



AP United States Government and Politics

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Room F125

AP United States Government and Politics is not a history class but a Political Science Class!!!

Course Overview & Objectives

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a year-long high school course equivalent to a one-semester introductory college course in the U.S. government, allowing high school students the opportunity to earn college credit. This course provides a **college-level**, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. Students will study U.S. foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals to gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behavior. They will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. Additionally, they will complete a political science research project or an applied civics project. This course will equip students with the political knowledge and reasoning skills to engage in meaningful and thoughtful discussions and debates that are currently shaping American politics and society. By the end of this course, students will be active political scientists who can analyze current and historical political events and develop factually accurate, well-reasoned, and thoughtful arguments.

AP Exam

This class also prepares students for the College Board AP United States Government and Politics exam, which will be administered on **May 4, 2027, at 8:00 AM.**

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

Multiple-Choice Questions:

Number of Questions: 55

Structure – The multiple-choice questions 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 hypothetical and real-world scenarios

Timing: 80 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

Free-Response Questions:

Number of Questions: 4

Structure – The four questions on the free-response will ask students to:

- ✓ Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios (Concept Application - 20 Min)
- ✓ Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases (SCOTUS - 20 Min)
- ✓ Analyze quantitative data (Quantitative - 20 Min)
- ✓ Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence (Argumentative - 40 Min)

Timing: 100 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

To be successful in this course and on the AP Exam, students must make connections among the units, and especially among the institutions and actors. Students are expected to analyze political information, regardless of

its format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned opinion based on it. The course has been designed to achieve this aim through its course content, big ideas, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices.

Text and other Class Materials

- Required Text: Edwards, George C., and Martin P. Wattenberg. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*, 2016 Presidential Election Edition, 17th Edition, AP Edition. Pearson, 2018.
- Other Materials: Students will also be assigned various readings/assignments from current newspapers, news magazines, and news footage from sources such as NPR, *The US News and World Report*, *The New York Times*, C-SPAN, *The Wall Street Journal*, Major news outlets, BBC, and *Time* to engage with political data and political analysis. They may also use a supplemental text (Wolfford, David. *United States Government and Politics*, 2nd ed. AMSCO School Publications, Inc., a division of Perfection Learning, 2018.) or other readings.
- Required Foundational Documents - *The Declaration of Independence*, *The Articles of Confederation*, *Federalist No. 10*, *Brutus No. 1*, *Federalist No. 39*, *Federalist No. 51*, *The Constitution of the United States*, *Federalist No. 70*, *Federalist No. 78*, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, *the Emancipation Proclamation*, *The Gettysburg Address*, and *The Wealth of Nations* (Adam Smith)
- Required Supreme Court Cases- Students will read, examine, and analyze the reasoning and court opinions of 14 Supreme Court cases (*Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, *US v. Lopez*, *Shaw v. Reno*, *Baker v. Carr*, *Engel v. Vitale*, *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, *Tinker v. Des Moines*, *Schenck v. United States*, *New York Times v. United States*, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Citizens United v. FEC*, and *McDonald v. Chicago*).
- Suggested Resource- Any AP Review Book - Kaplan, Princeton Review, 5 Steps to a 5, etc. - can be bought from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc

Areas of Study: The course will examine the connections between these topics; therefore, certain course concepts will be taught on an ongoing basis and/or as part of a review. The exam dates are tentative and may be adjusted to meet instructional time.

Semester 1:

- Unit I: Foundations of American Democracy
- Unit II: Interactions Among Branches of Government
- Unit III: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Semester 2:

- Unit IV: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs
- Unit V: Political Participation

AP Exam: May 4th

Civics Test: TBD, but after May 4th

Applied Civics Project Due: est May 20th

Course Outline

The course outline below serves as a guide for our study and learning. At the beginning of each unit, students will receive a more detailed calendar with specific due dates and updated readings, activities, etc.

Unit of Study	Approx. Time	Topics	Readings
1-Foundations of American Democracy 15-22% of AP Exam	3-4 weeks	• Introduction to government and politics • Theories/Principles of democratic government • Articles of Confederation • Formulation of Constitution & the ensuing debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists • Major ideas found within the Constitution- separation of powers, checks and balances, etc • Federalism- relationship between states & national government	Edwards- Ch. 1, 2, 3 Declaration of Independence Federalists 10, 51 Brutus 1 Articles of Confederation The Constitution

