

## AP US Government and Politics Course Syllabus

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** AP US Government and Politics presents an analytic perspective on American politics. The course introduces students to the ideals, institutions, and processes that direct the daily operations of our government and shapes our public policies. Students will use a variety of theoretical perspectives and explanations to interpret and analyze the political landscape to develop a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of our system of government.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Explain the American system of government and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses
- Read, understand, and interpret primary source documents and contemporary news analyses related to American government and public policy
- Analyze and interpret data and other relevant information to US government and politics
- Write analytical and interpretive essays demonstrating an understanding of the ideals, institutions and processes of the American political system

**COURSE LENGTH:** One Semester

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*, 14/E  
Edwards, Wattenberg, & Lineberry | ©2009 | Longman 0-13-715159-4

Theme/ Unit	Section Name	Objectives	Assessments	Content Plan
Unit 1: Constitutional Foundations	Introduction to American Political Culture	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Describe sources of American political culture and compare America’s political culture to other democracies.</p> <p>Compare the values and principles of American political ideologies</p>	<p>Journal: Media Evaluation</p> <p>Discussion: Elements of Democracy</p> <p>Discussion: What is "American"?</p> <p>American Political Culture Quiz</p>	<p>Chapter 1: Introducing Government in America</p> <p>Evaluating Sources of Information</p> <p>Media Evaluation Worksheet</p> <p>Democracy vs. Authoritarian Government</p> <p>Pluralism vs. Elite Theory Tutorial</p> <p>Theories of Power: Alternative Theoretical Views by William Domhoff</p> <p>American Political Culture Tutorial</p> <p>de Tocqueville Reading</p> <p>Analyzing American Political Culture via charts and graphs</p> <p>Sources of American Political Culture</p> <p>Political Ideology Tutorial</p>

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	<p>The Constitution</p>	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Evaluate the theories and styles of democratic government</p> <p>Analyze the experiences, philosophies and ideologies that influenced the formulation and adoption of the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.</p> <p>Analyze the influence of the American experience on the U.S. Constitution and the ratification debates.</p> <p>Evaluate the major principles of American democracy developed in the Constitution and explain their justification</p> <p>Evaluate the motives of the framers of the constitution.</p>	<p>Journal: The Federalist Papers (based on select readings)</p> <p>Assignment: Free Response Question</p>	<p>Chapter 2: The Constitution</p> <p>Social Contract Theory Hobbes and Locke Primary Sources Reading</p> <p>Declaration of Independence Video</p> <p>Compare Hobbes and Locke</p> <p>Great British Documents Reading Assignment and Guide</p> <p>The Articles of Confederation Chart</p> <p>Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches Compared: Checks and Balances, Division of Power, and Federalism</p> <p>Influences on the Constitution</p> <p>Writing Free Response Questions</p>
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Modern Federalism	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Explain the Constitutional basis of federalism</p> <p>Evaluate the causes and impact of changes in American federalism since the writing of the Constitution</p> <p>Trace the expansion of national power and the assess success of moves to reverse this expansion.</p> <p>Analyze the implications of federalism as a foundation of American government</p>	<p>Discussion: Federalism and the Supreme Court</p> <p>Journal: Evaluating Modern Federalism</p> <p>Discussion: Power Struggles in the News Today</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Federalism</p> <p>Distribution of Powers</p> <p>Powers Distribution Comparison</p> <p>Distribution of Powers Reading Guide</p> <p><i>McCulloch v Maryland</i></p> <p>Implied Powers</p> <p>Intergovernmental Relations</p> <p>Sabato: Now Batting for Federalism</p> <p>Federalism and the Supreme Court Reading Guide</p> <p>Federalism Supreme Court Cases</p> <p>Phases of Federalism</p> <p>Vocabulary Flashcards</p>
Unit Test	<p>60 multiple choice questions</p> <p>2 Free Response Questions :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Madisonian Model: Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, and Federalism</li> <li>2. Changing Nature of Federalism</li> </ol>		

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Unit 2: Civil Liberties and Rights	Civil Liberties	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Analyze the effect of the 14th amendment and incorporation doctrine on American civil liberties in the states.</p> <p>Analyze the development of first amendment rights as they evolved through judicial interpretation.</p> <p>Analyze the development of the rights of the accused as they evolved through judicial interpretation.</p> <p>Analyze the development of privacy rights as they evolved through judicial interpretation and legislative action.</p>	<p>Journal: The Bill of Rights in Students' Lives</p> <p>Discussion: Current Events News Articles Involving the Bill of Rights</p>	<p>Chapter 4: Civil Liberties and Public Policy</p> <p>Introduction to Civil Liberties</p> <p>Supreme Court Research, Part 1</p> <p>Establishment and Free Exercise Court Cases</p> <p>Constitutional Law and the Importance of Free Exercise in Schools</p> <p>Freedom of Expression</p> <p>Supreme Court Research, Part 2</p> <p>Free Speech and Expression Court Cases</p> <p>Criminal Proceedings and Civil Liberties</p> <p>Privacy Rights Video</p> <p>Due Process Rights</p> <p>Supreme Court Research, Part 3</p> <p>You Have the Right to Remain Silent Video</p> <p>Due Process Court Cases</p> <p>Flashcards Review</p>

