

AP U.S. Government & Politics

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classroom: C-207

Texts & Sources:

Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, by George C. Edwards, Martin P. Wattenburg, and Robert L. Lineberry, 17th edition. {CR16}

Foundational Essential Documents (Instructor provided) {CR10}

National Constitution Center <https://constitutioncenter.org/>

Required Supplies:

- + Blue, black, and red ballpoint pens
- + Number 2 pencils
- + Highlighters
- + 3x5 white, lined note cards (one pack)
- + Spiral notebook or Composition notebook

Course Overview:

We the peopleare going Constitutional. This college-level course provides a non-partisan introduction to key political concepts, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the systemic and political culture of the United States. Through studying founding documents and Supreme Court decisions students will understand our unique political institutions and behaviors. Students will interpret data, make comparisons, and develop evidence-based arguments. The content covered in this course will help prepare students for the AP exam. It all fits in 5 Big Ideas:

Big Idea #1: Constitutionalism (CON)

Big Idea #2: Liberty and Order (LOR)

Big Idea #3: Civic Participation in Representative Democracy (PRD)

Big Idea #4: Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)

Big Idea #5: Methods of Political Analysis (MPA)

Major Assignments & Activities:

In this course, expect that you will read a lot, write a lot, study terms & SCOTUS cases, and participate in discussions... *a lot*. The class success and your personal success hinges on it. Individual and group projects can amount to the same as a test score. Some class time will be allotted to making these creative, thought-provoking, and successful connection to our studies {CR 11.12. 15}.

Writing- You'll become disciplined writers in *Free Response & Argument Essays*. Since it comprises 50% of the AP Government exam, some unit tests include free-response questions. We will practice this in class throughout the semester, and grade according to AP scoring guides. {CR7 & 11 & 13}

+ *Being diligent students in your English class will be an asset in this class.*

Tests & Quizzes. You will have quizzes, unit tests, Supreme Court cases, all using vocabulary terms. It isn't designed to torture you, but learn in segments along the way. Study well as we go along so you won't be freaking out before the semester Final and AP Exam.

Current Events:

Students will post current event articles to GoogleClassroom **#APGovTompkins24**. Stories need to be from credible sources. In class we will analyze current, relevant visual sources (photo, political cartoon, infographic)—all that connect to the course articulation. Don't waste your time on baseless comedy skits and memes. {CR7 & 11}

Moot Court:

A major course grade will be Moot Court where the classroom will be fashioned as the Supreme Court in session. Students will function as law clerks, lawyers and SCOTUS justice in an actual case facing the current Supreme Court. You will prepare for court in the days preceding oral arguments. Some research and case work will be done outside of class. [CR11]

Controversial Topics:

All government systems are laden with the righteous & the sleezballs; the mundane & the tantalizing; persecutions & liberties; politics & religion. The content of this class deals with current real world, controversial issues.

It is vital that everyone is respectful of each other's opinions, backgrounds, beliefs, and worldviews. There will be a lot of agreement and disagreement on topics. Listening is essential to communicating. Everyone is to be valued and respected. If you cannot maintain the civil discourse, you will be given alternate assignments or separated from the class as needed.

Grading Scale, Attendance & Make-up Work:

Consistent attendance is vital for success in APGov. Your semester grade consists of class assignments, projects, homework, quizzes, and tests. Tests and quizzes account for up to 50% of the semester grade. Expect your grade may drop after Unit Tests. Per the Social Studies Dept policy grades are quantified and scaled:

Semester grade = 40% (Quarter 1) + 40% (Quarter 2) + 20% (Final Exam)
100%-90%=A 89%-80%= B 79%-70% = C 69%-60%= D Below 60% =F

Grades are rounded up only if they meet the 9.5 or higher threshold. Do NOT ask to have your grade rounded up for anything less than this. Do NOT come to me on bended knee on or near Finals week to ask for extra credit. The answer will be no and you will have created an awkward situation.

Wonder if it is worth it? It is! [Legendary Alabama Coach, Nick Saban on taking AP classes \(Oct 2019\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUdN8vafbrs)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUdN8vafbrs>

Excused absences. You will have the same amount of days as your absence to complete assignments. It is 1000% your responsibility to check Google Classroom and/or ask classmates what you missed.

Late policy and no-name policy. Assignments submitted 1-day late, can earn 50%. After that, it zeros out in the gradebook. If you are absent from a quiz or test, you are responsible for arranging a make-up *within one week* of the assessment. If not, it will stay zeroed out in the gradebook. No name on your assignment? No credit in the gradebook.

Field trips and sports. Plan around them. I know your coaches, and I know you know your game schedules. Field trips are also planned weeks in advance.

