

AP United States Government and Politics

SEMESTER TWO

Spring 2026

MR. OBERG

CONTACT MR. OBERG: scott.oberg@moundsvIEWSschools.org

COURSE OVERVIEW

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a college-level semester-long course that not only seeks to prepare students for success on the AP Exam in May, but also provides students with the political knowledge and reasoning processes 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 and the behaviors and attitudes that shape this system and are the byproduct of this system.

AP U.S. Government and Politics accomplishes these goals by framing the acquisition of political knowledge around enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics that can be applied to a set of disciplinary practices through the use of a set of reasoning processes. Through the development of this set of political knowledge, disciplinary practices, and reasoning processes, by the end of the course, students will be able to analyze current and historical political events like a political scientist and develop factually accurate, well reasoned, thoughtful arguments and opinions that acknowledge and grapple with alternative political perspectives.

Textbook: *American Government*, by James Q. Wilson, John J. DiIulio Jr. & Meena Bose, Houghton Mifflin, 14th Edition.

CONTENT OUTLINE

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

- Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy
- Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government
- Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
- Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs
- Unit 5: Political Participation

COURSE CONTENT AND BIG IDEAS

The course content consists of the essential political knowledge that will be synthesized in the construction of enduring understandings and big ideas about American government and politics. The big ideas that connect the content in the course units include:

- Constitutionalism (CON)
- Liberty and Order (LOR)
- Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD)
- Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI)
- Methods of Political Analysis (MPA)

REASONING PROCESSES

The reasoning processes are the thought processes that will facilitate connection-making and analysis in the pursuit of effectively executing the disciplinary practices in the course. In other words, the reasoning processes form the cognitive bridge between the course content/big ideas and disciplinary practices. The reasoning processes in this course include:

- Definition/Classification: Demonstrating knowledge of course concepts
- Explain - Process: Explaining political processes
- Explain - Causation: Explaining the causes and effects of political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors
- Explain - Comparison: Explaining similarities and differences among political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors

DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

The disciplinary practices are the tasks that students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices 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 disciplinary practices in this course include:

- Practice 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context
- Practice 2: Apply Supreme Court decisions
- Practice 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics
- Practice 4: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources
- Practice 5: Develop an argument in essay format

Every AP Exam question fuses course content, reasoning processes, and disciplinary practices. Thus, in-class and outside of class assignments will focus on the acquisition of course content and the application of course content to disciplinary practices using reasoning skills.

REQUIRED FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of nine 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"

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 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)

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Very Simple!

1. Be in your seat when the bell rings, otherwise you will be marked tardy.
2. Be attentive (you have been in school for many years, you know what this means) when Mr. Oberg is speaking.

WHAT IF I MISS A CLASS?

Check the course webpage and Google Classroom for additional information and assignments

EATING AND DRINKING

Feel free to eat and drink, but. . .

NO LITTERING

If you spill, clean it up!

CELL PHONES/EARBUDS

If a cell phone and/or earbuds/airpods are brought to school, the phone must be placed in the caddy (attendance will be completed using your assigned phone caddy slot) and earbuds/airpods must be placed in a backpack or pocket during class time. Cell phones must not be heard or visible to teachers at any time during class (bell to bell).

All MVHS teachers are directed to refer students that choose not to place their phone in a classroom phone caddy to administration. Upon meeting with administration, students will be required to leave their phone in the front office for the remainder of the school day. They may pick up their phone after school, but will then be required to leave their phone in the front office during school hours the following day.

GRADING

In accordance with the Mounds View High School grading syllabus, the core purpose of grades is to communicate the academic achievement of a student against the course standards

Unit Multiple Choice Tests 20%

Unit Free Response Questions 20%

Required Documents 10%

Required Supreme Court Cases 10%

Civic Engagement Project / Mock Congress 10%

Final Exam 10%

Practice 15%

Breaking News 5%

Proficiency Based Learning

[What is PBL?](#)

Students will demonstrate their understanding of the curriculum through both formative and summative assessments and receive feedback using the following:

Not Proficient (1)	Developing (2)	Proficient (3)	Mastery (4)
---------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	--------------------

RE-LEARNING

Grades communicate academic achievement based on performance (unit tests and final exam) for this class. Practice such as class work, learning experiences, and teacher feedback will prepare you for the unit tests and final exam. However, when a score on a unit test does not accurately represent what you know, understand and can do, a relearning plan is in place to provide you with another opportunity to show what you know, understand and can do. **The score on the retake will replace your score on the original assessment.**

Only Unit Test MCQs are eligible for a re-learning plan and retake

The re-learning plan in US Government is as follows:

[What is PBL?](#)

The re-learning plan in APGoPo is as follows:

- The student will complete handwritten notes for all assigned readings from the text for the unit
- The student will show the handwritten notes and any additional study materials to Mr. Oberg before retaking the unit reassessment
- The student will take the unit reassessment within one week of receiving their original score

Note: Grades are not rounded up, no extra credit is offered, and under no circumstances will grades be “bumped” at the end of the semester.

MISS CLASS DUE TO ILLNESS?

Turn work into Google Classroom no more than two (2) days after you return to school. In other words, you receive two (2) days of grace for every one (1) day you are ill.

MISS CLASS FOR ANY OTHER REASON?

Turn work into Google Classroom immediately upon your return to class.

YOUR GRADE IS COMPRISED OF THE FOLLOWING:

Assignments: *Practice – 15% Category*

You will be moving through the text FAST, and unlike some other courses, you really NEED the readings for this course. It is different from, but will supplement what we will work on in class. You will need the information/ideas from both the notes and readings in order to gain a deep understanding of U.S. Government and Politics, and subsequently to score well on the AP Exam. If you don't do the reading, expect to do poorly on the AP Exam, and probably on all our quizzes/tests/final, etc.

Unit Tests: *Performance – 85% Category*

Each test shall consist of 20-30 questions: matching, multiple choice, and interpreting maps, graphs, charts, and political cartoons. Each question will be worth 1 point. Additionally, each test will have a writing component called a free-response question (FRQ). All test questions and FRQs will be from the

College Board's AP U.S. Government exams and test banks. Mr. Oberg will not be writing or designing the tests. The tests will be practice for the actual AP Exam.

Civic Engagement Project: *Performance – 85% Category*

A Civic Engagement Project will be assigned and completed at the end of the semester, the CEP will comprise 10% of the "Performance" category.

Final Exam: *Performance – 85% Category*

An actual, full length AP US Government examination spread over 2 days at the end of the semester, this exam will comprise 15% of the "Performance" category.

OVERVIEW OF THE AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS EXAM

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will last for 3 hours and be comprised of the following two sections:

Multiple-Choice Questions:

Number of Questions: 55

Structure – The questions on multiple choice 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: One hour and 20 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
- Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
- Analyze quantitative data
- Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence

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

Mr. Oberg reserves the right to edit or change any part of the course syllabus at any point during the semester