

2014-2015 Advanced Placement United States Government- H. Vinson
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Course Overview- Advanced Placement United States Government examines the history and the creation of our government. The course connects policy making between the four institutions of government and the influence of the media, public opinion, interest groups have on the political process. The class is taught with college-level expectations and standards. There is a substantial amount of reading on a nightly basis as well as preparation for weekly seminar discussion. A public policy research project is a vital component of the course and the instructor will coordinate an optional research day over a weekend at NC State to supplement the course as well as time with our in-house media resources.

Structure of the Test- the Advanced Placement US Government and Politics Examination is 2 hours and 25 minutes and consists of:

Section 1- 60 multiple choice questions (45 minutes)

Section 2- Four Required Free response Essay questions (100 minutes)

Course Objectives- AP Government Students will be able to:

- Evaluate the significance of primary and secondary sources
- Analyze, interpret, and infer using charts, graphs, and statistics
- Synthesize information into concise and factual essay writing
- Defend/support a position using data driven analysis
- Compare and Contrast varying political points of view
- Prepare for comprehensive assessments at the end of every unit of study
- Work cooperatively with peers in roundtable discussions, issue analysis groups, and writing circles
- Complete a semester-long research project on public policy using a variety of sources

Outline for the Course/Thematic breakdown

1. Constitutional foundation of the United State Government
2. Political Theory and Political Socialization
3. Impact of Linkage Institutions - Political Parties, Elections, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
4. Formal Institution of Government- Congress, Presidency, Judiciary, Bureaucracy
5. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
6. Scope and Creation of Public Policy

Grading Policies- In keeping with school-wide policies grades will be weighted either as Major Grades (55%), Minor Grades (35%), Homework (10%)

Major Grades- Unit Tests, Analytical Essays, Public Policy Project, Sum of Friday Seminar Discussions (per Quarter), Practice Released Exams

Minor Grades- Unit Reading/Vocabulary Quizzes, Weekly Chart/Graph/Map/Cartoon Interpretation and Analysis, Essay Scaffolding

Homework- Weekly Public Policy Journal Notebook, Vocabulary Practice, Chapter Outlines/Questions, Nightly reading check in quizzes via Socratic (app on phones or computer)

Teaching Strategies- Most class meetings will include lecture via power point presentation. Discussion of supplemental readings will occur per unit with guided discussion. Weekly practice with chart and graph analysis will also be utilized. Students will be grouped off and assigned a topic to research as issue analysis is a key component to understanding the political process the linkage between institutions. A separate handout will be given out prior to the first debate.

The paired students will be facilitators for that unit's roundtable discussion. All students are expected to participate and will be assessed for their seminar participation/role as a leader. Practice Free Response questions will occur during each unit and will be discussed during class writing circles. Major Assessments will consist of multiple choice questions from released AP Gov't exams and free response questions given at the end of each unit. Quizzes will consist of short answer and fill in the blank questions covering primary/secondary text readings and assigned unit vocabulary. Occasional video clips will also be incorporated. A weekly public policy journal assignment is due, guidelines to follow.

Student Expectations-

- ✓ Prepare to take the AP United State Government Exam on Tuesday, May 12th 2015
- ✓ Be in class on time, prepared to participate and learn from your instructor as well as your peers. Do your best to be in class for the whole period. Contact me if you will be out via email.
- ✓ HOT Lunch Tutorials- Required if average is failing course or missing any Major Assignment
- ✓ Work cooperatively with others. Organization of study groups is encouraged outside class.
- ✓ Maintain a high degree of integrity in your written work. Citations are a must for non-original sources. MLA format is required. www.citationmachine.com is excellent.
- ✓ Refine your research skills through writing and analysis of material.
- ✓ Plan time to complete assignments. I will use unit calendar system to be given out in class and also on the class Google Doc
- ✓ Use some type of organization system for notes, handouts, issue analysis, and returned work. An organized notebook will be a valuable tool for AP Exam Preparation.
- ✓ While a *love* of politics is not necessary, taking the course in the shadow of a major Presidential election will give you insight and a foundation for understanding our political system. You *might* just be a political junkie in training.