

# **A.P. U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS FALL 2019**

## **Course Information Sheet**

**Semester Course: 18 weeks; ½ credit**

**Necessary for graduation**

**Instructor:**     **Mr. Beck**  
**period** \_\_\_\_\_  
**days** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class**  
**Meeting**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

AP Government provides the student with a framework for understanding the purposes, principles, and practices of American government as established by the United States Constitution. The Advanced Placement course in U.S. Government and Politics gives students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. The course includes both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific examples as required by the AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework. The course builds a familiarity with various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute U.S. politics. The student becomes acquainted with the variety of theoretical perspectives and explanations for various behaviors and outcomes. The student analyzes the history and changing interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. In addition, he/she examines his/her rights and responsibilities as a citizen and how to exercise them as well as experience the political process at local, state, and national levels of government. The structure of this course is designed to prepare the students to successfully complete the AP US Government exam in May. Assignments and tests are designed based on AP Exam requirements and format.

**THIS IS A COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSE.** The majority of instruction will be lecture/discussion, as well as group work and debate. The student must have a basic understanding of government and U.S. history, and also must keep up with the homework and reading. It is the responsibility of the student to complete assignments PRIOR to class. Students will be prepared to take the AP Government exam in May for potential college credit and are encouraged to do so.

### **TIPS FOR BEING SUCCESSFUL IN AP U.S. GOVERNMENT:**

- 1. Understand, rather than just memorize the information.**
- 2. Understand and explain cause and effect relationships.**
- 3. Stay up with current government events. The newspaper, magazines, the internet and cable television will be used and will be essential resources.**
- 4. Use study groups or peers in class to understand key concepts, homework, review, etc.**
- 5. Learn to speak and THINK in civic terms. Understand the meaning of terms like constituency, federalism, Constitutional activism, as just examples of the language of government.**

6. **BE IN CLASS AND BE PREPARED. Do NOT fall behind. These civic concepts build upon each other and it is crucial that students understand the currently studied U.S. government concepts before they move on in the class.**

**COURSE READINGS:**

**PRIMARY TEXT:**

Magelby, David; Light, Paul; et al. *Government By the People, AP Edition, 23<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, Pearson Publishing, 2009 (CR16)

**SUPPLEMENTARY TEST**

The Princeton Review: *Cracking the AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam*, 2010 edition, Random House, 2010

Serow, Ann; Ladd, Everett, *The Lanahan Readings In The American Polity, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Lanahan Publishers, 2007. Text includes some of the 15 required Supreme Court Cases (**CR15 Supreme Court Cases**). Handouts will be given for the remainder of the cases and we will analyze them on oyez.org (CR15)

**Key Supreme Court cases (can be reviewed on oyez.org):**

- *Marbury v. Madison (1803)*
- *McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)*
- *Schenck v. U.S. (1919)*
- *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*
- *Baker v. Carr (1961)*
- *Engel v. Vitale (1962)*
- *Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)*
- *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District ((1969)*
- *New York Times v. U.S. (1971)*
- *Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)*
- *Roe v. Wade (1973)*
- *Shaw v. Reno (1993)*
- *U.S. v. Lopez (1995)*
- *McDonald v. Chicago (2010)*
- *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)*

All nine foundational documents are incorporated into the course

**Key Foundational Documents:**

- *The Declaration of Independence*
- *The Articles of Confederation*
- *Federalist No. 10*

- *Brutus No. 1*
- *Federalist No. 51*
- *The Constitution of the United States*
- *Federalist No. 70*
- *Federalist No. 78*
- *Letter from a Birmingham Jail; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Other materials used in the course will come from sources such as newspapers, magazines and the internet.

**These readings will be supplemented by classroom handouts, and the following video series:**

**Annenberg Media Series:**

Democracy In America

**HOMEWORK POLICIES:**

Students are required to keep a three-ring notebook for this class. Homework will be assigned to be completed and either be turned in for a grade or placed in the notebook for reference. I will determine how the notebook will be organized at the beginning of the semester. The notebook can be requested for a grade at any time. The expectation is that it will be organized and all paperwork will be included.

*All papers are to be properly headed with name, date and period number.*

*Blue or black ink is preferred on all written work.*

Work completed in an inappropriate manner will not receive credit.

