

AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Syllabus 4

AP[®] United States Government and Politics is an intensive study of the formal and informal structures of government and the processes of the American political system, with an emphasis on policy-making and implementation. This course is designed to prepare students for the AP Exam.

Texts

Edwards, George C. III, Martin P. Wattenberg, and Robert L. Lineberry. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*, 10th ed. New York: Longman, 2002.

Supplemental Text

Woll, Peter. *American Government: Readings and Cases*, 15th ed. New York: Longman, 2003.

Other Materials

Assigned and used in class: articles from current newspapers, such as the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*; a news magazine excerpts from *Time*, *Newsweek*, or the *Economist*; news footage and documentaries; C-SPAN's coverage and current events materials; numerous Web sites. [CR8]

CR8—The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as *The Federalist Papers*) and contemporary news analyses.

Course Plan

Unit I: Foundations of American Government

Preread Edwards, et al., pp. 32-37

Content Goals

Students should understand the doctrines and historical background to the Constitution; key principles, such as federalism and separation of powers; the ideological and philosophical underpinnings of American government; and theories informing interpretations of the Constitution including democratic theory, republicanism, pluralism, and elitism. [CR1]

CR1—The course provides instruction in the constitutional underpinnings of the U.S. government.

Materials

Sections of the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and the *Federalist Papers*; modern commentary on federalism; essay writing rubrics handout.

Day (Edwards, et al.)	Topic	Assignment
1	Introduction and methods (data analysis, maps and charts)	
2	Rebels with a Cause	pp. 37–40
3	Articles of Confederation	pp. 40–54
4	Hot Days in Philly	Essay #1
5	Essay Work Day	
6	The Constitution	
7	Essays Due/Discussion	
8	Peer Reviews	pp. 54–57
9	Feds and Anti-Feds	<i>Federalist</i> #10 and
51		
10	Federalist Papers	pp. 57–62
11	The Living Document	
12	The Big 27	pp. 63–65
13	Summary and Timed Writing	pp. 71–78
14	Federal, Federalist, Federalism	pp. 78–83
15	Don't Tax the Bank!!!!	
16	National Supremacy Timed Writing	pp. 83–91
17	Modern Federalism	
18	Modern Federalism	pp. 91–97
19	Review of foundations and methods	
20	Unit I Exam—multiple-choice and free-response questions	
21	Discussion/Justification of Exam	

Unit II: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Content Goals

Students should understand the institutional guarantees to political and civil rights granted under the Constitution; the rights conferred by the American government system; key Supreme Court cases and arguments regarding constitutional protections; the impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on civil rights at the state level; and the impact of judicial decisions on American society. **[CR6]**

CR6—The course provides instruction in civil rights and civil liberties.

Materials

Supreme Court decisions on civil rights and civil liberties (*Plessy v. Ferguson*; *Brown v. Board of Education I & II*; *Roe v. Wade*; *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*; *Engle v. Vitale*; *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*) **[CR8]**; current news debates on terrorism and civil liberties.

CR8—The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as *The Federalist Papers*) and contemporary news analyses

Special Assignment—Civil Liberties and Civil Rights Landmark Cases

[CR6]: Each student is assigned two landmark Supreme Court cases. For each assigned case, the student must prepare a written and oral brief of the case, including the background of the case, points of law, the decision and rationale of the court, and subsequent related cases.

CR6—The course provides instruction in civil rights and civil liberties.

Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Intro/Court Project Assigned	Case research
2	Portfolio Assignment	
3	Portfolio, Cont.	
4	Project Work Day	pp. 103–104, Woll assignment
5	Amendment 1	pp. 105–123
6	Amendment 1—Goes On...	
7	Amendment 1—And On...	
8	Amendment 1	pp. 123–131, Woll assignment
9	Rights of the Accused	
10	Rights of the Accused	
11	Rights of the Accused	pp. 132–135
12	Privacy Issues	Outside reading assignment
13	Privacy Issues	pp. 130–149
14	Intro to Civil Rights	pp. 149–152
15	Education	pp. 153–155
16	Civil Rights Act of 1964	pp. 155–158, 165–170
17	Race and Ethnicity	pp. 158–165
18	Gender	pp. 170–172
19	Affirmative Action	
20	Summary and Review	
21	Exam—multiple-choice	
22	Exam—free-response questions	
23	Discussion and Justification	

Unit III: Political Parties and the Public

Preread pp. 181–93

Content Goals

Students should understand the mechanisms of transmitting interests to government action, including interest groups, political action committees, and mass media; the role of media coverage and the press on elections and government actions; **[CR3]**

CR3—The course provides instruction in political parties, interest groups, and mass media.

the different historical and ideological beliefs of political parties; demographic groups in the U.S. and their political beliefs; and ways of understanding political beliefs and behavior. [CR2]

CR2—The course provides instruction in political beliefs and political behaviors.