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	Civil Rights	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p>Trace the expansion of voting rights as they evolved through Constitution amendments and legislative and judicial action.</p> <p>Apply and evaluate the impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties for African-Americans.</p> <p>Analyze the evolution of equality through judicial and legislative action.</p>	<p>Discussion: Civil Rights Timeline</p> <p>Journal: 1964 Civil Rights Act</p>	<p>Chapter 5: Civil Rights and Public Policy</p> <p>African-American Odyssey Web Quest</p> <p>Read and analyze: Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments</p> <p>The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow Simulation</p> <p>Non-Violent Protests and The Montgomery Bus Boycott Videos</p> <p>Affirmative Action and Equality</p> <p>Civil Rights and the Schools</p> <p>Southern Schools Desegregation Video</p> <p>Civil Rights and Supreme Court Cases</p> <p>Talking About My Constitution Game</p> <p>Analyzing Implications of Supreme Court Cases</p>
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	Unit Test	<p>60 Multiple Choice Questions</p> <p>2 Free Response Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Applying the 14th Amendment to expand civil liberties</li> <li>2. Applying the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments in civil rights cases</li> </ol>		
Theme/ Unit	Section Name	Objectives	Assessments	Content Plan
People and Politics	Public Opinion	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Analyze the nature, influences, consequences, and measurement of public opinion</p> <p>Identify and evaluate the ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life.</p> <p>Describe the cleavages in the American political landscape and their impact on American Democracy</p> <p>Analyze the changes in the American population and their impact on American Democracy.</p> <p>Explain the political socialization process</p> <p>Evaluate factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors</p>	<p>Creating and Comparing Political Polls</p> <p>Discussion: American's Political Knowledge</p>	<p>Chapter 6: Public Opinion and Political Action</p> <p>The American Population Video</p> <p>Web Search: The Census Controversy</p> <p>Majority Minority Web Quest</p> <p>Agents of Political Socialization</p> <p>Decline of Trust in the Government</p> <p>Political Ideology</p> <p>How to Tell a Liberal from a Conservative</p> <p>Political Participation</p> <p>Political Participation</p> <p>Free Response Practice: Political Participation</p>

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	Media	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Evaluate the role of the mass media in the political system</p> <p>Explain the functions and structures of the media in the political system</p> <p>Analyze the impact of the media on public opinion and the use of the media by political campaigns</p>	<p>Analysis of Truth and the Media</p> <p>Public Opinion and Mass Media Quiz</p>	<p>Chapter 7 The Mass Media and the Political Agenda</p> <p>The Media in American Politics</p> <p>Analyzing the Role of New Media in the Political Process: Report from the Pew Research Center</p> <p>News War Video and Video Guide</p> <p>News and Public Opinion</p> <p>Reading: 1969 Spiro Agnew Des Moines Speech</p> <p>Vocabulary Matching</p>
	Political Parties	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Describe the functions and organization of political parties</p> <p>Analyze the cause and effects of the American two party systems and evaluate the proposals for change</p> <p>Explain the role and impact of third parties in the political process</p> <p>Analyze the implications of the two-party system</p> <p>Compare and contrast the ideological and demographic differences between the two major parties</p>	<p>Create a Marketing Campaign: Democrats, Republicans and Independents</p>	<p>Chapter 8: Political Parties</p> <p>Federalist Number 10 Reading Assignment</p> <p>Multiple Choice Practice for AP Exam</p> <p>The Meaning of Party</p> <p>Why Political Parties?</p> <p>Republicans and Democrats Video and T-chart organizer</p> <p>The Party in the Electorate and the Party in the Government</p> <p>Party Identification</p> <p>Comparison: Democrats and Republicans</p> <p>Party Eras</p> <p>Third Parties</p> <p>Blitz Game</p>

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	<p>Campaigns, Elections, and Voting</p>	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Understand the operation and evaluate the role of elections in American politics.</p> <p>Explain current election law including how campaigns are financed</p> <p>Analyze the impact of the current nomination process</p> <p>Evaluate the workings and implications of the Electoral College</p> <p>Evaluate the current laws governing campaign financing and proposed changes.</p>	<p>Journal: Analysis of The 2008 Election</p> <p>Campaigns, Elections and Voting Quiz</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Nominations and Campaigns</p> <p>Chapter 10: Elections and Voting Behavior</p> <p>Political Campaigns</p> <p>Fact checking Presidential Campaign Commercials</p> <p>Campaign Finance</p> <p>Votes for Sale Video</p> <p>527s and Political Action Committees</p> <p>A Tale of Three Elections</p> <p>Multiple Choice Practice: Campaigns, Elections and Voting</p> <p>Voting</p> <p>Early Voting Blog from Online Newshour</p> <p>Getting Out the Vote Video</p> <p>Who Votes?</p> <p>Edwards: Electoral College and Voter Inflation</p> <p>Analyzing Charts and Graphs: Electoral College Results, Voter Turnout, Party Identification</p> <p>Multiple Choice Practice: The Incumbent Advantage</p>
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Interest Groups	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Analyze the causes and effects of the growth of interest groups and PACs in the American political system.</p> <p>Analyze the effects of interest groups and PACs on the political process and policy</p> <p>Compare the types of Interest group, their resources and strategies.</p> <p>Evaluate the effectiveness and constitutional implications of attempts to regulate interest groups and PACs</p>	Research Interest Groups and How They Try to Shape Policy	<p>Chapter 11: Interest Groups</p> <p>Analyzing Theories of Interest Group Influences</p> <p>Interest Groups</p> <p>Lobbyists Video and Video Guide</p> <p>Multiple Choice Practice: Interest Groups</p> <p>Types of Interest Groups</p> <p>How Interest Groups Try to Shape Policy</p> <p>Electioneering</p> <p>Tutorial: Writing a Free Response Question for AP US Government</p> <p>Tutorial: Scoring the AP US Government FRQ: Part I</p> <p>Tutorial: Scoring the AP US Government FRQ: Part 2</p> <p>Vocabulary Practice</p>
Unit Test	<p>60 Multiple Choice Questions</p> <p>4 Free Response Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact of new media on politics</li> <li>2. Analysis of interest groups and techniques used to influence public policy</li> <li>3. Evaluation of the Electoral College and its effect on elections</li> <li>4. Analysis of the effect of confidence of voters in their government</li> </ol>		

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Theme /Unit	Section Name	Objectives	Assessments	Content Plan
Unit 4: The Policymakers	Congress	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Explain the Constitutional framework within which Congress operates</p> <p>Analyze the influences on Congressional policy making.</p> <p>Evaluate the informal institutional arrangements of power within Congress</p> <p>Explain the functions of members of Congress (including representation, lawmaking, oversight, checks and balances)</p>	<p>Journal: Analyzing the Incumbency Advantage</p>	<p>Chapter 12: Congress</p> <p>Members of Congress</p> <p>Analyzing Article I of the Constitution</p> <p><i>League of United Latin American Citizens. v. Perry</i> Video</p> <p>The Redistricting Game</p> <p>The Federalist Papers Reading Assignment</p> <p>House versus Senate</p> <p>Congress and Democracy</p> <p>Tutorial: How a Bill Becomes a Law</p> <p>Influences on Congress</p> <p>Multiple Choice Practice: Congressional Committees</p> <p>Free Response Practice: Congressional Committees and Leadership</p> <p>Multiple Choice Practice: Congressional Voting</p> <p>Study Guide: Congress</p>

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	The Presidency	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Explain the Constitutional framework within which the President operates</p> <p>Describe the role of the executive branch in formulating and executing public policy</p> <p>Explain how the role of the president has changed throughout American history</p> <p>Analyze basis of increased Presidential power and limitations of presidential power.</p> <p>Analyze influences on presidential decisions making.</p>	<p>Journal: The Roles of the President</p> <p>Analysis of Presidential Power and Signing Statements</p> <p>Congress and the Presidency Quiz</p>	<p>Chapter 13: Presidential Power</p> <p>Presidential Power</p> <p>Understanding the Presidency</p> <p>The Origins of Presidential Power Web Quest</p> <p>Article II of the Constitution Reading Assignment</p> <p>The Constitutional Basis for the Presidency</p> <p>The Executive Branch</p> <p>Vice-President Video</p> <p>The Presidency and Public Policy</p> <p>A Week in the Life of the President Tutorial</p> <p>Multiple Choice Practice: The Presidential Veto</p> <p>Greenberg: This Land is My Land: The Expansion of the "Defensive War"</p> <p>The President and the Public</p> <p>Analysis of Presidential Approval Ratings</p>
	The Federal Bureaucracy	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Explain the Constitutional framework within which the Bureaucracy operates</p> <p>Describe the nature and functions of bureaucracy.</p> <p>Explain the growth and limitations of bureaucratic power.</p> <p>Analyze the role of the bureaucracy as a policymaker and influences on bureaucratic policy making.</p>	<p>Regulation v. Deregulation Debate</p>	<p>Chapter 15: The Federal Bureaucracy</p> <p>The Civil Service</p> <p>The Federal Civil Service Crossword</p> <p>The Role of Bureaucracy</p> <p>Oversight of Bureaucracy</p> <p>Implementing Policy</p> <p>Regulatory Functions</p> <p>Multiple Choice Practice: Regulatory Agencies</p> <p>Iron Triangles</p>

