

Mr. Miles
Room 301
Periods: 2B/3A - AP US Government
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El Modena High School
3920 E. Spring Street
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714-997-6331 ext. 3618

AP US GOVERNMENT COURSE OUTLINE & MANAGEMENT PLAN

Classroom Behavior/Expectations:

1) **Respect your learning by giving it, its appropriate attention.** This is a college level course and needs to be treated as such. You are expected to be in class and prepared with the appropriate reading, assignments, or tasks completed every day.

2) **Respect the teacher, your fellow students, and differing perspectives.** The goal of this course is to learn about the functions of the US Government and all of the institutions, policies, and influences that are a part of our democracy. Due to the nature of the course, many of the topics discussed will evoke very passionate and different views, opinions and perspectives. These are essential to the learning process, but should never deter from it. When the teacher or a fellow student is talking regarding a class topic, issue or contributing to discussion, those views must be received openly and with understanding. Any disruptive behavior that prevents the class from being conducted as the teacher sees appropriate will not be tolerated, and any words or actions that might injure another member of the class will not be allowed.

Course Information:

Overview of the Course and the AP Exam

Introduction to AP U.S. Government and Politics

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level year-long course that not only seeks to prepare students for success on the AP Exam in May, but also provide students with the political knowledge and reasoning processes to participate meaningfully and thoughtfully in discussions and debates that are currently shaping American politics and society. It is important to note that this course is not a history course; it is a political science course that studies the interconnectedness of the different parts of the American political system and the behaviors and attitudes that shape this system and are the byproduct of this system.

AP U.S. Government and Politics accomplishes these goals by framing the acquisition of political knowledge around enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics that can be applied to a set of disciplinary practices through the use of a set of reasoning processes. Through the development of this set of political knowledge, disciplinary practices, and reasoning processes, by the end of the course, students will be able to analyze current and historical political events like a political scientist and develop factually accurate, well-reasoned, thoughtful arguments and opinions that acknowledge and grapple with alternative political perspectives.

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This year-long course will meet for 100-minutes every other day on an alternating block. The course will be organized around the following units of study although the order of the units may vary from year to year:

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy (19 days)

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government (34 days)

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (18 days)

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (13 days)

Unit 5: Political Participation (26 days)

The course also consists of:

- A one-class period review day in each unit
- A unit exam at the end of each unit
- A week for civic engagement project presentations at the end of the course
- Two weeks of review for the AP Exam at the end of the course

The political knowledge, enduring understandings, and big ideas acquired and developed in each unit will be applied to the disciplinary practices using the reasoning processes outlined below.

Overview of the AP Exam and Keys to AP Exam Success

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will be comprised of the following sections:

Multiple-Choice Questions:

Number of Questions: 55

Structure – The questions on multiple choice will ask students to:

- Analyze and compare political concepts
- Analyze and interpret quantitative, text-based, and visual sources
- Apply course concepts, foundational documents, and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of hypothetical and real-world scenarios

Timing: One hour and 20 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

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Free-Response Questions:

Number of Questions: 4

Structure – The four questions on the free response will ask students to:

- Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios
- Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
- Analyze quantitative data
- Develop an argument using required foundational

documents as evidence Timing: One hour and 40 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

As the breakdown of the AP Exam highlights, success in this course and on the AP Exam requires far more than the memorization of political knowledge. Success in this course and on the AP Exam requires connection-making with the aim of being able to analyze political information, regardless of the format the information is presented, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned opinion regarding this information. The different pieces of the course fit together in pursuit of this aim through course content and big ideas, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices.

Course Content and Big Ideas

The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics. The big ideas that connect the content in the course units include:

- Constitutionalism (CON)
- Liberty and Order (LOR)
- Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD)
- Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)
- Methods of Political Analysis (MPA)

Reasoning Processes

The reasoning processes are the thought processes that will facilitate connection-making and analysis in the pursuit of effectively executing the disciplinary practices in the course. In other words, the reasoning processes form the cognitive bridge between the course content/big ideas and the disciplinary practices. The reasoning processes in this course include:

- Definition/Classification: Demonstrating knowledge of course concepts
- Explain - Process: Explaining political processes
- Explain - Causation: Explaining causes and effects of political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors
- Explain - Comparison: Explaining similarities and differences among political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors

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Disciplinary Practices

The disciplinary practices are the tasks students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices gives students the tools to analyze political information, regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The disciplinary practices in this course include:

- Practice 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context
- Practice 2: Apply Supreme Court decisions
- Practice 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics
- Practice 4: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources
- Practice 5: Develop an argument in essay format

Every AP Exam question fuses course content, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices. Thus, in-class and outside of class assignments will focus on the acquisition of course content and the application of course content to disciplinary practices using reasoning skills.

Required Course Texts and Additional Resources

Textbook and Online Resources

Each student will check out a copy and be assigned digital access to online content of the following textbook at the beginning of the course:

Harrison, American Democracy Now (AP 5th Edition), McGraw Hill Education, 2017.

Additionally, students will have access to the following free online resources:

- *AP United States Government and Politics reading skills lessons* – This resource contains all of the required Supreme Court cases and foundational documents, along with close reading and discussion questions and activities.
- *Oyez* – This online database provides succinct and accessible overviews for all Supreme Court cases.
- *The National Constitution Center's Interactive Constitution* – This online resource is an annotated U.S. Constitution that includes essays from multiple perspectives that frame the debates underlying key clauses and provisions of the U.S. Constitution. The National Constitution Center also has a blog that applies constitutional principles to current events.

