

Syllabus
AP® U.S. Government and Politics
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Taylor HS

General Information

The purpose of this class is to allow students to develop an intellectual framework of our system of government and politics, with the goal that they become informed and intelligent life-long participants in government. The scope and depth of the curriculum should also enable the student to be successful on the AP® U.S. Government and Politics exam, given in the spring of each year.

Skills and Abilities: Along with the required content, the course emphasizes the following skills and abilities necessary for mastery of college level achievement and success on the AP exam:

- *Knowledge* of facts, concepts and theories pertaining to U.S. Government and politics
- *Understanding* of 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)
- *Analysis, interpretation* of data and relationships in U.S. Government and politics
- Careful attention to specific free-response questions posed and the ability to stay on task
- *Evaluation* of ideas, arguments, and justifications found in the historical and contemporary political arena
- **And most importantly**, the ability to **articulate, orally and in writing**, concepts, arguments, justifications, analyses and evaluations as well as to **pose questions** which facilitate in-depth personal and group exploration of a topic.

Textbook:

Edwards, George C., III; Wattenberg, Martin P.; Lineberry, Robert L. *Government in America People, Politics, and Policy, 2012 Election Edition*. New York: Pearson, Inc., 2012.

Supplemental Readings:

Woll, Peter. *American Government: Readings and Cases*. New York: Longman Pearson, 2008.

Standard sources of news and current events for ongoing reading and assigned readings:
Washington Post; New York Times (online or print versions); *Time Magazine; Newsweek; The Economist; Congressional Quarterly, Houston Chronicle*

A wide variety of internet resources including data bases; Findlaw.com; pollingreport.com; 270towin.com; livingroomcandidate.com; official U.S. Government websites

Selections from *The Federalist Papers; The Anti-Federalist; John Locke Second Treatise on Government*.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government (CR1, 4-6 Weeks)

- Introduction to Government and Politics *Edwards Chapter 1*
- Historic, Institutional and Philosophical Origins of American Government *Edwards Chapter 2;*
- U. S. Constitution “
- Separation of Powers “
- Theories of democratic government “
- Federal Arrangement; State and Local Govt. *Edwards Chapters 3*

Additional Readings: *John Locke, “Second Treatise of Civil Government”*
Anthony Arblaster, “Problems With Majority Rule”
Excerpt from C. Wright Mills, Power Elite
*Selected Federalist Papers: Nos. 10, 47, 51, (16, 17, 19)**
*Morton Grodzins, “The Federal System” **
Assigned Landmark Cases on Federalism

Unit 2: Political Beliefs and Behaviors I: Participation, Parties, Campaigns and Elections (CR2, 2-3 Weeks)

Edwards Chapters 8-9

- Beliefs that citizens hold about government and leaders
- Processes by which citizens learn about politics
- The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion
- Political Parties: functions, organization, development
- Campaigns, finance and organization
- Elections
- Ways in which citizens vote and participate in political life

Additional Reading: *V. O. Key, Jr., “The Responsible Electorate”*;
“Toward a More Responsible 2-Party System,” by the
*American Political Science Assn. * p.183*

Unit 3: Political Beliefs and Behaviors II: Interest Groups, Mass Media (CR3, 1-2 Weeks)

- Politics and Mass Media: functions and structures of the media; impact of media on politics *Edwards, Chapters 6-7*
- Interest Groups including: PACs; range of interests represented; effects of interest groups on the political process *Edwards, Chapter 10*

Additional Readings: *Jeffrey Berry, “Madison’s Dilemma” or Rozell &*
*Wilcox, “Interest Groups and the American Political System” *p. 251*

Unit 4: Policymaking Institutions of the National Government (CR4 and CR5, 4-6 Weeks)

- Congress *Edwards, Chapter 11*
 - Additional Readings: *James Madison, Federalist Nos. 53 56, 57, 58, 62, 63*
- The Presidency and Foreign Policy *Edwards, Chapter 12, 18*
 - Additional Readings: *Richard Newstadt, "Presidential Power" *p.284*
James David Barber, "Presidential Character" p. 291*
Aaron Wildovsky, "The Two Presidencies" p. 312*
- The Executive Bureaucracy *Edwards, Chapter 14*
- Economic Policy: Policymaking in a Federal System *Edwards, Chapter 16,17*
- Inter-institutional linkages in policy formation

Unit 5: Judicial Branch, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CR6 2-3 Weeks)