Life gets difficult. Seriously. Please tell me in advance when you cannot get computer access at home, are struggling in classes, incur health problems, or become overly stressed out. We will find solutions *before* things get unmanageable. There's a difference between excuses and legitimate difficulties. I'm on your side.

The College Board Exam Format:

[AP Government & Politics Exam: 8 am, May 6, 2023](#)

The AP Government Exam is 1 hour and 20 minutes and includes both a multiple-choice section and a free-response section. Each account for half of the exam score. Both sections will test student knowledge and ability to interpret the nine required foundational documents and 15 required Supreme Court cases.

Section 1: Multiple-Choice Questions

We will practice the kinds of multiple-choice questions that appear on the AP Government Exam. Additional sample questions can be found at AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.org). Multiple-choice scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly only. So answer all multiple-choice questions. Eliminate as many choices as possible, then select the best answer among the remaining choices.

The multiple-choice section is:

- +55 questions
- + 1 hour, 20 minutes
- + 50% of exam score

On the multiple-choice section expect to:

- + analyze and compare political concepts.
- + interpret and analyze qualitative and quantitative, text-based, and visual sources.
- + apply course concepts, foundational documents and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of real-world contexts.

Section 2: Free-Response Questions

In the free-response section, students have 100 minutes to answer 4 constructed-response questions. The score on each response accounts for one-fourth of the student's total FRQ score. It requires testers to connect big idea topics across curriculum and make connections. Expect to identify an opposing or alternative perspective in an understanding way and refute (or concede) it. Students are expected to use their analytical and organizational skills to formulate responses succinctly and informatively. Bulleted lists are not acceptable responses.

The FRQ section is:

- + 1 hour, 40 minutes
- + 4 questions
- + 50% of exam score

FRQ section format and suggest times:

- + **Apply political concepts** in real-world scenarios (20 min)
- + **Analyze quantitative data** (20 min)
- + **SCOTUS comparisons**- non-required cases with any of the 15 required (20 min)
- + **Argument essay** develop an argument using foundational documents as evidence (40 min)

Exam prep and study sessions:

In April we will start study sessions after school. Attend them. You are *strongly encouraged* to purchase any of the following test prep guides:

- + *Pearson Education's Test Prep for AP United States Government & Politics, 17th edition 2019*
- + *Barron's AP U.S. Government & Politics* (Barron Education Series)
- + *5 Steps to 5: AP U.S. Government & Politics* (McGraw-Hill)

Scoring 3-5 on College Board and earning an A-B in class:

It is realistic for you to pass the AP Exam and earn the weighted A or B in APGov. How? Plan to spend, on average, 30-45 minutes outside of class every day on APGov. Attend the study sessions. Buy an exam prep book. Enjoy every class like we are in a political arena. Have fun learning. Your worldview is about to expand.

Copyright, Academic Honesty & Plagiarism:

Students expected to cite material where appropriate. Your homework and/or projects must be COMPLETELY original. Plagiarism will result in a "0" on the assignment, parent contact, and

administrative discipline. A second offense will result in being dropped from the class with an F. Academic dishonesty can be described as, but not limited to:

- Copying another's work with or without permission.
- Giving your work to someone else to pass as her/hers own.
- Working in a group unless explicitly told to do so.
- Using "crib notes" on tests, quizzes or other assessments.
- Securing answers for tests from others who have already taken a test. This includes passing information along to a future test-taker.
- Using notes or a book when they have not been permitted.
- Passing off another's work as your own to any capacity.

Course Schedule:

Unit #1: Foundations of American Democracy (18 days)

Essential Questions:

- How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty while also promoting public order and safety?
- How have theory, debate and compromise influenced the U.S. Constitutional system?
- How does development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact U.S. Citizens?

Key Terms:

Natural rights	Three-Fifths Compromise
Popular sovereignty	Importation (slavery) compromise
Republicanism	Separation of powers
Social contract	Checks and balances
Declaration of Independence	Federalism
Philadelphia Convention	Exclusive powers
Participatory democracy	Implied powers
Pluralist democracy	Concurrent powers
Elite democracy	Categorical grants
Shays' Rebellion	Block grants
Great (Connecticut) Compromise	Mandates (unfunded)
Electoral College	Commerce clause

Readings:

Chapters 1-3 in Edwards textbook	The Declaration of Independence
<i>Federalist No. 10</i>	<i>Brutus No. 1</i>
<i>Federalist No. 51</i>	The Articles of Confederation
The Constitution of the United States	<i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> *
<i>United States v. Lopez</i> *	"The Good of American Federalism," Alexis de Tocqueville (1831)

Unit #2: Interactions among Branches (Institutions) (25 days)

Essential Questions:

- How do the 3 branches of federal government compete & cooperate in order to govern?
- To what extent have changes in the powers of each branch affected how responsive and accountable the national government is in the 21st Century?