Graded homework is accepted only on the day it is due at the beginning of the period. If a student is absent, they may turn in the work on the day that they return. If the assignment is of acceptable quality, it may remove the zero from their average, but it might not receive a letter grade. Late work will be accepted up to one week after the due date for a maximum of 70% credit. If a student does not give their report, or does not turn in their part of a group's work on the due date, they will receive a zero.

**GRADING SCALE:**

The grading scale in this class is as follows (in percentages):

98-100	A+	82-86	B	67-70	C-	BELOW 57 IS FAILING
92-97	A	79-81	B-	66	D+	
89-91	A-	77-78	C+	62-65	D	
87-88	B+	71-76	C	57-60	D-	

The student's grade is based on a continuing average throughout the semester. There will be tests and quizzes, which account for 30%, the major activity of current events presentation which accounts for 15%, homework which accounts for 25%, classwork which accounts for 25% and participation which accounts for 5%. That will comprise 90% of the final grade, with the final exam counting 10%.

## **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION, EXPECTATIONS AND ADVICE:**

The course will be a mix of direct instruction and independent learning. In all units, students will have the ability to access my website for notes, relevant websites, podcasts and other information that will be covered. Exams will be based on knowing and applying information that is found in the website information. The information will include what we cover in class, guided reading from the Lanahan reader and other material packets that will be completed in class or as homework, then reviewed in class. You will be encouraged to stay engaged, ask questions, and add to the information covered in class to build understanding (take notes on the notes).

Some classtime will be also given to allow students to work on readings, essays, and projects. You will be expected to make good use of classtime for individual and group assignments. Many assignments will be started in class and finished as homework. The majority of homework will be reading assignments from the Lanahan Reader where you will be required to submit written responses. You will always be given over a weekend for those reading assignments. During that time, you can email me or ask in class any clarifying questions. We will debrief the reading assignments and connect them to current content, principles, institutions, political processes and/or political behaviors. You are not required to participate, but making comments and asking questions can assist you and your peers in building understanding, critical thinking and making the class more interesting and fun. The same can be said for the discussion of current events during classtime to, again, connect those events to political principles, institutions, processes and behaviors. I encourage you to please pay attention to the news on a day-to-day basis and actively participate in class discussions concerning the American political system and other related items in the news.

## **MAJOR CLASS ACTIVITY:**

**Current Events Presentations:** You will work in groups of 3-4, preparing a current events presentation that you will share with the class on your assigned week through a power point, prezi or any other creative media you choose. The presentation must include one article (no more than two weeks past) in each of the five units: Foundations of American Democracy, Political Ideologies and Beliefs, Political Participation, Interactions Among Branches of Government, and Civil Liberties and Civil Rights. You must also include two additional articles: one regarding the upcoming **national** (not state or city) mid-term election and one of your choosing. Finally, you will have your 8<sup>th</sup> article analysis on an article you determine to be “fake news.” Your group will determine the criteria for “fake news” and you will present your article to the class showing exactly why that specific part of the article qualifies as “fake news.”

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

The following is a sampling of the types of assignments that will be given throughout the course:

- **Reading Responses:** You will be given many reading assignments throughout the course, mostly from the Lanahan Reader. I will give you prompts for the assignments and you will turn in our responses on the specific due date.
- **Current Political Events Analysis:** You will be assigned to read newspapers, watch television and analyze social media content regarding current political events. Assignments will be

given to discuss and share opinions on the events along with connecting with class content and curriculum. **This includes your major class activity discussed above.**

- Projects/Presentations: You will complete several assignments that involve researching various political topics. On several projects, you will also be required to give a presentations on your findings and analysis. **This includes your major class activity discussed above.**
- Election Assignments: You will be doing assignments based on the upcoming national mid-term elections. This will include analyzing candidates' positions on issues and debating different sides of those issues.
- Charts, Graphs and Maps: You will frequently receive statistical information in the form of charts, graphs and maps. Assignments and tests will ask you to interpret the information or create graphical information based on the data.
- Tests and Quizzes: You will take exams throughout the semester, at the conclusion of major topics and units. Tests will include multiple-choice and essay questions similar to what you might see on the AP Exam. Class time will be used to learn strategies to succeed on various question types that will be found on your class and AP Exams.