2- Interactions Among Branches of Government 25-36% of AP Exam	5-6 weeks	● Formal and Informal institutional arrangements of power ● Relationships among the four institutions and balances of power ● Linkages between institutions and public opinions, voters, interest groups, political parties, media, state governments, etc. ● Congress □ Characteristics of Legislative Branch and its members □ Congressional Elections □ Compare/Contrast House and Senate - Congressional Leaders, Committees, Caucuses, Staff, etc □ Congressional Decision Making and Bill to Law Process ● Presidency □ Characteristics of Presidential Office □ Roles and Powers of President, limits on Presidential power □ Office of the President □ President and Policy □ Presidential Relationship to the public, media, Congress, etc □ Presidential appointments □ Impeachment ● Courts □ Characteristics of the Judicial Branch □ Structure of the Federal court system □ Responsibilities and role of the judicial system □ Judicial nominations □ Supreme Court & Judicial Review ● Bureaucracy □ Organization of federal bureaucracies - Role and powers of regulation □ Iron Triangles □ Effectiveness of Bureaucracies	Edwards- Ch. 11, 12, 14, 15 The Constitution Federalists 70, 78
3- Civil Liberties and Civil Rights 13-18% of AP Exam	4-5 weeks	● Development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation ● Difference between civil liberties and civil rights ● Knowledge of rights and liberties granted to Americans and debates surrounding them- specifically the Bill of Rights, 1st Amendment, 2nd Amendment, defendant's rights, right to privacy, equal protection clause, discrimination, minority groups, and affirmative action. ● Impact of 14th Amendment on constitutional development of rights and liberties	Edwards- Ch. 4, 5 The Constitution Letters from the Birmingham Jail

4- American Political Ideologies and Beliefs 10-15% of AP Exam	4-5 weeks	• Demographic trends, socialization, and ideology- and their influence on politics • Public opinion polls • Political participation • American beliefs and opinions on government • Using and interpreting political data • Mass Media and Politics- History of, Structure and Function of, Influence of, Involvement in Politics, etc.	Edwards- Ch. 6, 7
5- Political Participation 20-27% of AP Exam	3-4 weeks	• Functions, Organization, and development of Political Parties • Advantages and Disadvantages of Political Parties • Effects on the political process • Electoral System • Elections- primaries, caucuses, etc. • Political Campaigns – especially finance • Voting Behavior • Interest groups- the role of, types of, activities of, effects of • PACs	Edwards- Ch. 8, 9, 10 The Constitution
Public Policy will be integrated throughout each unit, including how it works in a federal system, policy agendas, the role of institutions in policy enactment, the role of bureaucracy in policy implementation, and the role of linkage institutions in the policy process.			

Throughout the above content units, we will practice skills and reasoning processes. After we have covered all the above units of study, we will spend our remaining time reviewing for the AP exam by completing practice multiple-choice exams, practicing FRQ timed essays, conducting data analysis practice, and taking mock exams.

It is the policy of the Clarksville Montgomery County School System to follow the dictates of state statutes in the selection and use of all instructional materials. Parents or legal guardians may request to review any instructional materials used in the classroom of the parent or legal guardian's child, following the guidelines outlined in [Instructional Policy INS-A073](https://www.cmcss.net/instruction/documents/), also found at: <https://www.cmcss.net/instruction/documents/>

Instructional Plan

This course is designed to challenge you at a college level and engage you in the content daily. Students can expect to engage in the following work during this course:

- **Chapter Reviews**- Students will be asked to complete these assignments per chapter outside of our daily coursework. Students will be given these assignments on the first day of our study of a new chapter, and they will be due before the chapter quiz. These will prepare students for their chapter quizzes and provide time to complete tasks that practice vocabulary, writing, concept mastery, and analytical skills.
- **Vocabulary**- Vocabulary is crucial for this class. Students will need to understand what the word means and how it applies to the many concepts we will be studying. The definitions will be provided in the readings or by the instructor in Google Classroom. Students will be responsible for writing out the definitions outside of our daily coursework.
- **Chapter and Vocabulary Quizzes** – After a textbook chapter of study, students will be required to show their mastery of the chapter's content through a short quiz. The quiz will include:
 - multiple choice questions
 - vocabulary mastery
 - short answer questions
 - quantitative(data) / qualitative(reading) analysis question.
- **Unit Tests & FRQ Essays**- After each unit of study, students will be required to show and apply their mastery of the unit's content through an exam that resembles the AP exam. This exam will include multiple-choice questions and at least one FRQ (Free Response Question) essay. There are 5 units of study in this course; thus, students can expect 6 unit exams (Unit 2 is broken into 2 sections). However, students will be given additional FRQ essays to practice writing on their chapter homework and throughout the course.
 - FRQ Essays include numerous skills, and students will practice these throughout the year. Tests will include any combination of the 4 AP GoPo FRQ types.
 - SCOTUS Comparison
 - Argument Essay
 - Concept Application
 - Quantitative Analysis
- **Test Corrections**: Students will have the opportunity to make corrections on their tests. For each question the student corrects, they can earn ½ credit back if completed to standard. Test corrections will be completed

before or after school in the classroom; the tests will not leave the classroom. Students have 5 class days to complete any test corrections. Coordinating times must be done with the instructor.

