

AP US Government and Politics

Mrs. Jaimie Hall
School Year 2023-2024

Section 1: Overview of the Course and the AP Exam Introduction to AP U.S. Government and Politics

- AP® U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level yearlong 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 skills 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.

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

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

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

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

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

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

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

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

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

Unit 5: Political Participation

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

At the end of each unit or at key points within a unit, 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. One to two class periods are set aside to reteach skills based on the results of the Progress Checks.

The course also consists of:

- Unit reviews based on data gathered from Progress Checks in the AP Classroom and other methods of formative assessment.
- A unit exam at the end of each unit that is administered in class.
- Applied civics project that will span the school year. (examples of different projects will be given to aid in the planning deciding, planning, and executing the project) This project can count towards the AVID senior service project.
- Planned class and tutoring time of review for the AP Exam at the end of the course.

Overview of the AP Exam- AP Gov Exam will be on Monday, May 6, 2024

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will be comprised of the following sections:

Multiple-Choice Questions: Number of Questions: 55 Structure –

The questions on the multiple-choice section will ask students to:

- Analyze and compare political concepts
- Analyze and interpret quantitative, text-based, and visual sources Apply course concepts, foundational documents, and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of contexts and to real-world scenarios.

Timing: 1 hour and 20 minutes
 Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

Free-Response Questions:

- Number of Questions: 4 Structure – The four questions on the free-response section will ask students to:
 Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios
- Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
- Analyze quantitative data and the implications of that data
- Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence

Timing: 1 hour and 40 minutes
 Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

Course Skills

The course skills are the tasks students will apply to the course content. Becoming proficient in these course skills gives students the tools to analyze political information regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The course skills in this course include:

- Skill 1: Concept Application—apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context.
- Skill 2: SCOTUS Application—apply Supreme Court decisions.
- Skill 3: Data Analysis—analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics.
- Skill 4: Source Analysis—read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources.
- Skill 5: Argumentation—develop an argument in essay format.

Textbook and Supplementary Resources

Textbook: Peterson, T., (2024). *We The People: An Introduction to American Government*, 15th Edition

ISBN10: 1265026688 | ISBN13: 9781265026684

Additionally, students will have access to the following free online resources:

- AP Classroom - Both multiple-choice and free-response prompts are available to measure student progress.
- AP U.S. Government and Politics: Analytical Reading Activities—This resource contains all required foundational documents, along with close reading and discussion prompts/questions and activities.
- Oyez – This online database provides succinct and accessible overviews for all Supreme Court cases.
- The National Constitution Center’s Interactive Constitution. This online resource is an annotated U.S. Constitution that includes “Matters of Debate” essays that include the common understanding and opposing perspectives of key clauses and provisions of the U.S. Constitution.
- Pew Research Center. This nonpartisan website will be accessed frequently by students for multiple uses including analyzing and interpreting public opinion polling and practicing analyzing and interpreting quantitative data in tables, charts, and graphs.
- Political cartoon, maps, and infographics websites—Students will need instruction and practice in analyzing qualitative visual resources like political cartoons, maps, and infographics.
- A variety of news sources and websites across the political spectrum will also be accessed throughout the course often with the aim of building the skill of concept application while deepening content knowledge.

Required Supreme Court Cases

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following required Supreme Court cases:

- Marbury v. Madison (1803)
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Schenck v. United States (1919)
- Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
- Baker v. Carr (1961)
- Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)
- Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)
- New York Times Company v. United States (1971)
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
- Shaw v. Reno (1993)
- United States v. Lopez (1995)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010)

Students must complete multiple assignments analyzing and comparing these cases with other non-required cases (Skill 2: SCOTUS Application). Examples of paired cases for comparison include but are not limited to:

- Gonzales v. Raich (2005) to go along with the analysis of McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Heart of Atlanta Motels v. United States (1964) to go along with the analysis of United States v. Lopez (1995)
- Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002) to go along with the analysis of Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- Morse v. Frederick (2007) to go along with the analysis of Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

Students may also analyze cases that illustrate concepts in foundational documents or that highlight other course concepts.

Required Foundational Documents

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of required foundational documents to help understand the context and beliefs of the founders and their critics and the debates surrounding the writing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution:

- The Declaration of Independence
- The Articles of Confederation
- Federalist No. 10
- Brutus No. 1
- Federalist No. 51
- The Constitution of the United States
- Federalist No. 70
- Federalist No. 78
- “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Section 2: Applied Civics Project

Project Guidelines

A relevant project applies course concepts to real-world political issues, processes, institutions, and policymaking. For example, students might investigate a question by collecting and analyzing data; participate in a relevant service learning or civic event; or develop a sustained, applied investigation about local issues. Students would then communicate their findings or experiences in a way that conveys or demonstrates their understanding of course content.

The project must require students to:

- Connect course concepts to real-world issues
- Demonstrate course skills
- Share/communicate their findings in an authentic way (e.g., presentation, article, speech, brochure, multimedia, podcast, political science fair)

The project may be:

- Undertaken either by individuals or small groups of students
- Completed before or after the AP Exam or integrated throughout or at a specific point in the course
- Partisan based, if chosen by the student(s)

Section 3: Course Outline

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

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 the development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact citizens and residents of the U.S.?

Required Documents and SCOTUS Cases

Foundational Documents: The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, excerpts from Federalist No. 10, excerpts from Brutus No. 1, excerpts from the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution of the United States, and excerpts from Federalist No. 51

Required Cases: McCulloch v. Maryland (1819), United States v. Lopez (1995)

Example Activity of Source Analysis with Text that may be used in this unit:

Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment—A lesson from the National Constitution Center (Skill 4: Source Analysis with Text)

Framing Question: How do constitutional provisions related to national and state powers impact the way government functions and policies are developed or enforced?

In this lesson, students will consider the role that each level of government plays in different policy areas. They will read selections of the Constitution, interpret political cartoons, and read and analyze Article I, Section 8, the enumerated powers using the “Matters of Debate” tool on the interactive Constitution. Students will drill into the common interpretation and then opposing interpretations of the Commerce Clause and the Tenth Amendment. Students will also read about three Supreme Court cases, one of them the required case of United States v. Lopez to explore the arguments and implications of different interpretations of constitutional provisions connected to the concept of federalism. This is a high leverage lesson that delivers on both content and course skills. (Skill 4: Source Analysis)

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

Essential Questions:

- How do the branches of the national government compete and 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?

Required Documents and SCOTUS Cases

Foundational Documents: The Constitution of the United States, Federalist No. 70, Federalist No. 78, and Federalist No. 51

Required Cases: Baker v. Carr (1961), Shaw v. Reno (1993), Marbury v Madison (1803)

Example Activity of Concept Application:

Framing Questions: To what extent has the committee system benefited or limited the legislative process, specifically regarding its role as being an authentic representation of the will of the people?

Does the committee system encourage or stifle the spirit of democracy in our political system?

Students will watch video clips on the types of committees in Congress. Students will research the standing committees in both chambers and identify what they believe, given current issues and debates, are the top five committees ranked in importance. Students will need to justify their rankings. Students will then engage in a mock committee hearing that features a bill that is currently or recently before one or both chambers of Congress. (Skill 1: Concept Application)

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

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 U.S. Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?

Required Documents and SCOTUS Cases

Foundational Documents: The Constitution of the United States and “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Required Cases: Engel v. Vitale (1962), Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972), Tinker v. Des Moines (1969), Schenck v. United States (1919), New York Times Company v. United States (1971), McDonald v. Chicago (2010), Gideon v. Wainwright (1963), and Brown v. Board of Education (1954).

Example Activity for Skill: Argumentation

Sample Activities and Assignments for Unit 3 Argument and Discussion

Framing Question: Who Is Most Responsible for Advancing Civil Rights Since the 1950s?

Argue whether Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, or social movements are most responsible for the advancement of civil rights since the 1950s.

Activity Summary: First, students will analyze the role of specific laws, U.S. Supreme Court rulings, and social movements in either advancing or hindering civil rights since the 1950s. U.S. Supreme Court cases students could analyze and use as evidence include:

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), Brown v. Board of Education (1954), Sweatt v. Painter (1950), Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc. v. United States (1964), Shaw v. Reno (1993), Craig v. Boren (1976), and Griswold v. Connecticut (1965).

Congressional actions that students could analyze, and use include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the Twenty-Fourth Amendment, and the Equal Rights Amendment.

Students will analyze the African American Civil Rights Movement, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (this analysis will include excerpts from “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”) and the National Organization for Women. After explaining the role of congressional actions, U.S. Supreme Court rulings, and social movements in advancing civil rights since the 1950s, students will be divided into groups, and each group will be assigned to argue on behalf of Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, or social movements.

At the conclusion of the discussion in which each group represents their assigned perspective, students will individually write an argument essay addressing the question of who is most responsible for advancing civil rights since the 1950s. The student will first state a claim supported by evidence, then use reasoning to support the claim and respond to an alternate perspective, as modeled after the free-response question type 4. (Skill 5: Argumentation)

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Essential Questions:

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

Required Documents and SCOTUS Cases

We will continue to cover and review the Foundational Documents and required Landmark SCOTUS cases.

Example Activity for Data Analysis:

Framing Question: Which force will ultimately prevail—the core values that unite us, or the attitudes and ideological beliefs that divide us?

Activity Summary: Students will first explain how excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville’s Democracy in America help to describe core American political values such as individualism, equality of opportunity, free enterprise, rule of law, limited government, and popular sovereignty. Students will then analyze excerpts from the most recent Republican Party platform and Democratic Party platform and explain how excerpts from both party platforms connect to these core American political values.

Next, students will compare the attitudes and ideological beliefs of both parties with respect to these core values before answering and discussing the framing question, using their understanding of their policy from the civic engagement process and data on political polarization and public opinion with regards to core American political values as additional evidence in answering the question. (Skill 3: Data Analysis)

Unit 5: Political Participation

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?

Required Documents and SCOTUS Cases

Foundational Documents: The Constitution of the United States

Required Case: Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)

Example Activity for Data and Visual Analysis:

Framing Question: Why do so many eligible voters find it “irrational” to vote, and what could either the national government, state governments, or linkage institutions do to make the benefits of voting outweigh the costs for more voters?

Activity Summary: This activity frames the potential problem of low voter turnout through the lens of economic rationality. Students first consider the different factors that influence an individual's decision to vote (attitudinal factors, government requirements, and institutional forces) and how these factors impact either the costs of voting or the benefits of voting. Then, in small groups, students either take on the role of an interest group or political party planning a "get out the vote" drive, or the role of a state or national government elected official (or staffer) looking to craft a policy to increase voter turnout (e.g., the "Motor Voter Act" of 1993).

Students will design a policy or strategy, explaining how their plan will either raise the benefits or lower the costs of voting for more voters and whether the proposed plan is constitutional. The first part of the activity will culminate in students presenting their policy or plan to the class. Students will then consider the implications of higher voter turnout in terms of changes in election outcomes and policies by considering what would happen if the U.S. adopted compulsory voting laws or policies similar to the ones designed by the students.

Additional Sources: Map and data on photo ID laws across different states ("Voter Identification Requirements." National Conference of State Legislatures, June 5, 2017), and map on the relationship between same-day registration and voter turnout ("Interactive map: Does same-day registration affect voter turnout in the U.S.?" PBS, October 4, 2015). ([Skill Data and Visual Analysis](#))

Section 4: Class Rules and Expectations

Grading

Grades will be averaged every 6 weeks that will include: Reading/Quizzes

- Unit Tests
- Classwork
- Vocab Assessments
- Skills Assignments

Final semester averages will be determined as follows:

- 1st 6 weeks average 25%
- 2nd 6 weeks average 25%
- 3rd 6 weeks average 25%
- MidTerm
 - (Midterm Exam is for students who do not have an average of a 90 or higher)
- 4th 6 weeks average 25%
- 5th 6 weeks average 25%
- 6th 6 weeks average 25%
- Final Exam (not the AP Exam) 25%
 - (Final Exam is for students who do not have an average of a 90 or higher)

Rules for Life and their Application in the Classroom

1. Practice integrity! Academic dishonesty (any situation in which you present work as your own when it actually is the work of someone else) will result in the student's receiving no credit for the assignment.
 2. Always come to class prepared! I.E.-You have read and or completed your homework.
 3. Bring your notebook, paper, pen or pencil, laptop, and a desire to learn.
 4. NO WHINING!!! This is an AP class. You should anticipate a significant amount of homework and YES – even on weekends and over some holidays!!!
 5. In class ON TIME DAILY!!! You are to assume the responsibility of getting makeup work. Absences and AP do NOT get along. If you are absent, you must hold yourself accountable to get your missing assignments.
 6. Assignments must be completed on time - unexcused late work will have a deduction.
 7. This is AP Gov time- This is not the time or place to eat, sleep, write notes, do other subjects, etc.. .
 8. You possess the maturity to come talk with me if a concern or problem develops. Let me know if you are having trouble or any other issues so I can help you.
 9. I will give my best every day and I expect you to be prepared to do the same.
 10. There are no free days in AP Gov until the AP test is over in May- so please do not ask.
- Enjoy the class, expand your mind, challenge yourself, and you might find you like it and can do it.
Good Luck!!! Work Hard!!!! Be Prepared!!!! And you will SUCCEED!!!!

Absences - When you are absent or have missed a class, assignments will be posted in TEAMS, in the class Notebook, or on our E-Binder. You will need to check these places before asking me. I will also be placing our WAG (weeks at a glance) on my webpage, on TEAMS, and on Wakelet. Hold yourself accountable by looking at these first before asking me what you missed.

Some of the instructional content may include films with historical, political, and government content. These movies maybe rated PG, PG 13, or R but are within the context of the time period or in the context in which they are representing.

To give consent for these movies please sign the syllabus and return with your student or you can email me at jaimie.hall@onslow.k12.nc.us.

Films shown in class are for enrichment purposes only. These films are in no way required viewing for the course or will take the place of instruction. Below is a list of possible films that could be shown in class. I do not plan to show all of these, this is just a possible list of films that could be shown in class.

The Post	Hidden Figures
RBG	All the Presidents Men
Vice	On the Basis of Sex
Wag the Dog	Confirmation
Thank You for Smoking	Loving
Recount	Selma
Milk	Frost / Nixon- The Interviews
JFK	Lincoln
Iron Jawed Angels	ARGO

Review the syllabus and if you have any questions feel free to email me, jaimie.hall@onslow.k12.nc.us.

Please return this page with your contact information and signatures allowing permission for historical film content to be viewed by your student.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian name: _____

Parent/ Guardian signature: _____

Parent/Guardian contact info (email or phone number): _____

Anything you would like to share or think I should know about your student:
