts.gov and www.uscplus.gov
- Video- The Constitution: That Delicate Balance - #4

11-15 February – Political Socialization

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 385- 403
- Handout – Banfield, Edward, “ Influence and The Public Interest “
- Handout – Lindblom, Charles, “ The Science of Muddling Through”
- Internet: www.aapor.org and www.ropercenter.conn.edu/

19- 22 February – Public Opinion and Polling

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p.403-417
- Internet:
www.washingtonpost.com
- Polling activity

25 – 29 February – Evolution and Functions of Political Parties

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 419-436
- Handout- Burnham, Walter, “The Changing Shape of The American Political Universe”
- Handout- Nie, Norman, Sidney Verba, and John Petrocik, “The Rise of Issue Voting”
- Video: excerpts from An American Story

3 – 7 March – Party Organization

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 436 – 459
- Woll, Peter, American Government: Readings and Cases, p. 173- 192
- Internet:
www.rockthevote.org/
and www.vote-smart.org
- Debate

10- 14 March – Voting Behavior

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 461-507

17- 21 March – Campaign coverage

- Presentation – head of the local electoral board
- Video: elections
- Graphs, charts

31 March – 4 April – Evolution of the Media

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 507-543
- Handout – Thurber, James and Candice Nelson, “ Campaigns and Elections American Style “
- Internet:
www.cnn.com/election/2006/
- Video: PACS

7 – 11 April – Origins and development of interest groups

- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 545-579
- Handout- Bennett, Lance, “ The Politics of Illusion “
- Using newspapers to analyze top stories
- Debate – Media bias
- O'Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 581-613
- Handout- West, Darrell, “ Checkbook Democracy: How Money Corrupts Political Campaigns “

14-18 April – Policy making process

- Handout – Olson, Mancur, “ Collective Action: The Logic “
- Handout – Lowi, Theodore, “ The Public Philosophy: Interest Group Liberalism:
- Group project – interest groups

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 615-655
- Internet:
www.chpp.org,
www.ncpa.org, and
www.aei.org
- Handout – Blank, Rebecca, “ The New World of Welfare “
- Handout- Hess, Frederick and Michael Petrilli, “ No Child Left Behind “
- Handout- Zucchini, David, “ Myth of the Welfare Queen”
- Dye, Thomas, “Political Culture: Ideas in Conflict”
- Debate: No Child Left Behind

21- 25 April

28 April and 2 May – Origins of government involvement in the economy

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p. 657-691

5- 9 May
12-16 May
19-23 May- U.S. Foreign Policy

- Handout- Stokes, Bruce, “ Outsourcing Jobs: US dilemma “
- Guest speaker – Va. Tech - money management
- Handout – Caldwell, Jean, “ What caused the Great Depression”
- Handout- Wildavsky, Aaron, “ Political Implications of Budgetary Reform”
- Handout- Gunderson, Gerald, “ The Founding Entrepreneurs: America’s Prosperity”
- Video/s- Monetary policy and Fiscal policy

- O’Connor, Karen and Larry Sabato, text, p.693-749
- Handout: Janis, Irving, “ Groupthink”
- Handout- Meyer, Philip, “ If Hitler asked you to electrocute a stranger, would you?”
- Dye, Thomas, Politics In America, p.673-698

- Standley, Scott, The U.S. and Global Poverty, p. 71-81
- Shari, Yossi, Multicultural Foreign Policy, p. 69-91
- Shultz, George, Turmoil and Triumph, p. 863-1139
- Bodansky, Yossef, Bin Laden, p. 1-27
- Binder, David, An American Perspective on European Security, p. 80-86
- Matinuddin, Kamal, The Taliban Phenomenon, p. 1-42
- Excerpts from video/s: World War I, World War II, Cold War, and the War on Terrorism