Course time frame: August to December

Introduction:
Welcome to Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics. This course is designed to provide the rigor of an introductory political science course at the collegiate level. This course will be reading and writing intensive. This course will examine primary and secondary documents that have shaped the governmental and political landscape of this country from colonization to hegemonic power. This course will also pay special attention to analyzing and extrapolating data from various sources and predicting future political trends.

Primary Textbook:

Supplementary Textbook:

Course Objectives: These are the general goals:
Students should gain a greater understanding of:
• the constitutional foundation of the United States government and the general themes of the government.
• the political beliefs of American citizens and the opportunities citizens have political participation and its consequences.
• how mass media, interest groups and political parties influence the daily functioning of government.
• the institutions that make up US Government and the bureaucracy that occurs on a daily bases.
• how public policy is created and the factors that influence the policy agenda
• the development of civil rights and civil liberties and Supreme Court Decisions that have impacted citizens rights.
• how to analysis and interpret data that from various forms of literature. i.e.: textbook, supplemental reader, handouts and Internet activities.
• how to analysis primary and secondary resources i.e.: Federalist Papers, New York Times articles.
• the proper style and thought process that is recommended by the AP Board for U.S. Government and Politics.

Structure: The primary diffusion of knowledge will take place via traditional lectures. The instructor will also frequently use Socratic Seminars and projects to ensure the full synthesis of the material covered. Also, students will be frequently assigned projects and presentations that focus on large thematic issues. Lastly, at the conclusion of each unit the instructor will lead a discussion of the material covered.

Reoccurring Assignments:
Current Events:
Students are required to summarize one current event per week from the Economist, BBC News, the Washington Post, New York Times, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. The article must relate to a national, state, or local current event. Students are to clearly summarize the article and explain how it connects to a topic from the course.
Unit One: Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government

Week 1: “Theory and Constitutional background”

Sample objectives: Use the concept of constitutional democracy to explain U.S. government and politics. Differentiate democracy from other forms of government, and identify conditions, values, political processes, and political structures conducive to a successful democracy. Show how politics before 1787 shaped the Constitution. Assess the important compromises reached by the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

Readings: Government by the People pages 19-38
Theories of democratic government (pgs. 19-27)
Considerations that influenced the foundation and adoption of the Constitution (pgs. 27-38)

Week 2: “Separation of Powers and Federalism”

Sample objectives: Describe the basic structure of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights. Analyze how the Constitution grants, limits, separates, and balances governmental power. Show how the use of judicial review strengthens the courts in a separation of powers system. Illustrate how the Constitution has evolved through changes in the informal, unwritten Constitution. Outline the processes by which formal changes to the Constitution can be made. Interpret the definitions of federalism, and assess the advantages and disadvantages of the American system of federalism. Differentiate the powers the Constitution provides to national and state governments. Assess the role of the national courts in defining the relationship between the national and state governments. Assess the role of the national courts in defining the relationship between the national and state governments, and evaluate the positions of decentralists and centralists. Analyze the budget as a tool of federalism, and evaluate its impact on state and local governments. Evaluate the current relationship between the national and state governments and the future challenges for federalism.

Readings: Government by the People pages 46-56; 78-98
Separation of powers (pgs. 46-56)
Federalism (pgs. 78-98)

Evaluations:
Vocabulary quiz
Reading quizzes
Locke vs. Hobbes Essay
Articles of Confederation vs. Constitution
Unit Exam with essay, fill in the blank, multiple choice and free response questions.

Unit Two: Political Beliefs and Behaviors

Week 3: Begin Unit Two: “Political Socialization.”

Sample objectives: Identify the forces that create and shape individuals’ political attitudes. Outline the key dimensions of public opinion, how public opinion is measured, and the relationship between public opinion and public policy. Identify forms of political participation, and assess the effect on voter turnout of demographic, legal, and electioneering factors. Analyze why people vote the way they do in elections. Identify problems associated with administering elections and evaluate proposed solutions to those problems.

Readings: Process by which citizens learn about politics (pgs. 214-236)
Week 4: “Plurality in American Politics”

Sample objectives: Identify the most important elements of and sources for the American political culture. Characterize the opportunities and challenges posed by the diversity of the American population and by the nation’s geography. Relate differences in political culture to where people live. Analyze how demographic factors including race and ethnicity, religion, gender, family structures, education, income, class, and age affect American politics. Evaluate the degree to which America has achieved a measure of unity in a land of diversity.

Readings: Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors (pgs. 106-122)
The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in public life (pgs. 106-112)
Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders (pgs. 106-112)
The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion (pgs. 130-152)

Evaluations:
Vocabulary quiz
Current event assignment (Summary and opinion of an article on Congress from a current periodical).
Reflective essay on student’s own political culture/socialization
Analyze data regarding political and cultural enclaves
Evaluate the American voter turnout
Notes and reading quiz
Unit Test – Essay and total recall questions

Unit Three: Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media

Week 5: Begin Unit 3: “Political parties and elections”

Sample objectives: Identify the primary functions of parties in democracies and distinguish the U.S. party system from those in European democracies. Trace changes in American political parties and identify four realigning elections. Differentiate the functions of parties as institutions, parties in government, and parties in the electorate. Explain party fundraising and expenditures, and assess their regulation. Assess the effects of recent party reforms and the long-term prospects for the current party system. Assess the implications of election rules in the United States. Explain how congressional elections work and why they are generally not competitive. Outline the stages in U.S. presidential elections and the differences in campaigning at each stage. Evaluate the influence of money in American elections and the main approaches to campaign finance reform. Assess concerns regarding presidential elections and reforms that have been proposed.

Readings: Functions (pgs. 185-191)
Organization (pgs. 185-191)
Development (pgs. 191-196)
Effects on the political process (pgs. 196-208)
Electoral laws and systems (pgs. 242-267)

Week 6: “Interest Groups and PACs”

Sample objectives: Explain the role of interest groups and social movements in American politics. Analyze sources of interest group power. Describe lobbyists and the activities through which they seek to influence policy. Identify ways interest groups use money in elections and assess efforts to regulate this spending. Evaluate the effectiveness of interest groups in influencing elections and legislation.
Readings: The range of interest represented (pgs. 157-160)
The activities of interest groups (pgs. 165-177)
The effects of interest groups on the political process (pgs. 178-181)
The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process (pgs. 165-177)

Week 7: “The Mass Media” & Unit 3 Test

Sample objectives: Assess the media’s relationship to governance in the United States. Outline changes in the nature and extent of the political influence of the various news media. Trace the evolution of the news media over the course of U.S. history. Evaluate the media’s influence on public opinion and attention. Describe the media’s role in elections and the associated problems and benefits.

Readings: The functions and structures of the media (pgs. 292-293)
The impact of media on politics (pgs. 275-289)

Evaluations:
  - Vocabulary quiz
  - Reading and notes quiz
  - Research major lobbying influences and their political power in the United States
  - Examine the role that the mass media plays in electoral politics (Yellow journalism to contemporary media outlets/ the internet)
  - Current event assignment (summary and opinion of article on the Executive Branch)
  - Unit Test – Essay, multiple choice, fill in the blank and Free response questions

Unit Four: Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the President, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts

Week 8: “Congress”

Sample objectives: Describe the congressional election process and the advantages it gives incumbents. Differentiate the powers of Congress, and compare and contrast the structure and powers of the House and Senate. Compare and contrast the leadership systems used in the House and Senate, and explain how work is done through congressional committees. Identify the steps by which a bill becomes a law and the ways a bill can be stopped at each step. Characterize the two ways legislators represent their constituents, and identify the various influences on their votes. Evaluate the influence of citizens on the legislative process.

Readings: The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power (299-320)
Linkages between Congress and public opinion and voters (314-320)
Congress and its relationship with interest groups (314-317)
Congress and political parties (314-319)
Congress and the media (275-289; 319)

Week 9: “The Presidency”

Sample objectives: Describe the constitutional foundations of the presidency and of three presidential roles. Evaluate the controversies surrounding president’s assertion of additional executive powers. Outline the functions of the White House staff, Executive Office of the President, cabinet, and vice president. Characterize the various roles that presidents play. Identify the sources of presidential-congressional conflict and the tolls presidents use to influence Congress. Identify factors that influence judgments about presidents.

Readings: The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power (325-337)
Linkages between the President and public opinion and voters (325-337)
The President and his/her relationship with interest groups (337)
Week 10: “The Bureaucracy and Federal Courts”

Sample objectives: Outline the constitutional roots of the federal bureaucracy and pros and cons of bureaucratic administration. Identify the four types of federal organizations. Differentiate three types of federal employees, and explain how each is selected. Analyze the bureaucracy’s tools of implementation and their effectiveness. Assess presidential and congressional efforts to control the federal bureaucracy. Evaluate the bureaucracy’s effectiveness. Federal Courts: Determine characteristics of the federal judiciary and implications of the adversarial process. Outline the structure of the federal court system. Analyze the factors that play an important role in selecting judicial nominees. Trace the process by which Supreme Court decisions are reached, and assess influences on this process. Assess the limits on judicial action and the role of the judiciary in a constitutional democracy.