- **Lecture & Note Taking**—Students will be involved in a lecture on each unit topic. We will use Cornell Notes in class. These may take the entire class period (some may be assigned outside of class), but students can expect to take notes and listen to a lecture that aids their understanding of the basic concepts, patterns, and processes. Students will be expected to catch up and aid in the discussions. Resources for each lecture will be posted in Google Classroom.
- **Supplemental Readings**- Students will be asked to read various supplemental documents to further their understanding of concepts, patterns, and processes. These may be primary source materials such as the Required Foundational Documents, secondary sources, or current sources. Supplementary readings will be completed in and out of class. These will often be used in class discussions and are imperative for prior knowledge.
- **Discussions, Simulations, & Projects**- Students will have opportunities to engage further in the current topic of study through various discussions, projects, simulations, and research.
- **POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH OR APPLIED CIVICS PROJECT**—This is a required part of the AP curriculum. This project adds a civic component to the course, engaging students in exploring how they can be affected by government and politics throughout their lives. It will occur after the AP exam in May.
- **Final Exams/Other Assessments**- The first-semester midterm will be a traditional cumulative exam of the semester's content that will count for 20% of the semester grade. If you take the AP Exam in May, that will be your final for the 2nd semester. If you do not take the AP Exam, you will be required to take an in-class final.
 - Students will also be required to take the state-required Civics test, which is a graduation requirement. They must earn 70% or higher on this test, which will occur around Spring Break.

Grading

According to school policy, a student's grade is determined by a 20% final exam and 80% class grade. Our in-class grade will be determined by the following:

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| • Tests, Essays, Quizzes, Vocab, and Projects (including Required Civic Action Project) | 50% |
| • Class Work (in-class assignments, participation, discussion formative assessments) | 25% |
| • Homework (Chapter Review, Readings, Flash Cards) | 25% |

The Clarksville-Montgomery County School System uses a numerical grading system to report student progress to parents. A grade of 60 or above is considered passing, and a grade of 59 or below is considered failing.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

- *Students taking an AP class and completing the AP Exam shall have 5 percentage points added to the grades used to calculate the semester average.*

Make-Up Work Policy: All make-up work will be handled per CMCSS board policy. The number of days a student has to complete missing work equals the number of days absent. If a student is absent due to a school-based trip, they are still responsible for completing any missed work. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the teacher and make up any missed work. If a student misses a test, they are responsible for making arrangements with the teacher to complete the missed assessment. A grade of zero will be given for any missed work due to absence and will be updated upon the assignment's completion. If work is not completed within the allotted time, a grade of zero will be recorded.

Late Work Policy: All assignments are due on the specified date and time. **Late work will not be accepted for credit.** If you are absent and excused on the date an assignment is due, you will be responsible for bringing the assignment to class the day you return to school. Please inform me if you will be out for an extended period.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations - As this is a college-level course, students will be challenged! You may work harder in this class than others, but it is beneficial! All work is purposeful and intentional, designed to help you succeed. It is expected that students follow the guidelines below:

- This course will require students to be involved in class discussions, activities, and lectures, so **regular attendance is a necessity**.
- If class is missed for any reason, students are **expected to stay on pace** with the rest of the class. Students should check the Unit Schedule, Weekly Agenda, and absent folders in the classroom (all work with your name on it will be placed in these folders), as well as Google Classroom, to avoid falling behind and complete any missed assignments or lecture notes.
- This course will also require students to complete work outside of the classroom walls. While students may not have homework every single night, they often do. Homework serves an excellent purpose in this class, as it prepares students to actively participate and apply their knowledge to gain a deeper understanding of the material. **Students must complete their assigned homework on time and independently**. The use of AI to complete assignments will be considered cheating. Cheating is not helpful to anyone and will not be tolerated!
 - **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED!**
- **Cheating:** Per the Code of Conduct (STS-M001 pg. 23), if caught **cheating/plagiarizing / forgery / unapproved use of AI**, students will receive a zero for that assignment, and a referral will be sent to the administration.
 - 2nd infraction, the student may be removed from class
- If a student falls behind, is confused about content, needs some extra help, or needs a quiet place to complete homework, students can attend the afterschool tutoring with their instructor if arranged. **Tests and quizzes may only be made up before or after school- never during class.**
- School rules apply in this room- not using the restroom during the first 10 minutes or last 10 minutes of class, using electronic devices only for educational purposes, and following established district and school cell phone and electronic communication device policies.

