AP GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Summer Project 2026-2027

Welcome to Advanced Placement Government and Politics course (APGOV). This college level advanced placement course will be both challenging and rewarding. This course is designed to give students a critical understanding of the U.S. government and its political culture to encourage civic engagement. The following summer assignment will be your first requirement for APGOV. This assignment is due on the **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.** Please reach out to me over the summer with any questions at jford@berkscatholic.org

PART A: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Print the required documents for the AP Government and Politics course list below. These websites provide a PDF version of the primary source:

1. Declaration of Independence: https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/declaration-of-independence
2. The Articles of Confederation: https://uscode.house.gov/download/annualhistoricalarchives/pdf/OrganicLaws2012/confederation.pdf
3. The Constitution: https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution
4. The Amendments to the Constitution: https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution
5. The Federalist Papers (No. 10, 51, 70, 78) & Brutus No. 1:
   - https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/full-text
   - https://docs-of-freedom.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/document/attachment/440/Brutus_No_1_Excerpts_Annotated_Proof_3__1_.pdf
6. Letter from a Birmingham Jail: https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/letter-from-birmingham-jail

Read and annotate these documents by highlighting and recording notes and questions in the margins as you read. Write an essay for each of the required documents using the prompts below (each numbered prompt below corresponds to the numbered required document above). Essays should be handwritten on loose leaf paper and approximately 1 page in length.

1. Explain the purpose of the Declaration of Independence. Describe 2 characteristics Jefferson applies to government. Describe 3 rights that Jefferson emphasizes in his declaration.
2. Explain the purpose of the Articles of Confederation. Identify at least 3 weaknesses of the Articles. Explain why the Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation.
3. Explain the purpose of the Constitution. Summarize each of the 7 articles of the Constitution. Identify the 3 branches of government and explain 2 powers each branch has.
4. Summarize the general purpose of each of the 27 amendments to the Constitution. Take a position on which amendment had the most impact on U.S. history. Explain your reasoning.

5. Explain the purpose of the Federalist Papers. Compare and contrast the purpose of the Federalist Papers with the purpose of Brutus No. Identify and explain one claim from each of the Federalist Papers (No. 10, 51, 70, 78) and compare and contrast those with one claim from Brutus No. 1.
6. Explain the argument Martin Luther King Jr. makes in his letter. Describe King's purpose in writing this letter. Take a position on whether or not King has effectively persuaded his reader.

PART B: SUPREME COURT CASE

Choose one of the Supreme Court cases listed below.

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 (1969)	New York Times v. U.S. (1971)
Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)	Shaw v. Reno (1993)	U.S. v. Lopez (1995)
McDonald v. Chicago (2010)	Citizens United v. F.E.C. (2010)	

Research your case and type a **4 page case brief** (explanation of the case), using at least 5 reliable sources. Use in-text citations throughout the case brief in MLA format. Include a bibliography citing your sources in MLA format. The brief should include the:

1. Facts: the relevant events of the case that occurred before the courts became involved.
2. Issue(s): a legal or Constitutional question the court considers in the case.
3. Holding: the court's response to the issue being considered in the case.
4. Reasoning: the court's explanation of the holding.
5. Decision: the outcome of the case that included a discussion of the facts, issue, holding, and reasoning.
6. (Majority) Opinion: an analysis of the court's decision, written by the justices.

https://www.oyez.org/ is a great website to begin with when researching your case.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html is a great resource for directions on MLA format.

SUMMER ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

- Submit Summer Assignment in a Binder
- PART A: 6 Annotated Readings & 6 1 Page Handwritten Essays
- PART B: 5 Page Typed Essay & Bibliography
- NO LATE OR EMAILED ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED!
- Failure to meet the required page length will result in a point deduction from your final grade.
- Plagiarism, cheating, copying, AI usage, and/or failure to include in-text citations or a bibliography with all sources will result in a zero for the assignment.
- Use 1" margins, Times New Roman 12 point font, double-space.

- Use third person, formal writing, and proofread before submitting.
- Include a Cover Page for the entire summer assignment, including:
  - Your Name
  - Subject: AP Government & Politics
  - Year: 2026-2027
  - Part A: Required Documents
  - Part B: Supreme Court Case Brief: *Name of Case in Italics*
- Include a Works Cited Page in MLA format for PART B.

Please note that any student who turns in a LATE OR INCOMPLETE summer project will be automatically dropped from the course.