Evaluations: Vocabulary quiz Reading and Notes quiz Create an original graphic organizer that clearly explains the function of each branch of the government Current Event assignment Unit Test – Essay, fill in the blank, multiple choice and free response questions.

Unit Five: Public Policy

Week 11: Group presentations and Unit Four Test on Terms: “Making Economic Policy”

Sample objectives: Describe the federal government’s economic policy making role and how economic performance is measured. Outline the way in which the federal government makes fiscal policy and the role of fiscal policy. Outline the way in which the federal government makes monetary policy and the role of monetary policy. Identify ways in which the federal government seeks to promote economic growth. Categorize ways in which the federal government seeks to regulate the economy. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the deregulation movement.

Week 12: “Social Policy”

Sample objectives: Outline the goals of the federal government’s social policy and the forms of protection it provides. Outline the evolution of social policy throughout the twentieth century. Evaluate the current status of and challenges for federal government policy in the areas of health care, education, and crime.

Readings: The role of the federal government in social policy (pgs. 501-505)
The expansion of social policy in the twentieth century (pgs. 505-511)
Social policy challenges for the future: Health, Education, and Crime (pgs. 511-518)

Week 13: “Foreign Policy”

Sample objectives: Analyze the questions and responses that shape approaches to U.S. foreign policy and defense. Assess the status of each of the issues that currently dominate the foreign policy and defense agenda. Outline the structure of the foreign policy and defense bureaucracy. Evaluate the options for achieving foreign policy and defense goals.

Readings: Understanding foreign policy and defense (pgs. 523-527)
The foreign policy and defense agenda (pgs. 527-532)
The foreign policy and defense bureaucracy (pgs. 532-536)
Foreign policy and defense options (pgs. 536-540)

Evaluations:
Vocabulary quiz
Reading and Notes quiz
Current Event assignment
Research and present a presentation that focuses on 1 social, economic, and foreign policy of interest and how it impacts that American public.
Unit Test – Essay, fill in the blank, multiple choice and free response questions.

Unit Six: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Week 14: Unit Five Test & Begin Unit Six “Civil Liberties”

Sample objectives: Trace the roots of civil liberties in the original Constitution and their subsequent development in the Bill of Rights. Outline the First Amendment freedoms and the limitations on them. Distinguish between procedural and substantive due process. Assess the kinds of behavior that may be covered by a constitutional right to privacy. Characterize the constitutional rights of criminal suspects. Evaluate the roles of institutions and the people in protecting civil liberties.

Readings: The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation (401-424; 429-452)
Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties (pgs. 429-452)
The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties (pgs. 429-452)

Week 15: “Civil Rights”

Sample objectives: Explain the concept of equality and assess the rights of citizens. Compare and contrast the efforts of various groups to obtain equal protection of the law. Analyze the Supreme Court’s three-tiered approach used to evaluate discriminatory laws. Trace the evolution of voting rights and analyze the protections provided by the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Describe congressional legislation against discrimination in housing.
employment, and accommodations. Evaluate the historical process of school integration and the current state of affirmative action. Assess the status of civil rights in the United States today.

**Readings:**
- Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties (pgs. 429-452)
- The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties (pgs. 429-452)

**Evaluations:**
- Vocabulary quiz
- Reading and Notes quiz
- Research and present 2 major Supreme Court cases
- Current Event assignment
- Unit Test – Essay, fill in the blank, multiple choice and free response questions.

**Week 16:** Final Review

**Week 17:** Final Exam

**Supplementary Readings:**
- Mayflower Compact
- Excerpts, Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws*
- Excerpts, Hobbes, *Leviathan*
- Excerpts, Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
- *Declaration of Independence*
- *United States Constitution*
- Woll pgs. 4-10: John Locke, *Second Treatise, Of Civil Government*
- Woll pgs. 74-78: McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Woll pgs. 79-83: Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)
- Woll pgs. 105-107: *The Anti-Federalist Papers No. 84*
- Woll pgs. 116-120: Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)
- Woll pgs. 123-126: Oliver Wendell Holmes, Abrams v. United States (1919)
- Woll pgs. 192-198: David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern*
- Woll pgs. 241-243: Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, *Interest Groups and the American Political System*
- Woll pgs. 264-267: Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power*
- Woll pgs. 303-306: John W. Dean, *Presidential Powers in Times of Emergency*
- Woll pgs. 308-311: Peter Woll, *Constitutional Democracy and Bureaucratic Power*