Student Supplies:

- We will use laptops for some of our in-class work. Your laptop must be charged. It is also helpful for students to have a tool or device to keep and organize resources for use outside of class.
- **A minimum of a 1.5" 3-ring binder is required (all course material will be kept in the binder).**
- **Minimum of 10 binder dividers**
- **A spiral/composition notebook or loose-leaf lined paper**
- **Pencil - Extra lead and erasers**
- **Highlighters (at least 3 separate colors)**
- **Colored Pencils**
- **Sticky tabs (optional, used for quick reference in notes)**
- **Note Cards for Vocabulary**
- **Corded Headphones**
- *You do not need to bring your Edwards text to class daily, but keep it somewhere safe. Losing or damaging this book makes you financially responsible for it.*

Classroom Expectations:

The following rules have been established to facilitate a positive learning environment in which students can comfortably contribute to their own learning. Students are strongly encouraged and expected to ask questions and contribute to class discussions. No one should ever be afraid to ask questions and contribute their knowledge, experiences, or opinions in class. Please be sure to update yourself on the CMCSS and Kirkwood Policies.

1. Respect and be polite to all people.
2. Speak at appropriate times, using appropriate voice and language.
3. Be in your seat and ready to begin when the bell rings.
4. Respect the classroom and other people's property.
5. Bring all needed materials to class.
6. Follow all school rules.
7. Participate, Participate, Participate

Behavior & Conduct: Students will follow the CMCSS Code of Conduct and the rules outlined in the Kirkwood High School Student Handbook at all times. The Student Code of Conduct for the 2024-2025 school year has been revised; make sure you review it and are familiar with the revisions. Behaviors that interfere with the learning process and our academic environment, or that show a lack of respect for others, will not be tolerated.

Tardies: If a student is late, it will be documented in PowerSchool. After three tardies, the student will be referred. An AP student must be in class. If your student is consistently tardy, they will miss crucial content and strategies they need for their AP test.

Kirkwood High School Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy: At Kirkwood High, we want your learning to reflect *your own* thinking, effort, and growth. To make sure everyone has a fair chance to succeed, the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or any other AI that helps with writing, research, problem-solving, or analysis, is **not allowed** for schoolwork.

Here is what that means for you:

- **Homework and Assignments:** All assignments should be your own original work. You cannot use AI tools to write essays, answer questions, help you research, or generate any part of your homework.
- **Class Discussions and Presentations:** When you speak in class or give a presentation, your ideas should come from you, not from an AI tool. This includes preparing your notes and/or slides.
- **Projects and Group Work:** Whether you are working solo or in a group, don't use AI to plan, research, or create any part of the project. Everyone in a group is responsible for keeping things "AI-free."
- **Academic Integrity:** Turning in work made by AI, or using it to get ahead, is considered cheating. It is not fair to your classmates, and it does not help you grow as a learner.

If an AI tool is ever approved for use on a given assignment, the teacher will communicate and model how to use the AI tool appropriately for that task. If you are ever unsure about what counts as using AI, ask your teacher first. The faculty at Kirkwood High is here to help you learn how to use these types of tools and resources ethically.

o AI usage is outlined in the following guidelines: [SLT-A005 Artificial Intelligence Acceptable Use Policy](#) and the [STS-M001 Student Code of Conduct](#), also found at:
<https://www.cmcss.net/directors-office/documents/>

Contacting Mr. Galbraith

The best way to contact me is through Parent Square or email. I will respond as soon as possible, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM. I will not answer emails over the weekend unless there is an emergency. For phone calls, please call the number on the first page of the syllabus before or after school. If you call during classroom hours, please leave a message, and I will return your call after school. In the event of a voicemail, please leave the name of the student, your name, and the nature of the concern. I will try to call you back as soon as possible.

Syllabus Acknowledgment and Signature Sheet—AP U.S. Government and Politics—Please return this to your teacher or scan the QR code below. This will be the 1st grade for the class.

The link to the digital syllabus can be found on the Kirkwood Homepage, Staff Directory
(<https://kirkwoodhigh.cmcss.net/user/jesse.galbraith/>)

Telephone #1 () _____ Telephone #2 () _____

Email address: _____ @ _____

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian

Signature of Parent or Guardian

To Students:

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and understood the course description and expectations, and I will do my best to succeed in my study of AP United States Government and Politics.

Printed Name of Student

Signature of Student

I will make almost all contact and messaging via ParentSquare. However, if you prefer a secondary way that I contact you regarding necessary updates on your child's grade, academic performance, or behavior, please indicate that below.

_____ E-mail (please ensure e-mail above is correct)

_____ Phone Call

Please scan to acknowledge this syllabus digitally