AP United States
Government and Politics
2012-2013

AP United States Government and Politics is an intensive study of the formal and informal structures of government and the processes of the American political system, with an emphasis on policy-making and implementation. This course is designed to prepare students for the AP Exam. This is an all-year class.

Reading Resources
- Various reading materials regarding current events, such as:
  *Newspaper articles
  *Magazine articles
  *Other outside reading

Auxiliary Curriculum
- Extra-curricular reading (as assigned)
  - Daily *Washington Post* newspaper
  - News magazine articles
- Leading discussions
- Keeping notebook/journal
- Oral presentations
  - From *Perspective on American Politics*
  - Current issues as assigned
- Essay writing
- Election and other projects
- Discussion interaction in large groups
- Small-group interaction
- Study of various government-related careers
- Term papers
Audio-Visual Resources
- Video and DVD recordings on United States Supreme Court decisions, US Congress, US Presidency, media, Constitution, civil liberties, civil rights, theories of government, the bureaucracy, etc.
- Cable news in classroom

Course Plan

American Government textbook reading assignment:
First Quarter
Chapter 1: Study of American Government
Objectives:
1. List the two basic questions to be asked about government in the United States (or any other nation) and show that they are distinct questions.
2. Explain what is meant by power and by political power in particular. Relate the latter to authority, legitimacy, and democracy.
3. Distinguish among the two concepts of democracy mentioned in the chapter, explaining in which sense the textbook refers to United States government as democratic.
4. Differentiate between majoritarian politics and elitist politics, explaining the four major theories of elitist politics.

Chapter 2: The Constitution
Objectives:
1. Explain the notion of "higher law" by which the colonists felt they were entitled to certain "natural rights." List these rights.
2. Compare the basis on which the colonists felt a government could be legitimate.
3. List and discuss the short comings of government under the Articles of Confederation.
4. Compare and contrast the Virginia and New Jersey plans, and show how they led to the "Great Compromise."
5. Explain why separation of powers and Federalism became key parts of the Constitution.
6. Explain why a bill of rights was not initially included in the Constitution and why it was added.
7. List and explain the two major types of Constitutional reform advocated today, along with specific reform measures.

Chapter 3: Federalism
Objectives:
1. Identify important policy areas affected by Federalism.
2. Explain the difference between federal and centralized systems of government, and give examples of each.
3. Show how competing political interests at the Constitutional Convention led to the adoption of a federal system that was not clearly defined.
4. State the reasons why federal grants-in-aid to the states have been politically popular, and cite what have proven to be their pitfalls. Distinguish between categorical and block grants.
5. Distinguish between mandates and conditions of aid with respect to federal grant programs to states and localities.
6. Explain the effect of devolution on relationships between national and state governments.

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties
Objectives:
1. Discuss the relationship of the Bill of Rights to the concept of majority rule, and give examples of tension between majority rule and minority rights.
2. Explain how the structure of the federal system affects the application of the Bill of Rights.
3. Describe how the Supreme Court has used the Fourteenth Amendment to expand coverage in the federal system. Discuss changing conceptions of the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
4. List the categories under which the Supreme Court may classify “speech.” Explain the distinction between “protected” and “unprotected” speech, and name the various forms of expression that are not protected under the First Amendment.
5. Explain the tension between the “free exercise of religion” and the “establishment of religion” clauses of the First Amendment.
6. Describe the “exclusionary rule” remedy devised by the Supreme Court as it pertains to unreasonable searches and seizures and coerced confessions.

Second Quarter

Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Objectives:

1. Summarize the legal struggles of African Americans to secure rights under the Fourteenth Amendment, and indicate how the Court construed that amendment in the civil rights cases. Discuss the NAACP strategy of litigation, and indicate why it was suited to the political circumstances. Summarize the rulings in Brown v. Board of Education and compare them with those in Plessy v. Ferguson.

2. Discuss the rationale used by the Supreme Court in ordering busing to achieve desegregation. Explain the apparent inconsistency between Brown and Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Indicate why these decisions are not inconsistent and explain why the courts chose busing as an equitable remedy to de jure segregation.