- The Judiciary *Edwards, Chapter 15*
 - Additional Readings: *Alexander Hamilton, Federalist No. 78 *p. 418*
*William Brennan, "How the Supreme Court Arrives at Decisions" * p. 437*

*Edwards: Chapters 4 & 5
& assigned landmark cases*
- Civil Liberties including First Amendment, rights of the accused, evolving judicial interpretation
- Civil Rights – Equality Before the Law – including constitutional development of civil rights and impact of 14th Amendment

Exams and Major Assignments

Activities and Assessment	Curricular Requirement And Duration
<p>Unit 1 Student-led Seminar on <i>Federalist Papers</i> Exam: Constitutional Underpinnings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Choice • Possible Free Response Topics - (Reasons for a bicameral Congress; ways in which the Constitution controls power; ways in which the Constitution corrects the deficiencies of the Articles of Confederation) <p>Group Presentations: Eras of Federalism Small groups will present Dual Federalism I and II; Cooperative Federalism; Creative Federalism; and Devolution. Presentations will cover the changes in the State-Federal power arrangement through Court Cases, Laws; Executive actions; Grants and Mandates. (Federalism Cakes illustrating each era will be served. Presentation will be accompanied by powerpoint or other visual.)</p> <p>Exam: Federalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Choice • Possible Free Response Topics - (Eras of federalism with examples of laws, court decisions and programs which changed state-federal control; how the controversy of centralized vs. decentralized control persists today in issues such as environment, gun control, educational standards, etc.) 	CR1 3-4 Weeks
<p>Unit 2 Polling Activity Using scientific polls accessed through pollingreport.com or similar sources, choose a topic (immigration; abortion; presidential approval rating; war in Iraq; stem cell research, etc.) and track public opinion on the issue over time. Include historical context, changes in public opinion, and analysis of that change.</p> <p>Exam: Political Beliefs and Behaviors I - Participation, Political Parties, Elections and Voting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Choice • Possible Free Response Items – (Identify and explain functions of political parties; explain how <i>Buckley v Valeo</i> and 527s present obstacles for Congress in the passage of campaign finance reform; interpret charts and graphs showing voting patterns in recent elections.) 	CR3 1-2 Weeks
<p>Unit 3 Interest Group Papers and Presentations Students use their chosen interest groups to research how they affect the political process. Information will be shared with the class using websites and other visual techniques.</p> <p>Exam: Political Beliefs and Behaviors II - Interest Groups; Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Choice <p>Possible Free Response Topics – (Select 2 among several prominent interest groups and explain how the resources of each group affect the institutional target and methods used by the group in affecting public policy; explain how both candidates and the media have contributed to a candidate-centered rather than an issue-centered campaign.)</p>	CR6 1-2 Week s

<p>Unit 4 Landmark Supreme Court Case Assignment: Students will write briefs and give presentations, with visuals, of landmark cases including historical background; facts; constitutional issue; arguments; ruling and rationale for the ruling; subsequent rulings or challenges stemming from the case Exam: Civil Liberties; Civil Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Choice • Possible Free Response Topics – (Explain the doctrine of incorporation with cases <p>Amendment equal protection clause was used by the Supreme Court in various cases on racial segregation, reverse discrimination, and women’s rights; explain provisions and the impact of the Voting Rights Act)</p>	<p>CR2-3 2-3 Weeks</p>
<p>Unit 5 Policy Paper Using <i>Congressional Quarterly</i> and other academic sources, research an issue currently before Congress (Social Security reform, immigration reform, education policy, environmental policy, etc.) Exam: Legislative Branch: Congress; Social and Economic Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Choice • Possible Free Response Topics- (Explain and interpret graphs on social security showing the projected shortfall in meeting demands for benefits; identify and explain the advantages of incumbency in election to Congress; identify and explain the advantages of the majority party in Congress; identify and explain methods used by Congress in its oversight of the executive branch; entitlement spending and the budget.) <p>Exam: Presidency, Bureaucracy, Foreign Policy and Judicial Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Choice • Free Response Topics – (politics and the role of interest groups in the appointment of Supreme Court nominees; factors contributing to the growth of presidential power over time; how divided government, weak party discipline and growth in interest groups hinder the enactment of public policy; the role of iron triangles and issue networks in public policy) 	<p>CR4,5 4-6 Weeks</p>
<p>AP Exams (College Board)</p>	<p>Thursday May 10, 2018</p>