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Required Supreme Court Cases

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 required Supreme Court cases:

- Marbury v. Madison (1803)
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Schenck v. United States (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 Company v. United States (1971)
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)
- Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- United States v. Lopez (1995)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010)

For each of these cases, the facts, issues, holdings, and reasoning underlying the majority and dissenting opinions can be found through the Oyez database online. Oyez also has an app that can be downloaded to smartphones. Students will be required to complete multiple assignments analyzing and comparing these cases with other non-required cases.

The list above is not an exhaustive list of the Supreme Court cases that will be analyzed and discussed in this course. Additionally, students will have access to various other sources which include information and majority/dissenting opinion excerpts for cases that complement the required cases, such as:

- Gonzales v. Raich (2005) to go along with the analysis of McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Heart of Atlanta Motels v. United States (1964) to go along with the analysis of United States v. Lopez (1995)
- Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002) to go along with the analysis of Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Morse v. Frederick (2007) to go along with the analysis of Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

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Required Foundational Documents

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of nine required foundational documents to help understand the context and beliefs of the founders and their critics and the debates surrounding the writing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution:

- 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 Birmingham Jail"

To aid in the analysis of these foundational documents, students will also have access to online supplemental activities from the textbook publisher. These online activities contain strategies for analyzing the required foundational documents and a sampling of related readings, including:

- Excerpts from Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government* to go along with the analysis of the Declaration of Independence
- "Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republican I" to go along with the analysis of the Articles of Confederation
- Essays from the National Constitution Center's "Matters of Debate" series (Interactive Constitution resource) to go along with the analysis of the Tenth Amendment

Civic Engagement Project – Creating an Interest Group Strategic Plan

The civic engagement project in this course will culminate in students "creating an interest group" and a strategic plan for this interest group that could be used to pursue the enactment and implementation of a solution to a domestic policy problem of interest. Students will create this interest group strategic plan in small groups of two-to-five, and there will be a research benchmark in each unit of the course that will require students to connect course content to their interest group's policy solution and plan. At the conclusion of Unit 5, students will present their interest group strategic plan to their peers and a panel of Social Studies teachers and field questions about the viability and effectiveness of their plan.

**A timeline for this project and the research benchmarks underlying this project will be given at a later date.

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Grading Policy

Your grade is the sum of points from the variety of assignments consisting of class work, homework, tests, quizzes and projects. The grades will be weighted in the following areas and scaled as follows:

Tests (25%)- The questions for the tests will be in multiple-choice and FRQ formats that reflect the style, format and content expected on the AP test. The questions will be detailed and require a thorough knowledge of the course material (vocabulary and concepts), foundational documents, and SCOTUS cases. It is suggested that students read and review each section at least twice prior to a test or quiz.

Quizzes (20%)- There will be quizzes weekly assessing students on the assigned reading, vocabulary and concepts of the week. These quizzes will be in various formats including multiple-choice, short answer, and others. It is suggested that students read and review each section at least twice prior to a test or quiz.

****Tests and quizzes may be given online or on paper/scantron depending on the content and type of assessment****

Free Response Questions/Argumentative Essay (15%)- Throughout the year, various FRQ's and essays will be assigned to assess content, work on writing and analysis skills, and to prepare students for the type and scope of questions asked on the AP Exam. These questions will include core materials but will ask students to explain and apply course material (vocabulary and concepts), foundational documents, and SCOTUS cases.

Class Participation (10%)- Class participation is a key part of this course. Without respectful thoughtful discussion it is impossible to understand key concepts and apply varying views to US Government and Politics. Participation will require understanding of key concepts and ideas and the application of them to class topics, current events and other discussions. These points can also be negative for lack of participation or distractions to class discussion. Also, please see Classroom Expectations for participation guidelines.

Homework (20%)- The main homework for the class will directly correlate to the assigned reading. Reading is an essential part of college course and for the understanding of the course material. Homework assignments can be assigned daily and will be used as a way to assess students' understanding of course content, concepts and assigned reading.

Civics Project (10%)- The Civics Project is a required component of the new AP curriculum for College Board. The project will primarily be completed following the AP Exam and will be used in place of a final end of term exam. Please see the Civics Project. section in the course outline for more information.

A	=	100-90%
B	=	89-80%
C	=	79-70%
D	=	69-60%
F	=	59% and below.

(If you are caught cheating, you will receive an automatic "0" and disciplinary action will be taken.)

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Absences and Make-up Work

Students are responsible for getting the notes and assignments that were missed due to an absence. Please get these from another member of the class, unless you have some question regarding the assignment. The following are time make-up timelines for missed work, tests and quizzes.

- 1) **Homework/ Projects:** You have the same number of days that you were absent (excused) to make up the missed assignment(s). Any work turned in after that will drop 10% of a grade for each day it is late. At the end of the quarter no late work will be accepted.
- 2) **Tests and Quizzes:** All tests and quizzes can be made up by appointment. A test or quiz must be made up within one week or you will receive a zero.

Additional information:

- 1) **Bathroom Passes:** You may go to the bathroom at any **appropriate** time during the class period as long as it does not interfere with the class or your learning. If bathroom use becomes habitual then privileges will be removed. A pass must be taken when using the restroom.
- 2) **Office Hours:** I am available at any time before school, during lunch, or after school for at least 45 minutes. Please talk to me about a time to meet before you come to see me. I am always more than happy to make time for students.

*****PLEASE NOTE: Any parts of this course outline can be changed at the teacher's discretion.**

I understand and agree to the course outline. (Please sign and return to: Mr. Miles in Room 301 for a 10pt grade)

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date