3. Trace the campaign launched by African Americans for civil rights laws. Demonstrate how civil rights advocates overcame resistance in Congress.

4. Describe the differences between the African American civil rights movement and the women’s movement. Indicate the various standards used by the courts in interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment.

5. Discuss the features of the Roe v. Wade abortion decision in light of the debate over whether a fetus is a person. Explain the differences of restrictions that the Supreme Court has upheld since the Roe decision.

6. Explain what is meant by “affirmative action,” and discuss the ideals of equality of opportunity and equality of result play roles in the debate surrounding affirmative action.

7. What is meant by “gay rights?” Discuss the role of the states in the gay rights movement. Explain the difference between gay marriage and civil unions.
Chapter 6: Public Opinion

Objectives:
1. Explain the role of public opinion in our democratic system.
2. Discuss the basic elements of polling and explain how polling reflects the attitudes of people generally.
3. Discuss the role of the family in the political socialization of today’s youth.
4. Explain why there are crosscutting cleavages between liberals and conservatives in this country; assess the significance of social class, race and ethnicity, and geographic region in explaining political attitudes.
5. Define political ideology, and describe the ideological differences between the average public and the political elites.

Chapter 7: Political Participation

Objectives:
1. Explain why the text believes that the description, the analysis, and many of the proposed remedies for low voter turnout rates in the United States are generally off base.
2. Compare the way that turnout statistics are tabulated for the United States and for other countries, and explain the significance of these differences.
3. Describe how control of the elections has shifted from the states to the federal government, and explain what effect this shift has had on blacks, women, and youth.
4. State both sides of the debate over whether voter turnout has declined over the past century, and describe those factors that tend to hold down voter turnout in the United States.
5. Discuss those factors that appear to be associated with high or low political participation.

Chapter 8: Political Parties

Objectives:
1. Define the term political party and contrast the structure of the European and the American parties, paying particular attention to federal structure of the United States system and the concept of party identification.
2. Trace the development of the United States party system through its four periods. Explain why parties have been in decline since the New Deal.

3. Describe the structure of a major party. Distinguish major from minor parties.

4. Indicate whether there are major differences between the parties. Describe some of the issue differences between delegates at Democratic and Republican conventions, and compare their policy positions with those of rank-and-file party members.

Third Quarter

Chapter 9: Elections and Campaigns
Objectives:

1. Demonstrate the differences between party-oriented campaigns of the 19th century and the candidate-oriented ones of today, contrasting the major elements of successful campaigns.

2. Outline the processes for electing presidents and for electing members of congress, and discuss how the major differences between the two types of contests shape who runs and how it affects their campaign strategy.

3. Describe what the Democrats and Republicans each must do to put together a successful national coalition to win an election.

Chapter 10: The Media
Objectives:

1. Describe the evolution of journalism in United States political history and indicate the differences between the party press and the mass media of today.

2. Demonstrate how the characteristics of the electronic media have affected the actions of public officials and candidates for national office.

3. Describe the impact of the pattern of ownership and control of the media on the dissemination of news. Show how wire services and TV networks have affected national news coverage.

4. Discuss the issue of media bias and how this might manifest itself.

5. Assess the impact of the media on public opinion and on the functioning of our government institutions.
Chapter 11: Congress
Objectives:
1. Explain the differences between a congress and a parliament and delineate the role that the Framers expected the United States Congress to play.
2. Pinpoint the significant eras in the evolution of Congress.
3. Describe the characteristics of members of Congress and the factors that influence who gets elected to Congress.
4. Identify the functions that party affiliation plays in the organization of Congress.
5. Describe the formal process by which a bill becomes a law.
6. Identify the factors that help to explain why a member of Congress votes as he/she does.

Chapter 12: The Presidency
Objectives:
1. Explain the differences between the positions of President and Prime Minister.
2. Discuss the approach taken by the Founders in regard to executive power.
3. Sketch the evolution of the presidency from 1789 to the present.
4. List and describe the various offices that make up the executive branch.
5. Review discussions of presidential character, and explain how these relate to achievements in office of various presidents.
6. Enumerate and discuss the various facets – formal and informal – of presidential power.

Fourth Quarter
Chapter 13: The Bureaucracy
Objectives:
1. Compare and contrast the United States and British models of government bureaucracy.
2. Sketch the history of the executive branch bureaucracy and the different uses to which it has been put.
3. Discuss the recruitment, retention, and demographic profiles of federal bureaucrats.
4. Show how the roles and missions of the agencies are affected by internal and external factors.
5. Review Congressional measures to control the bureaucracy and evaluate their effectiveness.
6. List the "pathologies" that may affect bureaucracies and discuss why it is so difficult to reform the executive branch bureaucracy.

**Chapter 14: The Judiciary**

Objectives:

1. Explain what judicial review is and trace its origins.
2. List and comment on the three eras of varying Supreme Court influences on national policy.
3. Explain what is meant by a dual court system and describe its effects on how cases are processed, decided, and appealed.
4. List the various steps that cases go through to reach the Supreme Court, and explain the considerations involved in each step.
5. Discuss the dimensions of power exercised by the Supreme Court and the opposing viewpoints on an activist Supreme Court.

**Chapter 15: Economic Policy**

Objectives:

1. Explain the economic, substantive, and political reasons for the national debt.
2. Show how voters have contradictory attitudes regarding their own and others' economic circumstances.
3. List and briefly explain four competing economic theories. Assess the nature of Reagonomics.
4. List the four major executive branch agencies involved in setting economic policy and explain the role of each.
5. Analyze federal fiscal policy in terms of the text’s four categories of policymaking politics.
6. Trace the history of federal government budgeting practices.
Chapter 16: Environmental Policy

Objectives:
1. List three reasons why environmental policy tends to be so controversial, and provide examples of each.
2. Describe the role of (A) the United States political system, and (B) local politics in shaping environmental policy.
3. Describe the role of entrepreneurial politics in the government’s response to global warming.
4. Describe the role of majoritarian politics in the government’s efforts to reduce automobile emissions. Explain why majoritarian politics has worked in some cases and not in others.
5. Describe the role of interest-group politics in the government’s efforts to resolve the acid rain controversy.
6. Describe the role of client politics in the government’s efforts to regulate the use of agricultural pesticides and logging in US forests.

Additional cognitive components included in various chapters:
- Component 3 - Interest Groups
- Component 7 - Public Policy and Public Policy Areas
- Component 9 - Analyzing and Interpreting Data
- Component 11 - Supplementary Readings, Including Primary Source Materials
- Component 13 - Analytical and Interpretive Free Response Questions on a Frequent Basis

Supplemental Reading
Subject areas to be covered in outside reading text:

   a. THE CONSTITUTION
      “Federalist No. 10”
      “Second Thoughts on the Second Amendment”
   b. FEDERALISM
“What the Antifederalists Were For”
“Federalists No. 45”
c. CIVIL LIBERTIES
“Terrorism and the Limits of Law”
“Is the Criminal Trial a Search for Truth?”
d. CIVIL RIGHTS
“Plessy v. Ferguson”
“Brown v. Board of Education”
“Affirmative Action: Don’t Mend or End It - Bend It”
e. INTEREST GROUPS
“Potholes on K Street”
f. PARTIES AND ELECTIONS
“How the Democrats Won”
“Lessons Learned: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Election Night Coverage”
g. THE CONGRESS
“Federalist No. 55”
“Slaying the Dinosaur: The Case for Reforming the Senate Filibuster”
“Defending the Dinosaur: The Case for Not Fixing the Filibuster”
h. THE PRESIDENCY
“Federalist No. 70”
“The Tension between Presidential Signing Statements and the Rule of Law”
“Presidential Signing Statements Maintain the Balance of Law”
i. BUREAUCRACY
“Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It”
j. THE JUDICIARY
“From Rehnquist to Roberts”
“Should the Constitution Be Interpreted According to Its Original Meaning?”
k. PUBLIC POLICY
“Why Spending Has Got to Give”
2. Students will read and perform the exercises assigned to them in preparation and practice for the AP examination using *Preparing for the AP* United States Government and Politics Examination, 11th edition.

Chapter 1: The Constitution
Chapter 2: Federalism
Chapter 7: Elections and Campaigns
Chapter 9: Interest Groups
Chapter 10: Mass Media
Chapter 15: Policy Making in the Federal System
Chapter 16: Economic Policy and the Budget
Chapter 18: Foreign and Military Policy

**Essays Assigned**
- Study of American Government
- Elections and Campaigns
- The Media
- Congress
- The Presidency
- The Bureaucracy
- The Judiciary
- Environmental Policy
- Political Parties
- The Constitution
- Federalism
- Civil Liberties
- Civil Rights
- Public Opinion
- Political Participation

**Grading Scale**
The course grade is computed on a point system comparing the total number of points achieved by the student to the total number possible. The following percentage system converts points to the letter grade:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60%</td>
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Percentage Criteria for the Weighting of Grades
Writing (research papers, notebooks, essays, journals, DBQs) 20%
Communicating (projects, debates, discussions, reports, teaching, co-op work) 20%
Applying skills (assessments, reading comprehension, interpreting visuals 60%

Homework Policies
Students will receive opportunities to practice concepts, skills and information learned in their courses through assignments completed inside class or extended outside of the classroom to be completed at home. It is essential students complete these practice activities, so they can be prepared to move on to the next concept.

Should students not complete assigned practice activities by the deadline the following will apply:
- Students will have until 8:00am the following morning after the due date to submit the activity to the teacher to receive 50% credit.
- Assignments not submitted the following day by 8:00am will not get any credit; HOWEVER, teachers will review the assigned activity to provide students valuable feedback which will help students know their progress toward mastering the knowledge and skills upon which they will be assessed.

Work Format Requirements
a. Requirements for formatting written assignments (headings, margins, documentation style {MLA}, etc.)
b. Classroom guidelines (e.g., behavior, procedures, etc.) will be covered in student contracts, which you will receive.

Returned Assignments
Student work will be graded and returned promptly to the students. Each student is expected to keep a portfolio in which to store all returned papers.

Student Spiral Notebooks
All students are required to keep and maintain an organized notebook. These will be collected and checked periodically and accorded points.
Academic Integrity
Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.
*First offense – One-day suspension from all classes with a zero for the assignment, test, or exam in question.
*Second offense – Loss of credit in the course, in which the second infraction occurred, for the grading period as well as possible suspension or expulsion.
For more definition on “cheating”, see the TA Handbook, p. 13.

Journey to Excellence – Underlying Principles
- Develop an understanding of cultural and historical heritages, affirm a belief in the dignity and worth of others, and accept responsibility for local, national, and global environments.
- Exhibit concern and sensitivity for other peoples and cultures.
- Participate actively in local, national, and global communities.
- Understand the functions of governments and their impact on individuals and society.
- Use a Biblical perspective to analyze history and current events.
- Assume an active role in nurturing and preserving God’s creation.

Use of Biblical Principles in Learning about Government
- Understanding of Christian values and their influence on events and people throughout history.
- Understanding the influence and importance of efforts made by the Christian Coalition and other faith groups to influence legislation and elections.
- Understanding Man’s responsibilities to government as a Biblical matter.
- Understand the effects of humanism on political philosophy.
- Understand freedom as a governmental and spiritual mandate.
- Understand the spiritual influences of the Founding Fathers and their effects on the writing of the Constitution.
- Understand the concept of “America as a Christian nation”.
- Understanding the principles behind political activism on the part of Christians.
- Understanding the SDA church and its relation to civil rights and civil liberties.
Understand the effects of Supreme Court decisions on religious freedom.

Understand the importance of the SDA Department of Religious Liberty and Public Affairs as a lobby interest.

PARENT SIGNATURE TEAR-OFF SHEET

Dear Parent,

It is very important that you as a parent read and understand this course syllabus. As an indication that you have read the syllabus, please sign and return this sheet by Tuesday, August 28, 2012.

Tom Ballard

Yes, I have read the syllabus.

Parent Signature

Date

Student Name

Student Signature

Date