## **COURSE OUTLINE; TOTAL OF 18 WEEKS**

**UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY; WKS 1-3**

**UNIT 2: AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND BELIEFS; WKS 4-5**

**UNIT 3: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION; WKS 6-8**

**UNIT 4: INTERACTIONS AMONG BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT; WKS 9-15**

**UNIT 5: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS; WKS 16-18**

## **UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY; WKS 1-3**

**PURPOSE:** The U.S. Constitution arose out of important historical and philosophical ideas and preferences regarding popular sovereignty and limited government. To address competing states' visions for all the allocation of governmental authority, compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises have frequently been the source of debate and negotiation in U.S. politics over checks and balances, the proper balance between federal and state power (Federalism) and between liberty and social order (Civil Rights and Civil Liberties).

### **Activities/Assignments: Ch 1, 2,3 (Magleby, Light, 23rd edition)**

- **Students will be introduced to the concepts of government, politics, political science and constitutional democracy.**
- **Students will be able to differentiate democracy from other forms of government.**
- **Students will be able to identify the conditions that help democracy flourish and explain why they do so.**

- **Students will understand the historical implications of the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation and the Constitution on the development of the U.S. form of government.**
- **Students will create visual diagrams and charts of the basic structure of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and summarize the basic principles of government established by the Constitution and current applications in presentations to the class.**
- **Students will be able to compare and contrast the three main branches of the U.S. government and understand the system of checks and balances.**
- **Students will understand the evolution of the Constitution over time.**
  - o Lanahan Readings: #1 De Tocqueville: Democracy In America
  - o Lanahan Readings: #3 Hartz: The Liberal Tradition In America
  - o Lanahan Readings: #16 Wilson: Congressional Government
  - o Federalist #51 Analysis
  - o Federalist #10 Analysis
  - o Brutus No. 1 Analysis
  - o Federalist No. 70 Analysis
  - o Federalist No. 78 Analysis
  - o FRQ: Changing Constitution by formal and informal methods
  - o FRQ: Increased Power of Federal Government
  - o Video: Democracy in America; #1 Making Government Work
  - o Video: Democracy in America; #2 The Constitution: Fixed or Flexible?

## **UNIT 2: AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND BELIEFS; WKS 4-5**

**PURPOSE:** American political beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, and the changing demographics of the citizenry. These beliefs about government, politics and the individual's role in the political system influence the creation of ideological trends that span decades impacting public policies. The measurement of public opinion and beliefs can be instrumental in understanding political outcomes.

### **Activities/Assignments: Ch. 4,5 (Magleby, Light, 23rd edition)**

- **Students will identify the elements and characteristics of the American political culture.**
- **Students will compare and contrast the differing ideologies of American government.**
- **Students will understand how geography affects politics.**
- **Students will understand the dynamics of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and demographics on American politics .**
- **Students will evaluate the roles of education, income and class on American politics.**
- **Students will participate in active debate on key political issues: gun control, late term abortion, Middle East involvement, recreational marijuana legalization, and immigration policy whereby they play the role of liberals, conservatives and libertarians. They compare and contrast their individual positions and finish the assignment by writing a formal persuasive essay on their position and its validity compared to opposing positions.**
  - o Political Attitude/Ideology Self Evaluation
  - o Political Tolerance handout

- Gender Gap exercise
- Political Poll discussion and handout
- FRQ: Voter Turnout
- FRQ: New Media Influence

### **UNIT 3: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: WKS 6-8**

**PURPOSE:** Governing is achieved directly through citizen participation and indirectly through linkage institutions ( political parties, interest groups, mass media, elections and campaigns) that inform, organize and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policy making. Election rules and campaign laws, institutional barriers, and demographics of the citizenry all influence participation.

**Activities/Assignments: Ch. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (Magleby, Light, 23rd edition):**

- **Students will understand how interest groups and social movements have affected American politics.**
- **Students will learn the sources of interest group power and the influence of lobbyists.**
- **Students will understand how political parties arise in democracies.**
- **Students will understand the history of American political parties.**
- **Students will learn how the American political parties are financed.**
- **Students will identify the key components of public opinion and how it is measured.**
- **Students will learn the connection between public opinion and public policy.**
- **Students will understand why people vote in certain ways in elections.**
- **Students will understand election rules and how they impact elections in the United States.**
- **Students will learn about the electoral college and its impact on presidential elections.**
- **Students will learn how the news media affects elections, the government and its influence on public opinion.**
- **Students will assess the impact of the media on American politics and compare and contrast different media outlets and how they present the issues. (issue framing and agenda setting)**
  - Lanahan Readings: #61: Lowi: The End of Liberalism
  - Lanahan Readings: #62: Birnbaum: The Lobbyists
  - Lanahan Readings: #73: Burnham: Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics
  - Lanahan Readings: #78: Monmonier: Bushmanders and Bullwinkles
  - Lanahan Readings: #56: Key: Public Opinion and American Democracy
  - Campaign Finance Website project
  - Media Website Project
  - Electoral College Project
  - Critical Election Analysis
  - FRQ on Interest Groups
  - FRQ on Linkage Institutions
  - Video: Democracy in America; #14; Interest Groups: Organizing To Influence
  - Video: Democracy in America; #12; Political Parties: Mobilizing Agents

