**AP U.S. Government and Politics**

**Syllabus**

**AP Exam**
Tuesday, May 4, 2017 at 8:00 am

**Course Description**
This is a one-semester study of the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that make up the American political reality. Students prepare to take the College Board Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics Examination and possibly receive college course credit. The course is rigorous, fast paced, and requires extensive reading.

**Teaching Strategies**
The course is taught with lecture/discussion, independent research, data analysis, practice timed writings, and Paideia Seminar. Strong emphasis is placed on analysis and writing skills needed for the free response section of the exam. Every unit includes a minimum of two practice twenty-five minute timed writing using released free response questions.

**Grading**
Nine weeks grades will be determined as follows:

- Tests and Papers – 60%
- Quizzes – 25%
- Daily Work, Notebook, and Homework – 15%

- The semester exam will constitute 20% of the semester average.
- There will be a test at the end of each instructional unit. There are no retests.
- Test corrections are available for students that complete all assigned Cornell Notes with a passing grade for the unit. Test corrections are held for up to a week after the test is graded in my room during tutorials.
- There will be two papers assigned that will count as a test grade.
- Quizzes will be given periodically-either announced or unannounced -in order to evaluate the students’ knowledge of the material on a day-to-day basis. There will also be vocabulary quizzes for each chapter.
- **No late homework will be accepted.** It is due on the due date unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

**Texts**


**Materials**
- Three ring binder
- 5 tab dividers
- Notebook paper

**Tutorials**
- Monday – Thursday 7:30 – 8:30 AM
- Afternoon by appointment only
- With assigned History teacher Tuesday & Thursday 4:00 – 5:00 PM (Contact your teacher for location and name of assigned teacher)
Units of Study

Unit 1: Political Theory & U.S. Constitution

*Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* Chapter 1
Lanahan, Robert Dahl, “Who Governs?”, page 86

*Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* Chapters 2 and 3
Woll, “Federalist 51” (Paideia Seminar)
Woll, Morton Grodzins, “The Federal system”, page 77 (Paideia Seminar)
Lanahan, David Osborne, “Laboratories of Democracy”, page 138

The student will

- Evaluate the validity of democratic theories: pluralism, hyperpluralism, and elite and class theory.
- Outline the process by which public policy is made.
- Analyze the basic antecedents of American Constitutional development including the writings of the Enlightenment philosophers such as Locke and Montesquieu and historical documents.
- Identify and evaluate significance of events leading to the writing of the Constitution.
- Discuss proposals and compromises at Constitutional Convention.
- Identify and explain the provisions of the U.S. Constitution including the amendment process, enumerated and implied powers, structure of government, and the amendments.
- Analyze the elements which allow the U.S. Constitution to be flexible such as precedent, tradition, judicial interpretation, changing political practice, and technology.
- Understand the arguments presented by the Federalists in support of the Constitution.
- Understand and apply the concept of separation of powers.
- Evaluate the concepts of separation of powers and checks and balances as presented in Federalist writing and the Constitution.
- Analyze relationship between states and national government over time using case law, legislation and constitutional law.
- **Skills and Activities for this unit include such items as:** primary source document analysis, Federalist/Anti-Federalist debate, categorization of Amendments by function, AP style timed writing.

Unit 2: Political System & Elections

*Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* Chapters 6, 7, and 8
Woll, “Federalist 10”
Woll, David Mayhew, “Divided We govern”, page 181 (Paideia Seminar)
Lanahan, Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone”, page 17
Lanahan, Kenneth Baer, “Reinventing Democrats”, page 595
Lanahan, Larry Sabato, “Feeding Frenzy”, page 642 (Paideia Seminar)

*Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* Chapters 9, 10, and 11
Woll, “The Misplaced Obsession with PACS”, page 244 (Paideia Seminar)
Lanahan, Frances Piven, “Why Americans Still Don’t Vote”, page 507 (Paideia Seminar)
Lanahan, Dennis Johnson, “No Place for Amateurs”, page 541
Lanahan, Richard Davis, “The Web of Politics”, page 164

The student will

- Identify characteristics of political ideology.
- Assess the agents of political socialization and how they contribute to a common political culture.
- Evaluate various methods of measuring public opinion, including polling and elections.
- Assess impact of public opinion on campaign strategy and policy making.
- Identify methods of political participation, including protests, voting, donating, campaigning, and litigation.
- Assess how demographic factors contribute to diverse political beliefs and behaviors.
- Analyze relationship between current issues and political behavior.
- Examine the historical evolution of the American two Party System, including the role of third parties.
- Identify and assess major functions and structure of political parties.
- Examine how party system affects development of public policy.
- Identify media sources of political information.
- Analyze effects of various media on political participation and political culture, including media bias, 24 hour news, and the internet.
- Analyze messages and means of political and issue advertising (e.g. campaign ads, issue ads).
Skills and Activities for this unit include items such as: Create and conduct an exit poll, analyze charts and graphs of demographic and voting data, evaluate current political trends and ideology using a multi-line spectrum, use print and national ads to evaluate the impact of media on public opinion.