Materials

Supreme Court decisions governing elections; [CR8] charts on political party formation and process; the impact of money on politics; graphs and charts on poll design and construction. [CR7]

CR8—The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as *The Federalist Papers*) and contemporary news analyses.

Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Political Socialization	
2	Political Socialization Part 2	pp. 194–198
3	Public Opinion and Spin 101	
4	Public Opinion and Spin Part 2	pp. 99–212
5	Political Ideology	<i>New York Times v. Sullivan</i> (Woll: Chapters 3, 8)
6	Field Trip to the Hub	
7	Class Discussion of Woll	pp. 217–226
8	Media	pp. 226–232
9	Media and Politics	pp. 243–262
10	Political Parties	pp. 262–270
11	Political Parties	
12	Beliefs and Behavior	
13	Demographic and Group Behavior	
14	Summary and Review	
15	Exam—multiple-choice	
16	Exam—free-response questions	
17	Discussion and Justification	

CR7—The course provides students with practice in analyzing and interpreting data and other information relevant to U.S. government and politics.

Unit IV: Campaigning and Elections

Content Goals

Students should become familiar with the workings of the electoral process; the role of money and interest groups on campaigns; the laws governing elections; and the way individual campaigns operate on the local, state, and national level.

Materials

Maps, charts, and graphs of electoral outcomes and political participation; charts showing the role of money in politics; contemporary news and Internet coverage and analysis of elections and campaigns; discussion of exit poll data. [CR7]

CR7—The course provides students with practice in analyzing and interpreting data and other information relevant to U.S. government and politics.

Special Assignment—Elections: The class will divide into Democrats and Republicans. Those who choose to identify with neither party will choose one for the sake of the project. Each party is to plan a campaign for a mock presidential election. Each party should choose its candidate and running mate. Each party should also use some combination of the following campaign positions: campaign manager, policy advisors, media consultants, ad specialists, speechwriters, logistics managers, and any other positions deemed necessary by the campaign manager. This project will be given both a group and an individual grade. Individual grades will be given by the instructor after reading evaluations completed by the campaign manager. The group grade depends upon winning the election. In every election, there is a winner and a loser. Unfortunately, the best campaign does not always win. Welcome to politics.

Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Intro/Election Project	pp. 275–292
2	Campaigning	pp. 292–302
3	Campaign Finance	
4	Project Work Day	
5	Project Work Day	pp. 307–313
6	Election Process	
7	Presidential Elections	Woll: Chapters 4–6, selections
8	Presidential Elections (1960–1980)	
9	Presidential Elections (1984–2000)	
10	Project Work Day	
11	Project Work Day	pp. 314–330
12	Voting Behavior	
13	Project: Election Day	
14	Election Analysis	pp. 335–362
15	Interest Groups—Roles and Theories	
16	Interest Groups—Action	
17	Summary and Review	
18	Exam—multiple-choice	
19	Exam—free-response questions	
20	Discussion and Justification	

Unit V: Institutions of National Government: The Congress

Content Goals

Students should understand the workings of the legislative process; the functions and powers of Congress; the relationship to other branches of government under the Constitution; and the change and evolution of congressional powers as a result of specific events in American history. **[CR4]**

CR4—The course provides instruction in institutions of national government.

Materials

Maps and charts of votes in Congress and party strength; charts on the legislative process and lobbyists.

Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Intro to Congress	Article I—the Constitution
2	Powers of...	pp. 369–380
3	A Day in the Life	pp. 374–380
4	Congressional Elections	pp. 380–391
5	The Party's On	pp. 392–394
6	Legislative Process	
7	"I'm Just a Bill"	
8	An Amazing Team Activity	pp. 394–400
9	Congressional Cha Cha (the Politics of Legislation)	
10	Outside Reading and Portfolio	
11	Reading and Portfolio, Cont.	
12	Peer Review	
13	Portfolio Analysis	pp. 400–404
14	"If It Ain't Broke"	Worksheets— current Congress
15	Current Congress	
16	Current Legislative Outlook	
17	Guest Speaker Panel—Congressional Staff	
18	Review	
19	Exam—multiple-choice	
20	Exam—free-response questions	
21	Discussion and Justification of Exam	

Unit VI: Institutions of National Government: Presidency, Bureaucracy, and Federal Budget

Content Goals

Students should understand the functions and powers of the executive branch; its relationship to other branches of government under the Constitution; the change and evolution of the executive branch and the bureaucracy as a result of specific events in American history; the relationship between the national government and state and local government bureaucracies; and the role of the bureaucracy in formulating the federal budget. **[CR4]**

CR4—The course provides instruction in institutions of national government.

Materials

Federalist 70; chart of major departments and responsibilities; data on federal budget spending and projected spending.

Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Presidential Powers	pp. 421–427
2	Organization of the Presidency	pp. 427–441
3	Will the Real President Please Stand Up?	pp. 441–451
4	PR	pp. 456–466, outside reading
5	The Numbers Game	pp. 466–484
6	Federal Budget	
7	So You Think You Can Do a Better Job?	pp. 489–502
8	Organization of the Bureaucracy	pp. 502–521
9	Implementation/Regulation	
10	Review	
11	Exam—multiple-choice	
12	Exam—free-response questions	
13	Discussion and Justification of Exam	

Unit VII: Institutions of National Government: The Judiciary

Content Goals

Students should understand the workings of the judicial process; the functions and powers of the federal court system; the relationship of the Supreme Court to other branches of government under the Constitution; and the change and evolution of the judiciary as a result of specific events in American history. **[CR4]**

CR4—The course provides instruction in institutions of national government.

Materials: review of major cases; chart on rulings of the court.

Day	Topic	Assignment
1	Intro, Powers of the Judiciary	pp. 532–536
2	Structure of the Courts	pp. 537–549
3	Judicial Selection/Decision Making	pp. 550–560
4	History of the Court	
5	The Rehnquist Court	
6	Summary and Review	
7	Exam—multiple-choice	
8	Exam—free-response questions	
9	Discussion and Justification of Exam	

Unit VIII: Public Policy

This unit consists of group presentations on several areas of public policy, including:

- Foreign and Defense Policy
- Health Care
- Economic Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Social Welfare Policy

Content Goals

Students should understand the major policy areas and debates in American government today. **[CR5]**

CR5—The course provides instruction in public policy.

Groups prepare a written and oral presentation of the assigned policy area. Presentations must include:

- Background information
- Major players in this policy arena
- Major policy initiatives
- Current issues in the policy area

Writing Component

Students must answer numerous free-response questions with essays that demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret the structure and actors within American government and politics. These essays prepare you for the essay section of the AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam. Essays are given in class and in take-home format, and are due approximately every one to two weeks. Some example assignments: [CR9]

CR9—The course requires students to answer analytical and interpretive free-response questions on a frequent basis.

1. On-Demand (Timed) Writing: Using the following court cases as examples, explain the evolution of federalism in the United States. Be sure to explain the facts of each case as they apply to federalism.
 - *McCulloch v. Maryland*
 - *Gibbons v. Ogden*
 - *Brown v. Board of Education*
 - *Printz v. U.S., Mack v. U.S.*
2. Transactive Writing: Write a letter to your senator or representative urging support or opposition to the Patriot Act. A successful transactive piece must show a clear and timely purpose and be written in appropriate language for the intended audience.
3. Book Review: Each student must read one book on modern politics. Students with conservative ideologies must read a book written by a more liberal author. Students with liberal ideologies must read a book written by a more conservative author. Your book review should be approximately two pages in length and should include the following:
 - a. A brief summary of the book, including specific examples taken from the book
 - b. An analysis of the author's purpose in writing the book, including evidence used by the author to support his or her position
 - c. Evaluation of the validity of the arguments—are they logical? Are they convincing?
 - d. To whom would you recommend this book and why?