

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND SYLLABUS

AP US GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

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Janeice Starks

janeice.starks@pisd.edu

Disclaimer: This course is taught as an equivalent to a sophomore level college course. This means that this course will include discussion of some controversial issues. This course is taught in a way that students are exposed to multiple sides within the political spectrum. This course does not push a political agenda and looks predominately at the Constitution, Amendments and Supreme Court Cases. This course will look at the current election but WILL NOT endorse a candidate or discuss candidates specifically in any way other than that they are candidates for their respective political parties. This is not a debate class. If you have questions or concerns please contact me.

Course Description

Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. This course includes both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific contemporary examples. It also requires students to familiarize themselves with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute our political system. Because this course is the equivalent of a college course and in order for students to perform well on the AP National Exam, students must meet the high expectations for the course and share the responsibility for mastery of the course objectives. This involves the careful reading of the textbook, class participation, and collaboration, as well as the knowledge and application of current examples of contemporary American politics.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy ([CB Unit 1](#))

Unit 2: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs ([CB Unit 4](#))

Unit 3: Political Participation ([CB Unit 5](#))

Unit 4: Interactions Among the Branches ([CB Unit 2](#))

Unit 5: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights ([CB Unit 3](#))

I strictly follow the College Board's Course Exam Description(CED) and the approved textbook and resources by PISD.

Behavior Expectations

Student behavior must not be distracting to other students or the instructor. The use of technology for non academic purposes is also prohibited. Cell phones should remain in bags for the whole class. Cell phones will also be left in the classroom any time a student needs to leave the room unless it is medically necessary or the student may not

be returning. Cell phones are extremely distracting and detrimental to student participation. If a student's cell phone becomes an issue the student will be asked to place their phone at the front of the class for the remainder of the period. Please realize this also applies to personal laptops when being used for non academic purposes. If a student refuses to comply they will be asked to leave and will be expected to get any notes from another student. If you wish to see studies that have shown the negative outcomes of student cell phone use during class I would be happy to provide some examples.

Supplies

Students must come to class prepared to work. A writing utensil and computer or chromebook (not a cell phone) are required on a daily basis.

A separate note book ONLY for APGoPo as notes will be taken up for quizzes.

Highlighters and pens of multiple colors are recommended for notes* and writing revisions but not required. Flashcards and an organized way to keep notes and handouts is also **highly recommended**.

*Note taking is VERY important at this level. You will not be successful without notes and maintaining handouts to help you study.

Required Resources

Calendar

Posted on the first day of each unit in Google Classroom. Also located on the school website.

Textbook

AMERICAN POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT TODAY AP ® EDITION

By William T. Bianco and David T. Canon

If you would like to check out a physical copy for the semester please see me and I will get you one. Otherwise, the digital version is available through your Webdesk.

AP Classroom

Every student is required to register for an account to access quizzes and other online resources. Instructions for creating your account are found in the online materials document.

Other

Various supplemental readings provided by teachers and other education sites will be used throughout the course. Instructions will be provided to access these materials as needed.

Course Expectations:

Each unit calendar will provide detailed activities for each day and will include the due dates of assignments, tests and quizzes. Students are expected to come to class prepared for discussion. All reading will be posted in the Unit calendar. All content in the Unit guide will be covered on Unit exams.

1. **READING:** In order for students to be successful in a college level course, it is essential that students maximize their time through proper organization and time management strategies and complete all assigned reading and or videos **prior to class**. The required reading and videos, along with lectures and class discussion, will figure prominently in your formal evaluation on quizzes, examinations, and essays. In addition to the survey text, students will be reading political science journal articles for more in depth perspective on several key topics.
2. **RESEARCH:** Students will be required to complete at least one research project for the course. Topics could include campaign techniques, advertising, finance and strategy, civil rights and liberties, congressional and executive behavior related to the legislative process, Supreme Court operations and possible others we study throughout the course. Students will present and submit a written analysis of their findings.
3. **DATA AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:** Throughout the course of the semester, students will be required to analyze various political statistical data. This will include assignments involving the analysis of charts, graphs, political cartoons, and maps. Students will respond to a series of questions with respect to data examined on daily assignments. Students also need to be prepared to deal with data analysis on tests and free responses.
4. **EXAMINATIONS:** Formal evaluations **may** consist of two days of testing which will consist of a 45- 55 question multiple choice test (one day), and at least one free response (one day). The students should be prepared that for each unit they **could** take tests over two days. The structure of the tests will be similar to that of the AP examination. After the first unit, students must be prepared for the tests to be **comprehensive**, meaning that any information covered during the semester (including current events) will be considered fair testing material. Multiple choice and essay exams in addition to requiring students to display knowledge of the subject matter, will serve to prepare them for the format of the AP exam.
5. **QUIZZES:** Students will be evaluated over the assigned reading material from the text. These evaluations will consist of 10 to 25 multiple choice and/or Free Response Questions and will constitute a daily grade. Some quizzes throughout the semester will be over combined chapters. Occasionally, students will be quizzed on current events that have been part of our class discussion or reading. Each of these will also count as a daily grade.

All quizzes and tests will be administered during class time unless instructed otherwise. If you are present and do not submit the assessment during class time you will receive a zero. If you are absent, you will be permitted to take a make-up assessment and the zero will be replaced. Make up Quizzes and Tests are available on Thursdays during tutorials.

6. **GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURE:** Unit examinations, along with the research assignment, various projects and some of the in-class essays will

constitute 60% of each grading period. The free response essays will be graded according to a rubric designed for that topic or assignment. Quizzes over the text, presentations, statistical analysis assignments, discussions, current events and other daily work will constitute the other 40% of a student's grade. The semester final grade shall be calculated by the following formula: Average = 40% of 1st nine weeks + 40% of 2nd nine weeks + 20% semester final project.

7. **MAKE UP PROCEDURES AND TUTORING:** Each student is responsible for their own make up work. Notes and assignments missed due to an absence (excused or unexcused) must be made up on the student's own time and by appointment with the teacher or posted make-up and tutorial times. Work assigned before an absence is due on the day the student returns to class (virtual or face to face). All other work must be made up within a week of the absence during posted make up times. All make-up times and tutoring availability are subject to change and appropriate notice will be provided when possible.
8. **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Students caught participating either actively or passively in academic dishonesty on an evaluation, a quiz or a test, will receive a permanent zero and lose all ability to retest. All written assignments should also be the work of the student and will undergo a plagiarism checker, including AI generated responses, when submitted electronically. If plagiarism is found the student will receive a zero for the assignment. If the student is caught cheating a second time the student will be referred to the office. Academic dishonesty is not something that will be tolerated. The use of AI generated responses is also academic dishonesty for this course. This course is designed to prepare students for the AP exam and all assignments are meant to assist to this end.