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Federal Courts	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Explain the Constitutional framework for the Federal Courts</p> <p>Describe the judicial process including the hierarchy of the courts and their jurisdictions</p> <p>Analyze how the Judiciary is influenced by: public opinion and voters, interest groups, political parties, the media, and state and local governments</p> <p>Explain how the Judiciary operates as a check on other branches of government and how those other branches act to check its power</p>	<p>Journal: Analysis of Selecting a Justice</p> <p>Current Events Discussion: Court Decisions in the News Today</p>	<p>Chapter 16: The Federal Courts</p> <p>Federalist No. 78 Reading Assignment</p> <p>Constitutional Basis for the Courts</p> <p>Legal Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle</p> <p>Article III of the Constitution Reading Assignment</p> <p>Federal and State Courts</p> <p>Judicial Selection</p> <p>Judicial Decision Making</p> <p>Judicial Review, Restraint, and Activism</p> <p>Federalism and The Supreme Court</p> <p>The Federal Bureaucracy and Federal Courts Review</p>
Unit Test	<p>60 Multiple Choice Questions</p> <p>4 Free Response Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain reapportionment and redistricting</li> <li>2. Analyze war powers of Congress</li> <li>3. Examine legislative oversight of the federal bureaucracy</li> <li>4. Analyze the process for selecting Supreme Court Justices</li> </ol>		

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Unit 5: Public Policy	Economic Policy	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Describe the factors that influence the economic policy making process.</p> <p>Describe the budget process</p> <p>Select a significant economic policy and trace its development, identifying the influences on its passage.</p>	<p>Journal: Analyze an Economic Policy Issue</p> <p>Economic Policy Quiz</p>	<p>Chapter 14: The Congress, the President, and the Budget: The Politics of Taxing and Spending</p> <p><b>Chapter 17: Economic Policymaking</b></p> <p>Fact or Falsehood: The Federal Budget</p> <p>Ten Trillion and Counting Video and Video Guide</p> <p>Economic Policy</p> <p>Inside the Meltdown Video and Video Guide</p>
	Domestic and Social Policy	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Describe the factors that influence the social policy making process.</p> <p>Select a significant social policy, identify its major provisions and trace its development, identifying the influences on its passage and implementation.</p>	<p>Journal: Analyze a Domestic/Social Policy Issue</p>	<p>Chapter 18: Social Welfare Policymaking</p> <p>Chapter 19: Policymaking for Health Care and the Environment</p> <p>Domestic and Social Policy</p> <p>Domestic and Social Policy Crossword</p> <p>Analyzing Graph: Social Security</p> <p>Immigration Reform</p> <p>Sick Around America Video with Video Guide</p> <p>Poisoned Waters Video with Video Guide</p>

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Foreign and Defense Policy	Students will be able to	Journal: Analyze a Foreign Policy Issue	Chapter 20: National Security Policymaking  Foreign Policy Reading Assignment and Self-Check  The War Briefing Video Guide
	<p>Explain how foreign and defense policy are different from domestic policy</p> <p>Describe the major players in foreign policy developments</p> <p>Select a significant foreign policy, identify its major provisions and trace its development, identifying the influences on its implementation.</p>		
Unit Test	Public Policy Presentation: Includes analysis of a current public policy topic including researching contemporary news articles		

Theme /Unit	Section Name	Objectives	Assessments	Content Plan
The AP US Government Exam	Preparing for the Exam	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Demonstrate proficiency on the AP US Government Exam</p>		<p>Taking the AP US Government Exam</p> <p>Practice Questions: AP US Government</p>
	Taking the Exam	<p>Students will be able to</p> <p>Demonstrate proficiency on the AP US Government Exam</p>	<p>Final Exam:</p> <p>60 multiple choice questions</p> <p>4 free response questions</p>	