

## Advanced Placement Government and Politics 2023-2024 (Mr.Wimsett)

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The Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics program is designed to teach U.S. constitutional government based on principles of philosophy, political beliefs and behavior, political parties and interest groups, national institutions and policy processes and law. Emphasis is given to the relationship of the citizen to the structure and function of the American constitutional system. Special attention will also be placed on current topics and events in American Government.

This course is designed to enable you to develop a critical perspective of government and politics in the United States. The nature of the American political system, its development over the past two centuries and how it works today are examined. Both general concepts and specific case studies are stressed. Emphasis will be placed on increasing the techniques of evaluating, refuting, comparing, contrasting, analyzing and documenting supporting ideas. This course will be conducted using a variety of class formats, depending on the size of the class, and the motivational skill of you, the students.

AP Government and Politics is a highly structured, very demanding college-level course. You are required not only to thoroughly read the college-level text, but also to augment this material through research and reading of supplemental articles and then critically apply the findings to the political nature of current governmental policies and analyze the ramifications of these policies. Unfortunately, too many of your high school courses have trained you to expect that everything important will be dealt with in class. In college and in this class, this is not the case. You will be expected to complete assigned readings and other assignments regardless of whether or not they are “covered” in class.

One of the primary objectives of this course is to be aware of all areas of information covered on the AP Exam. The most important skills you SHOULD acquire are those of analyzing data, writing coherently, interpreting primary source documents related to our constitutional system, and presenting arguments from different points of view.

In order to develop these abilities that all of you possess, the following writing assignments will be completed throughout the course of the school year: argumentative essays, legal briefs, newspaper article analyses, policy analysis and position papers.

### MAJOR COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. Study Guides - For each chapter (this is for your benefit!) 6-7 Learning Objectives. Varying points possible.
2. Weekly current event write-ups & class discussion. (You will receive a handout about this.)
3. Attend government meetings/political forums throughout the year and complete corresponding assignment. (We will discuss this in class.)
4. Possible Winter Break and Spring Break assignments – You will know ahead of time whether or not we will do this.
5. Learning activities & assessments after the AP Exam is completed.
6. Complete practice exams.
7. Attend field trips and respectfully listen to guest speakers (if possible).

**Cost for the AP Exam is approximately \$100 this year. You must pay the registration fee in the fall. (More details to come.)**

In order to give you a more realistic sense of college-level grading, I will grade your AP writing more stringently than other classes. Typically, each chapter test will consist of 2 parts – multiple choice and free response. The free response questions are from previous exams and the College Board scoring rubric will be used so that you will have a precise understanding and extensive experience responding to the F/R questions. A student who receives a grade of **3 or better** on the AP Exam is generally considered qualified to receive credit for the equivalent course at the nearly 2, 200 colleges and universities in this country that give credit for AP Exams. This credit is worth more now than in college where you pay between \$300 and \$3,000 per credit.

## ***THINGS TO PURCHASE***

A separate notebook for this class with the following dividers for:

- Hand-outs
- Current events
- Writing assignments
- chapter tests
- Practice tests
- In-class assignments/projects

## **GRADING POLICY**

The Tumwater School District has adopted a new grading policy for all secondary schools (high school and middle school). Grading for this class will follow this new policy.

**Per the new policy, grades will be weighted as follows:**

**60 percent of your grade will be based upon summative assessments (tests, news article reviews, reports, projects, essays, presentations, and/or anything that measures your mastery of skills or content learned in class.)**

**40 percent of your grade will be based upon daily assignments and homework.**

### ***School-Wide Grading Scale:***

|                  |   |    |
|------------------|---|----|
| 92.50% to 100%   | = | A  |
| 89.50% to 92.49% | = | A- |
| 86.50% to 89.49% | = | B+ |
| 82.50% to 86.49% | = | B  |
| 79.50% to 82.49% | = | B- |
| 76.50% to 79.49% | = | C+ |
| 72.50% to 76.49% | = | C  |
| 69.50% to 72.49% | = | C- |
| 66.50% to 69.49% | = | D+ |
| 59.50% to 66.49% | = | D  |
| 59.49% & below   | = | F  |

\*Students will have an opportunity to retake tests. However, this must be done within one week of receiving the assessment back, and is conditional based upon completion of work from that particular unit.

It is your responsibility to keep track of assignments and to make up missing work if you've been absent. **DON'T RECYCLE ANYTHING until the end of the SCHOOL YEAR.** If you find yourself getting lost, ask for help early on.

### ***ATTENDANCE***

Due to the collaborative and cooperative nature of the activities in this class, when you are absent, you hurt yourself and the other members of your group. **Unexcused absence = NO CREDIT for assignment due OR assigned that day. If you have been absent, you need to turn in your assignments when you return. If you have an extended absence (multiple days at a time), you must come and talk to me about a schedule for completing your work.**

### ***STUDENT CONDUCT***

Throughout the semester we will be engaged in several "hot" political topics. All students are to respect other student's opinions and values – regardless of gender, parent's occupation, car ownership, etc. If a problem arises, it will be dealt with immediately. Treat yourself and others with respect, courtesy, and appreciation for our diversity. Be conscious of your actions & your words. **BE RESPECTFUL! This includes being respectful with your technology. Keep your cell phones away unless I tell you that it's okay to have them out. I will take your phone away and send it to the office, if you cannot comply.**

### ***TEXT/MATERIALS***

Edwards, George C, Wattenberg, Martin, and Robert L. Lineberry. Government in America. People, Politics, and Policy. Sixteenth Edition. Pearson Longman Publishers, Inc.: 2016.

## **Major Units:**

- **Foundations of American Democracy**
- **Interaction Among Branches of Government**
- **Civil Liberties and Civil Rights**
- **American Political Ideologies and Beliefs**
- **Political Participation**

## **Big Ideas for the Course from the College Board:**

### **1. Constitutionalism (CON)**

The U.S. Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances among branches of government and allocates power between federal and state governments. This system is based on the rule of law and the balance majority rule and minority rights.

## 2. Liberty and Order (LOR)

Governmental laws and policies balancing order and liberty are based on the U.S. Constitution and have been interpreted differently over time.

## 3. Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD)

Popular sovereignty, individualism, and republicanism are important considerations of U.S. laws and policy making and assume citizens will engage and participate.

## 4. Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)

Multiple actors and institutions interact to produce and implement possible policies.

## 5. Methods of Political Analysis (MPA)

Using various types of analyses, political scientists measure how U.S. political behavior, attitudes, ideologies, and institutions are shaped by a number of factors over time.

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\*Throughout the month of April 2024, we will spend a significant amount of time reviewing for the AP Exam.

\*\*This is our road map for the year. I will do all that I can to teach you about the American political system and our institutions of government. **I expect you to give me your best effort daily.**

**I'm looking forward to a great year!**

**AP Government & Politics Exam date is  
Monday, May 6, 2024.**