## **UNIT 4: INTERACTIONS AMONG BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT: WKS 9-15**

**PURPOSE:** Because power is widely distributed and checks prevent one branch from usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in the position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern. In this unit, you will study the structures and politics of Congress, bureaucracy, the presidency and executive branch, and the federal court system. You will analyze the major formal and informal arrangements of power and the relationships among the four institutions. With each sub-topic, you will discuss who holds the power and the struggles for varying balances of power. There will be a study on how different national institutions have evolved to possess power and how crises can dramatically change the balance of power within the government.

**Assignments/Activities: Ch. 11,12, 13, 14 (Magleby, Light, 23rd edition):**

- **Students will describe the congressional election process and how it favors incumbents.**
- **Students will learn the differences in structure and power between the Senate and House of Representatives.**
- **Students will understand how a bill becomes law.**
- **Students will understand the constitutional foundations of the presidency and the types of presidential power.**
- **Students will learn the different roles of the members of the White House, cabinet, and other members of the executive branch.**
- **Students will learn the details and impact of the federal bureaucracy.**
- **Students will understand the structure of the federal court system.**
- **Students will assess the role of the judiciary in the American political system.**
- **Students will have a research project in groups of 3-4 analyzing the 15 key Supreme Court cases and connect at least one other case to the case they are analyzing. They will also discuss how that specific case is currently interpreted in real world application. They will do this in power point format and it will be uploaded to the class website.**
  - o Lanahan Readings: #22 Mayhew: Congress: The Electoral Connection
  - o Lanahan Readings: #31 Neustadt: Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents
  - o Lanahan Readings: #40 Wilson: Bureaucracy
  - o Lanahan Readings: #42 Rostow: The Democratic Character of Judicial Review
  - o Mock Congress and Committee Chairs Exercise
  - o Bill Becomes a Law Project – dealing with issues of political ideology and political participation
  - o Separation of Powers Analysis
  - o White House Staff Analysis
  - o Bureaucratic Pathologies Analysis
  - o FRQ on Federal Budget
  - o FRQ on President and Congress Checks and Balances



- Presidential v. Parliamentary Form of Government discussion and graphic
- Video: Democracy in America; #8; Bureaucracy: A Controversial Necessity
- Video: Democracy in America; #6; Legislatures: Laying Down the Law
- Video: Democracy in America; #9: The Courts: Our Rule of Law

## **UNIT 5: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS: WKS 16-18**

**PURPOSE:** Through the U.S. Constitution, but primarily through the Bill of Rights and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, citizens and groups have attempted to restrict national and state governments from unduly infringing upon individual rights and from denying equal protection under the law. Sometimes the Court has handed down decisions that protect both public order and individual freedom, and at other times the Court has set precedents protecting one at the expense of the other.

**Assignments/Activities: Ch. 15, 16 (Magleby, Light, 23rd edition)**

- **Students will identify protections under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.**
- **Students will compare and contrast procedural and substantive due process.**
- **Students will understand the importance of citizenship rights.**
- **Students will compare and contrast efforts to obtain equal rights under the law.**
- **Students will evaluate the current state of discrimination and affirmative action- they will write a persuasive essay after researching current issues including: LGBTQ rights, women’s rights based on recent current events (i.e. “Me too” movement), Police issues and discrimination, ICE issues and immigration, admission policies in secondary education and graduate schools.**
  - Lanahan Readings: #49 Kettl: System Under Stress
  - Lanahan Readings: #54 Glendon: Rights Talk
  - Letter from a Birmingham Jail; Analysis
  - Court Case Analysis
  - Constitution and Bill of Rights Clause Analysis
  - Selective Incorporation Analysis
  - FRQ: Selective Incorporation
  - Video: Democracy in America; #5; Civil Rights: Demanding Equality
  - Video: Democracy in America; #4; Civil Liberties: Safeguarding the Individual