Key Terms:

Enumerated powers
 Implied powers
 Necessary and proper clause
 Checks and balances
 Bicameralism
 Speaker of the House
 President of the Senate
 Senate Majority Leader
 Filibuster
 Cloture
 Holds
 Rules Committee
 Committee of the Whole
 Discharge petitions
 Discretionary spending
 Mandatory spending
 Pork barrel legislation
 Logrolling

Partisanship
 Gridlock
 Gerrymandering
 Divided government
 Trustee
 Delegate
 Politico
 Veto (including pocket veto)
 Commander in Chief
 Executive order
 Signing statements
 Nomination and confirmation
 Treaty negotiation and ratification
 22nd Amendment
 Bully pulpit
 Judicial review
 Precedent/stare decisis
 Judicial activism
 Judicial restraint
 Patronage

Readings:

Chapters 11-15 in Edwards textbook	The Constitution of the United States (Articles I-III)
<i>Shaw v. Reno</i> *	<i>Baker v Carr</i> *
<i>Federalist No. 70</i>	<i>Federalist No. 78</i>
<i>Marbury v. Madison</i> *	"America is Living Madison's Nightmare," Jeffery Rosen, <i>The Atlantic</i> (October 2018).

Unit #3: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights (12 days)

Essential Questions:

- To what extent do the U.S. Constitution and its amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from invidious discrimination?
- How have Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?

Key Terms:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Civil liberties | Patriot Act |
| Civil rights | Exclusionary rule |
| Bill of Rights | Equal protection clause |
| Judicial review | National Organization for Women |
| Selective incorporation | Civil Rights Act 1964 |
| Establishment clause | Voting Rights Act 1965 |
| Free exercise clause | Title IX of the Education Amendments |
| Symbolic speech | Act of 1972 |
| “Clear and present danger” | “Separate but equal” |
| Due process clause | Miranda Rights |

Readings:

Chapters 4 & 5 in Edwards textbook	Church & State: The Danbury Baptists – Thomas Jefferson letters
<i>Engel v. Vitale</i> *	<i>Schenck v. United States</i> *
<i>Wisconsin v. Yoder</i> *	<i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i> *
<i>McDonald v. Chicago</i> *	<i>Gideon v. Wainwright</i> *
<i>Roe v. Wade</i> *	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> *
“Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Martin Luther King, Jr.	14 th Amendment; due process and equal protection clauses

Unit #4: American Political Ideologies & Beliefs (12 days)

Essential Questions:

- How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time?
- How do political ideology and core values influence government policy making?

Key Terms:

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|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Political ideology | Scientific polling |
| Demographics | Party platform |
| Political culture | Liberal ideology |
| Political socialization | Conservative ideology |

Readings:

Chapter 6 in Edwards textbook	“Did America Have a Christian Founding?” Mark David Hall (2011)
“The Children’s Story,” James Clavell (June 1964)	“Confronting the Submerged State” – Suzanne Mettler. [2011]

Unit #5: Political Participation (18 days)

Essential Questions:

- How have changes in technology influenced political communication and behavior?
- Why do levels of participation and influence in politics vary?
- How effective are the various methods of political participation in shaping public policies?

Key Terms:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Rational choice theory | Elite democracy |
| Retrospective voting | Primaries (open v. closed) |
| Prospective voting | Caucuses |
| Party-line voting | Party convention |
| Political efficacy | General election |
| Midterm election | Electoral College |
| Demographics | Incumbency advantage |
| Linkage institution | Federal Election Commission |
| Political party | Federal Elections Campaign Act |
| Interest group | McCain-Feingold |
| Critical election | Citizens United v. FEC (2010) |
| Political realignment | PACs |
| Proportional electoral system | SuperPACs |
| Winner-take-all electoral system | Independent expenditures |
| Iron triangles | Media & Social media |
| Free rider problem | Watchdog |
| Single issue groups | Gatekeeper |
| Participatory democracy | Horse race journalism |
| Pluralist democracy | "Fake news" |

Readings:

Chapters 7-10 in Edwards textbook	<i>New York Times Co. v The United States</i> *
"Stepping Up: The Impact of the Newest Immigrant, Asian and Latino Voters," Immigration Policy Center (2013)	<i>Citizens United v. FEC</i> *
Gaslowitz, Lea. "How to Spot a Misleading Graph." TED-Ed video, 4:09	"Money Unlimited: How Chief Justice John Roberts orchestrated the Citizen decision," Jeffery Toobin, <i>The New Yorker</i> (May 21, 2012)