AP U.S. Government and Politics

Course Syllabus

2015 – 2016

*“I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.”* Thomas Jefferson (1820)

**Instructor**

**Ms. Amber Rogers Email:** amber.rogers@canyonsdistrict.org

**Room:** Portable 3 **Telephone:** (801) 826-6502

**Website Address:** socialstudiesrogers.weebly.com **Availability:** 7am-3pm; NOT Tuesdays

**College Board and Advanced Placement general information:** http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/

**Course Description**

This college-level course is designed to cultivate your mind through the acquisition and analysis of knowledge, learning to reason, and developing communication skills. The Political Science course is designed to prepare students to take the AP Government Exam, and it will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. The course includes both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific examples. It also requires familiarity with various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute U.S. politics. Students will become familiar with the theoretical perspectives and the history of U.S. politics along with the various behaviors of politicians and outcomes.

This course will further integrate a mixture of class discussion, some lecture, group work, student-led seminars, debates, individual assignments, current event research, and MANY writing assignments. Students will learn to analyze and interpret data through discussion and AP style essays. Writing assignments will be conducted periodically in class and on each exam. The writing assignments will consist of analytical and free responses to AP style questions.

Remember, the purpose of this course is to help prepare you to take, and successfully pass the AP US Government and Politics test. The date of the test is ***May 10 at 7:30 am***. Those who successfully pass the test may be eligible for college credit depending on how well you score on the tests. If you have questions as to how much credit you might earn you should speak directly with the college/university you are planning to attend. Please be aware that the format of this class is focused on the AP US Government and Politics curriculum.

**Major units of study: Percentage of Exam**

\*Constitutional Underpinnings of the United States Government 5-15%

\*Political Beliefs and Behaviors 10-20%

\*Political Parties, Interest Groups and Mass Media 10-20%

\*Institutions of the National Government 35-45%

\*Civil Liberties/Civil Rights 5-15%

\*Public Policy 5-15%

**Timeline and Concepts**

Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings of the United States Government and Federalism (Chapters 1, 2, 3)

Unit 2: Political Culture – Belief and Behaviors (Chapters 6, 7, and 11)

Unit 3: Political Parties and Electoral Politics (Chapter 8-10)

Unit 4: Institutions - Congress (Chapter 12)

Unit 5: Institutions - The Budget, Economic Policymaking, and the Bureaucracy (Chapters 14, 15, and 17)

Unit 6: Institutions - Executive (Chapter 13)

Unit 7: Institutions - The Judiciary, Civil Rights and Liberties (Chapter 16, 4, and 5)

Unit 8: Public Policy (Chapter 17-20)

**Test Outline**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Questions** | **Time** |
| **Part I Multiple Choice** | 50% of Exam Score  60 Questions | 45 min. |
| **Part II Free Response Questions (FRQ)** | 50% of Exam Score  4 Prompts to Answer | 100 min. |

**Course Goals**

1. For the student to be able to take concrete knowledge and move to abstract analysis.

2. For the student to learn to write in a clear and concise manner, and to learn to write analytically and argumentatively following a clear line of logic.

3. For the student to grapple with and begin to reason out their own ideas on moral and ethical issues as they relate to U.S. politics.

4. \*\*For the students to begin to delve into who they are and what it is they believe.

**Resource Materials**

**Textbook:** Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry. *Government in America: People, Politics and Policy*

**Reader:** Ladd, Everett, Lanahan Readings in the American Polity

\*Various other readings will be used to supplement the textbook and reader\*

**AP Supplement Guide:** AP Barron (This is recommended; not required)

1. 3X5 or 4X6 note cards (vocabulary)
2. Several #2 pencils and black ink pens
3. A dedicated binder or some type of organizer for AP Government and Politics
4. A small file type organizer to keep the handouts and readings that you will receive.

**Classroom Culture**

Students and the instructor will enter into a mutual understanding to build a classroom culture that promotes active

learning. All parties agree to:

* **Be respectful.** Look for the best in others. Listen. Follow directions the first time given.
* **Be responsible.** Stay on task. Ask questions when necessary.
* **Be ready.** Come to class prepared to learn and participate. Bring materials.

**Grading**

Grades will be based on a point system. The amount of points assigned to any assignments will be based upon the importance of the assignment and the difficulty of the assignment. In addition to daily assignments there are several assignments that carry extra importance. These assignments include semester projects, and student writing assignments. Daily quizzes and tests will also be an important part of your grade. Quizzes will focus on the assigned reading and the material covered during previous class periods and should be expected each class period. Test will be challenging and require students to study. I only use previous AP test questions!

**For grading scale see Student Handbook.**

**Late and Make-up Work**

All assignments must be submitted within the same unit for which those assignments were given. Once a new quarter or unit has begun, late work from the previous quarter or unit will no longer be accepted. Also, assignments labeled with “Major Project” on Skyward must be submitted by the scheduled/assigned due date, ***regardless of a student’s absence*** (including school-excused, sickness and family vacations). Students can arrange to submit electronically, when possible, or have someone else drop off the assignment to the teacher as needed. Late “major projects” will not be accepted for credit.