- Discuss national, state and local voting processes (e.g., registration, ballots, polling procedures, requirements, administration).
- Assess the dynamics of voter turnout including demographics.
- Explain the nomination and electoral process.
- Analyze how political parties impact nominations and the electoral process.
- Analyze sources of funds and implications of campaign finance laws and efforts to reform.
- Explain the mechanics of issues associated with the electoral college system.
- Explain how PAC's influence elections and public policy.

Skills and Activities for this unit include items such as: Video excerpts from “Vote For Me” series, local election judge guest speaker, computer webquest FEC data activity.

Unit 3: Legislative Branch, Executive Branch & Bureaucracy, and Judicial Branch

Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy Chapters 11 and 12
Woll, Richard Fenno, “If…. How Come we Love Our Congressman…..”, page 376 (Paideia Seminar)
Lanahan, Irvin Gertzog, “Congressional Women”, page 170
Lanahan, Paul Starobin, “Pork: A Time Honored Tradition”, page 183
Lanahan, William Greider, “Who Will Tell the People”, page 482

Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy Chapters 13, 14, and 15
Woll, James Barber, “The Presidential Character”, page 278 (Paideia Seminar)
Woll, Aaron Wildavsky “The Two Presidencies”, page (Paideia Seminar)
Woll, Richard Neustandt, “Presidential Power”, page 274
Lanahan, Arthur Schlesinger, “The Imperial Presidency”, page 221
Lanahan, Bradley Patterson, “The White House Staff”, page 262
Lanahan, Robert Reich, “Locked in the Cabinet”, page 280

Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy Chapters 16
Woll, Selected Case Studies, page 93-161
Woll, John Roche, “Judicial Self-Restraint”, page 414 (Paideia Seminar)
Woll, Federalist #78
Lanahan, David Yalof, “Pursuit of Justices”, page 334

The student will
- Identify different formal and informal organization of Congress including bicameralism, qualifications, committee system officers, and party influence.
- Identify legislative and non-legislative powers of Congress.
- Explain mechanics of legislative process including the role of political parties, public opinion, interest groups and the media.
- Analyze the representative nature of Congress including the relationship between members of Congress and their constituencies.
- Evaluate the impact of the relationships represented in the iron triangle and issue networks on public policy.
- Categorize different types of interest groups and provide examples.
- Explain tactics used by interest groups and their impact on the political process.
- Distinguish between interest groups and political parties.
- Apply democratic theories to interest group politics.

Skills and Activities for this unit include items such as: Selected member of House of Representatives will be researched and profiled for a power-point presentation, use of graphs and charts to analyze Congressional membership and voting.

- Identify formal and informal organization of Executive Branch including White House staff, cabinet, leadership styles, executive office.
- Identify formal and informal powers of the president/executive branch and evaluate how presidents have used these powers to lead and govern.
- Discuss the relationship between public opinion, interest groups, political parties, the media and sub national and presidential actions.
- Describe the evolution of bureaucracies including types, civil service.
- Describe the role of the federal bureaucracy and how it implements policy including the iron triangle relationship.
- Analyze how nondiscretionary government spending impacts the budget process.
• Explain the interaction of Congress, the president and others in the development of the national budget.

• **Skills and Activities for this unit include items such as:** Create chart of over time expansion of Presidential powers, panel discussion/debate of presidential success and failure, compare/contrast leadership styles and administration organizations. Budget Process team simulation, use of charts and graphs to analyze budget.

• Identify formal and informal organization of the Supreme Court

• Compare judicial activism and judicial restraint

• Identify the structure and roles of the federal court system including jurisdictions and judge selection.

• Examine Constitutional basis of judicial branch including judicial review and jurisdiction.

• Evaluate the politics of judicial selection.

• Discuss how court decisions are translated into public policy either by action or inaction (e.g. Brown v. Board of Education, 1954).

• **Skills and Activities for this unit include items such as:** several AP Style timed writings stressing importance of comparison of Warren, Burger, and Rehnquist Court, data analysis of court voting patterns and judicial qualifications.

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**Unit 4: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights**

*Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* Chapters 4 and 5

**The student will**

• Investigate how civil liberties and civil rights have been defined and implemented by both judicial interpretation and legislative acts.

• Understand and apply rights as defined by the Constitution.

• Understand the impact of the 14th Amendment as source of the incorporation doctrine including due process and equal protection clauses.

• Examine application and effects of 14th Amendment through analysis of key Supreme Court decisions, legislative acts, and constitutional amendments.

• **Skills and Activities for this unit include items such as:** Individual Case Study assignment, several AP Style timed writings stressing importance of Incorporation Doctrine

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**Unit 5: Public Policy**

*Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* Chapters 17, 18, 19, and 20
Lanahan, Milton Friedman, “Free to Choose”, page 676
Lanahan, Tommy Thompson, “Power to the People”, page 691
Lanahan, Theresa Funicello, “Tyranny of Kindness”, page 699 (Paideia Seminar)
Lanahan, Benjamin Barber, “Jihad vs McWorld”, page 709 (Paideia Seminar)

• Analyze how public policy is developed and implemented by formal and informal mechanisms.

• Evaluate the effectiveness of a selected public policy (GT-student selected public policy).

• **Skills and Activities for this unit include items such as:** Complete a formal research project that will answer questions related to policymaking. Both the policymaking process and a student selected national policy will be analyzed with both qualitative and quantitative data and the success of the policy evaluated.