

AP US Government and Politics Sample Syllabus



Taught by Nate Gilbert

Section 1: Overview of the Course

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 as well as 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 by using a set of reasoning processes. Through the development of this set of political knowledge, disciplinary practices, and reasoning processes, 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.

The course will be organized around the following units of study:

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy (7 weeks)

(Big ideas: Constitutionalism, Liberty and Order, Methods of Political Analysis)

Unit 2: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (5 weeks)

(Big ideas: Liberty and Order, Methods of Political Analysis)

Unit 3: Political Participation and American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (8 weeks)

(Big ideas: Civic Participation in Representative Democracy, Methods of Political Analysis)

Unit 4: Interactions Among Branches of Government (7 weeks)

(Big ideas: Competing Policy-Making Interests, Methods of Political Analysis)

Unit 5: Ideology in Policy Making (5 weeks)

(Big ideas: Competing Policy-Making Interests, Methods of political Analysis)

At the end of each unit or at key points within a unit, Personal Progress Checks will be provided in class or as homework assignments in AP Classroom. Students will get a personal report with feedback on every topic, skill, and question that they can use to chart their progress, and their results will come with rationales that explain every question's answer.

Section 2: Applied Civics Project

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. 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 the teacher and field questions about the viability and effectiveness of their plan.

Section 3: Course Policies and Guidelines

I look forward to working with you during the upcoming course. Each week of the course is separated into a distinct module. The module will not be accessible until the day of the weekly live class.

Late assignments will incur a 10% scoring reduction per day late (and may receive less feedback). Assignments over one week late will receive a zero score. Any request for an exception must be made prior to the due date and have the support of a parent.

Quizzes - The bi-weekly quiz is designed to test your knowledge of the class information discussed during the live class presentation and the assigned textbook readings (including portions of on-line textbooks provided by teacher). The quiz is timed and may not be taken with any outside assistance (including notes, web searches, tips from friends, etc.). This is not meant to cause you stress, but rather see how much of the information is being retained.

Assignments - Regular assignments may include completing an online activity, watching a video online, reading an article with response questions, or writing an essay. When completing,

students should respond in complete sentences and demonstrate supportive reasoning for their answers. Plagiarism is the act of presenting the ideas and statements of another as if they are one's own without crediting the original source. When students use someone else's words or ideas, they must credit the source. Unless specified otherwise, the total points available will be divided evenly among the questions. Students will also be assigned Personal Progress Check questions in AP Classroom.

Projects - In order to encourage student engagement with the material and internalization of the key concepts, projects will be assignment throughout the course. Projects may have longer timelines associated, so please be aware of the due date to plan your time accordingly.

Participation/Professionalism - Students should use video and audio during the live class. Parents may request an exception to this requirement. Students should also engage appropriately in class discussions that may be raised, or initiate new discussions from time to time.

Note to Parents About Internet Usage - At times I will direct the students to a website for an assignment or activity. I have tried to be careful when selecting websites so as to avoid inappropriate content. Parents should also monitor their child's internet usage and employ appropriate internet filters.