If you know you will be absent in advance (for athletics, trips, appointments, etc.), it is your responsibility to tell me, so I may make arrangements for you to receive your work and ensure you do not fall behind. Otherwise, late work will ONLY be accepted in the case of an excused absence. In these cases:

* You have **the number of days you were gone PLUS 1 DAY** to complete the assignments. For example, if you were absent 1 day, you have 2 days to turn in late work... 5 days absent = 6 days to turn in work... etc.
* Assignments given BEFORE you were absent are due the day you return.
* If you miss a quiz or exam, you will be expected to make it up **the day you return**, unless other arrangements are made. If you do not, you will receive a ZERO for that quiz/exam.
* I check your attendance everyday. If you are truant on a day you have a quiz or a test you will not be allowed to make it up.
* Assignments may be turned in late with a penalty of one letter grade for each day late. I return all assignments to “class box”.

***NO EXCEPTIONS TO THESE RULES WILL BE MADE. PLEASE, DON’T WASTE EITHER OF OUR TIME BY ASKING.***

**Cheating**

This is defined as gaining an unfair advantage, or trying to do so. Do your own work. Plagiarism of any kind (including copying homework, cheating on a quiz or exam, or lifting material from printed sources or the Internet without proper citation) will earn a zero for that assignment, a lowering of your citizenship grade, and an opportunity to explain your dishonesty to both the teacher and your parents. If found copying homework, both students involved will receive a zero.

**Preparation**

Reading and homework will be assigned daily. Students should expect quizzes based on assigned textbook readings as well as discussion from the previous class period. Students are required to be on time, bring their textbook, a pencil/pen, paper, and assignments.

**Notes**

Proper note taking is of tremendous importance in a class of this nature. Notes should be taken on all reading, lecture, and discussion material. This point cannot be overemphasized. Outlining material, especially from the textbook, will be very beneficial. You are expected to keep a well-organized notebook of all course related materials. However, note taking is NOT mandatory but again, extremely beneficial. Vocabulary is not apart of note taking and is mandatory.

**Vocabulary Assignments**

During each unit of study you will be exposed to new vocabulary that relate to politics. You should plan to write these terms down on 3 X 5/4 X 6 cards with their meaning and perhaps a brief explanation of how they apply. If you would rather you could write the terms down on paper and place them in a three ring binder to help you study for the AP Exams. **The terms will be collected at the end of each unit and returned to you so that you can save them and use them to review for the AP Test in May.** The terms are a vital resource for you, please see that you complete them and are prepared to turn them in for credit.

**Participation**

You are expected to attend class, contribute to in-class discussions, and effectively participate in activities. Some sessions will be seminars or debates; in order for discussions to work, your preparation and participation is critical and essential to your class success. If short on sleep this is neither the time nor place to make it up. Please bring your positive attitude, your energy and inquisitiveness, and your terrific work ethic to class with you each day. Participation will be taken into consideration at the end of the quarter.

**Student Work**

Ongoing critical evaluation by peers, which may include the exchanging of student work, will be used to enhance the educational process. Ultimately the final assessment is the job of the teacher. Student privacy will be respected when providing class grades and other confidential information.

**Extra Credit**

As a rule, “extra credit” is not offered on an individual basis. However, from time to time there will be bonus assignments offered to the class. These opportunities will come throughout the term and may included things like reading a book, watching a TV program, or viewing a film or video. (Parental approval is required for film and video bonus) The bonus opportunities are not required and should not be needed to be successful in the class!

**Videos**

On occasion video presentations are used in certain units. All videos used in class pertain to the curriculum, have a specific educational purpose and follow the district rating guidelines. In this, we will mainly be watching documentaries and debates. Any student that wishes to be excused from viewing any media presentation may request an alternative assignment for full credit. Below are some of the titles of videos I have shown excerpts from in the past or plan to show this year:

-TED Talks

-Law and Order: Gun Show

-The West Wing: Stackhouse Filibuster

-John Adams –HBO series

-The American President

-The War Room (Documentary about Clinton’s Campaign)

**Important Tips for Success on the Test**

1. Read the text and other assigned reading even if it is challenging and you don’t “get it.” Your reading will be the foundation that we will build on in class.
2. Watch the news and read newspapers (online). This will help give you context and real world examples of what you are learning.
3. Keep a portfolio of all your work. This will be essential to reviewing for the test.
4. Buy a study book – They all have their strengths so look them over.
5. Keep your textbook until May! Do not turn in your textbooks at the semester. You will need them to study for the test.
6. Put in the time to review- AP tests are challenging and will require you to be well prepared. There really aren’t any short cuts!

**AP Test Review Sessions**

Outside of normal class review sessions will begin the first week of April. I will hold Friday after school FRQ review questions and I will also hold one Saturday review session as well. These will be announced at a later time and you will also be given a calendar. Please note that these are going to be very important to your success. If you fail to attend you will need to put in extra time on your own to prepare for the exam. **It is highly recommended that you pickup a Princeton Review for the US Government and Politics Test.**

**AP Executive Summary**

• A.P. U.S. Government is as hard, or harder, than a college survey government class.

• A.P. U.S. Government uses an actual college textbook.

• Only students who are motivated, persistent, and take the initiative for their learning do well in A.P. classes.

• Students will learn much more in an A.P. class than any regular class.

• Students who take A.P. classes usually do much better in college.

• The A.P. U.S. Government Exam will be given on May 10, 2016

• Extensive outside research is necessary for the class.

**Please return this page to Ms. Rogers**

**By signing this page you indicate that you and your parents understand and agree to the rules, procedures and the Executive Summary for AP US Government and Politics.**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Email:

**Parent Contact Information**

Name: Name:

Email: Email:

Home Phone: Home Phone:

Work Phone: Work Phone:

Cell:­­­­­­­­­ Cell:

Home internet access: Y N

Access to a smart phone:

Special requests or considerations: