

**Syllabus 2019-20 | Mr. Kirby | Voorhees High School**

**Course Overview** AP United States Government and Politics introduces students to key political ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the political culture of the United States. The course examines politically significant concepts and themes, through which students learn to apply disciplinary reasoning, assess causes and consequences of political events, and interpret data to develop evidence-based arguments.

**Course Content** Students study general concepts used to interpret U.S. government and politics and analyze specific topics, including: (%s represent rough distribution of content on multiple choice section of AP Exam)

• Foundations of American Democracy (5-15%)

• Political Beliefs and Behaviors (10-20%)

• Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media (10-20%)

• Interactions Among Branches of Government (35-45%)

• Public Policy (5-15%)

• Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (5-15%)

An integral part of the course includes analysis and interpretation of basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics, and the development of connections and application of relevant theories and concepts. (See both the Course Overview and Curriculum Framework on Google Classroom for more details):

**Goals and Objectives** Students successfully completing this course will:

• Describe and compare important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics.

• Explain typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the components of political behavior, the principles used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures).

• Interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics (including data presented in charts, tables, and other formats).

• Critically analyze relevant theories and concepts, apply them appropriately, and develop their connections across the curriculum.

**Course Texts**

O'Connor, Karen, and Larry J. Sabato. *American Government: Roots and Reform, 13th Edition*. Pearson. CR16

Woll, Peter. *American Government, Readings and Cases, 19th Edition*. Pearson.

Ladd & Serow. *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity, 6th Edition*. Lanahan Publishers, Inc.

**AP Exam Structure** The AP United States Government and Politics Exam asks students to explain and apply key and supporting concepts. The exam measures students’ understanding of American political culture and the interactions of governing and linkage institutions. Questions are based on the six major topics in the course, and students must be able to define, compare, explain, and interpret political concepts, policies, processes, perspectives, and behaviors that characterize the U.S. political system. The AP Exam will take place on **Monday, May 4th, 2020 at 8am.**

**Section I:** Multiple Choice | 55 Questions | 80 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

• Demonstrate understanding of major course concepts, policies and institutions

• Apply skills of comparison, analysis and application as well as knowledge

**Section II:** Free Response | 4 Questions | 100 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

• **Concept Application**: Respond to a political scenario, explaining how it relates to politics

• **Quantitative Analysis**: Analyze quantitative data, identify a trend, and draw a conclusion

• **SCOTUS Comparison:** Compare a non-required Supreme Court case with a required one

• **Argument Essay:** Develop an argument in the form of an essay, using evidence from one or more required foundational documents

**Daily Class Structure and Activities** It is VITAL that you come prepared to class having read and comprehended all reading assignments. Student inquiry and perspectives will be the driving force behind daily class activities. In addition to occasional lectures, class activities in AP US Government and Politics will include (but are not limited to) the following:

* **It is VITAL that you come prepared to class having read and comprehended any and all reading assignments**
* Group inquiry and discussion
* Socratic Seminars – These are carefully crafted, directed discussion of textual materials. Students are questioned in a Socratic style; discussion transpire with limited input from the teacher
* Case studies – Students analyze Supreme Court cases and explain how their decisions connect to other non-required, contemporary Supreme Court case addressing a similar issue CR15
* Data analysis – Students will analyze and interpret a variety of charts, graphs, political cartoons, and public opinion polls in order to better understand political behaviors and processes CR11 CR9
* Current events research and discussion – Students are expected to keep up with current events; students will occasionally give oral summaries based on current news articles relating to course content
* Group Free Response Questions – In preparation for the free response section of the AP Exam, students will collaborate in small groups to provide model answers to a variety of open-ended prompts
* Structured debate – Formal debates will challenge students to use evidence to argue one side of an ongoing political issue
* Argument development and essay writing – Students analyze and develop arguments relevant to course key concepts. CR13
* Simulations – Students will engage in simulations (e.g. mock Constitutional Convention, Federal debt reduction) in order to more fully engage with enduring understandings of the course CR6

**Assessment** This college level course will include a variety of assessments including formal exams, written reports, reading quizzes, data analyses, vocabulary quizzes, oral presentations and research assignments. Each unit exam will follow as closely as possible the format of the AP Exam. Each unit exam will be structured as follows:

**Section I:** Multiple Choice | 25-30 Questions | 35 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

• Demonstrate understanding of major unit concepts, policies and institutions

• Apply skills of comparison, analysis and interpretation in addition to factual recall

**Section II:** Free Response | 1 Question | 20 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

• One of the four **F**ree **R**esponse **Q**uestion types will be included:

• Concept Application (FRQ1)

• Quantitative Analysis (FRQ2)

• SCOTUS Comparison (FRQ3)

• Argument Essay (FRQ4)

**Academic Honesty** As an Advanced Placement student it is absolutely imperative that **all** course work be entirely of you own creation. All assigned work, including homework is to be done **individually** unless expressly stated otherwise by your instructor. Sharing documents, responses or ideas either electronically or in person is **plagiarism**. Googling information and using information without citation is **plagiarism**. ‘Working on an assignment together’ is also **plagiarism**. Borrowing someone’s homework and changing their answers to make it look like your own work is definitely **plagiarism**. Any work submitted that contains content not of your own creation will result in an immediate zero, no opportunity to restore credit, and an afterschool detention where you will research the consequences of academic dishonesty at the post-secondary level. Plagiarism has never been easier and never more important to avoid.

**Course Structure** *\*denotes AP required Foundational Document or Supreme Court case*

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| **Unit** | **Chapter Readings**  **(Primary Text)** | **Additional Readings** | **Selected Activities** |
| **Unit 1:** Foundations of American Democracy CR1  *(15 classes)* | Chapter 1: American Government: Roots, Context, and Culture  Chapter 2: The Constitution  Chapter 3: The Federal System CR1 | Federalist No. 10\*  Federalist No. 51\*  Brutus No. 1\*  Lanahan, 13  The Declaration of Independence\*  The Articles of Confederation\*  The Constitution of the United States\*  *McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)\** compared to *Arizona v. United States (2012)* CR15  *United States v. Lopez (1995)\** | Citizenship Test  FRQ Practice SC13  FRQ4 Argumentative Essay Creation – pluralist v elitist model CR13  Constitution articles and amendments game  Constitutional Convention Simulation |
| **Unit 2:** Political Beliefs and Behaviors  *(15 classes)* | Chapter 10: Public Opinion and Political Socialization CR4  Chapter 12: Campaigns, Elections and Voting CR5 | Woll, 45  Lanahan, 66, 69 | 2016 election voter turnout and data analysis CR9  2016 AP FRQ #2 – Demographic trends chart CR9  Political cartoon analysis – electoral college CR11  Political belief tracker  *West Wing* Episode 21 - Polling |
| **Unit 3:** Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media  *(20 classes)* | Chapter 11: Political Parties  Chapter 13: The News Media  Chapter 14: Interest Groups | Woll, 43, 44  Lanahan, 56 | Political parties research paper  2017 AP FRQ #2 – Interest Groups |
| **Unit 4:**  Interactions Among Branches of Government CR2  *(35 classes)* | Chapter 6: Congress  Chapter 7: The Presidency  Chapter 8: The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy  Chapter 9: The Judiciary | Federalist No. 70\* CR10  Federalist No. 78\*  *Baker v. Carr (1961)\**  *Shaw v. Reno (1993)\**  *Marbury v. Madison (1803)\**  Woll, 47, 48, 49  Lanahan, 30, 41 | Powers of House and Senate Game |
| **Unit 5:** Public Policy  *(12 classes)* | Chapter 15: Domestic and Economic Policy  Chapter 16: Foreign and Defense Policy |  | 2017 AP FRQ #3 – mandatory spending program charts CR9  Budget Simulation CR8 |
| **Unit 6:** Civil Liberties and Civil Rights CR3  *(12 classes)* | Chapter 4: Civil Liberties  Chapter 5: Civil Rights | Letters from Birmingham Jail\*  *Engel v. Vitale (1962)\**  *Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)\**  *Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)\**  *Roe v. Wade (1973)\**  *McDonald v. Chicago (2010)\**  *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)*  *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)\** | *Eyes on the Prize*  The Four C’s Game |
| **Unit 7:** Review & Political Science Research Project CR14  *(10 classes)* | Review | Review | Key Legislation Review Game  Political processes research project |

***This course content is subject to change and is designed to serve as a sampling of course readings and activities.***