

Welcome to AP U.S. Government & Politics! In this packet, I'd like to tell you a little bit about the course, what to expect, general grading policies and other guidelines, and get you started with some technology information. As we work together this year, you'll learn all about the intricacies of American government and politics. Through discussions, debates, projects, simulations, and more you will learn a multitude of information that can help you next year, in college, and beyond! Here's looking to a great year ☺

~Mrs. Oels

### So what is this class about?

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. Through the study of foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals, you will gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behaviors. Throughout the course you will read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. Should you choose to take the AP Test in May, you could earn college credit for a one-semester introductory college course in U.S. Government. (Check with your college - it's usually Political Science 101.)

### What do I need for this class?

- ✓ Something for your notes. You'll need to take notes and store handouts. This could be:
  - o An actual notebook that you can write your own notes in along with a folder to store handouts OR
  - o A three-ring binder with notebook paper that you use for this class or share with another class
- ✓ A pen or pencil
- ✓ Optional: Your books
  - o We don't use the textbook or reader in class often, but feel free to bring them as needed
- ✓ Optional: AP Test Prep book
  - o This can be useful for studying for unit tests as well as the final exam and the AP exam
- ✓ Optional: Computer/iPad
  - o Studies show everyone learns better when they write things on their own. However, you may choose to appropriately use your computer during class as needed. If you are not using your computer responsibly, it will be removed from your possession for the duration of the class period, and points will be deducted from your class participation grade.

### 2 General Classroom Guidelines

- 1) BE RESPECTFUL!! We will be covering many topics, some of which could be controversial. You are encouraged to discuss your views, but please keep in mind that others may have different viewpoints.
- 2) BE RESPONSIBLE. This includes coming to class on time, having the necessary items, using class time wisely, etc.

**Grading Guidelines** - Throughout this year you will have many different assignments. Each of these assignments will be worth a certain amount of points. EVERYTHING IS WEIGHTED EQUALLY. The bigger or more important the assignment is, the more points it will be worth. You will be told how you are being graded when each assignment is given out.

**Homework/Classwork**: As this class is an AP class, homework assignments will often consist of a reading to be done prior to coming to class. While a point-style grade might not be assigned (except as part of your class consciousness grade - see below), it is imperative that you complete the assignment as you will often need to be able to discuss it in class on the due date.

**Tests** - Each unit will conclude with a test modeled after the AP Test. We'll go into more detail as the first test nears, but you'll have the entire block to answer multiple choice questions and 1-2 free response questions from each unit. An in-class review will be done prior to each test, though you are encouraged to review on your own.

**Quizzes** - Quizzes in AP U.S. GoPo can be announced or unannounced. They will be similar to quizzes you would have in your other classes (multiple-choice, T/F, matching, short answer) and will be worth 10-30 points.

**Debates** - Throughout the year we will complete several debates concerning current issues as they are related to the units we study. Details about the setup of debates will be given at the time the first debate is assigned. Debates are worth 100 points.

**Projects** - Throughout the year you will complete several projects. Details to each project will be given at the time the project is assigned. Projects are usually worth 25-50 points.

**Class Consciousness Grade** - This is similar to what might be a class participation grade in other classes. Because we use technology so often, it's easy to participate even if you're shy! However, it's also really easy to get off track. The class consciousness grade is meant to keep you on track. This grade is worth 10 points and will be given once per month. Stay on task, actively participate, use technology and supplies appropriately, and complete your assignments on time to earn a 10/10.

**Fees** - I do accept late work, but you will receive a penalty of -5 points/day late. Additionally, should you forget to put your name on an assignment, you will lose 2 points for making me break out my detective skills to figure out who you are.

**Plagiarism** - Plagiarism will not be tolerated! Refer to your student handbook for details on the school's policy concerning plagiarism. Remember that copying or sharing your work is a form of plagiarism as is using AI to complete your assignment and copying that.

**Extra Credit** - Extra credit will be given throughout the marking period. No extra credit will be given at the end of the marking period purely to bring your grade up, especially if you haven't completed assignments throughout the marking period. Want 2 extra credit points now? Email Mrs. Oels a pic of your pet. Don't have a pet? Email her a pic of an adorable panda. This extra credit opportunity expires on Monday, 9/8/2025.

## **Film Resources**

At times, we may use films to help us in our study of American Government & Politics as well as clips from shows such as *Last Week with John Oliver*, *The Daily Show*, and more. Some of these films or clips may contain adult language. Please be aware that other arrangements can be made for you if you are against viewing this type of material. All clips, films, etc. will be related to American Government & Politics.

## **Technology Resources**

Throughout the year we will be using a variety of technology. You will have access to these resources in school, however most of them also have apps that you can download for free to your personal tablet/iPad, smartphone, etc. if you wish. Please use your school email for these apps.

1. Google Classroom – The majority of assignments, notes, etc. will be posted on Google Classroom. The Tech Dept should have already enrolled you in our Classroom, but if they did not, please see Mrs. Oels so she can invite you to the classroom.
2. AP Classroom - You will need to join our AP Classroom by logging into your College Board/AP account and entering the following join code:
  - 1A AP GoPo: ANMQWV
  - 2B AP GoPo: YX4M7P
3. AI Platforms - It is understandable that you may wish to use AI platforms to help you succeed this year. While you are welcome to use AI appropriately to generate ideas or help you understand something, you may NOT use it to complete your work. Copying from AI = plagiarism. Use AI only to help you find information - the work needs to be in your own words.

## **Technology Policies**

While we will be using technology throughout the year, we are all too dependent on our devices. Therefore, we will be following the school's policies regarding cell phones, computers, and other technology in order to use it in a professional manner. This means:

- The only technology you may have at your desk is your computer/iPad.
  - This should stay closed until you are given permission to use it.
- Phones, earbuds, etc. must be placed in your parking lot pocket when you come to class. Feel free to use the powerstrips to charge as needed during class.
  - You may NOT access your phone or other devices if you leave the room to use the bathroom, get a drink, go to the office, etc.
  - You will be given approximately two minutes at the end of class to retrieve your items from the parking lot.

## **Relaxation Corner**

Should you finish work early and need to take a little break, you may visit the relaxation corner, which includes:

- Puzzle books
- Games (play quietly with a friend or two who has also finished their work)
- Puzzles
- Coloring books (yes, completed pictures can be hung on the walls)
- Blank paper to draw on

What you may **NOT** do: take your phone/devices out of the parking lot before time is up. You can go 75 minutes without your phone. Seriously, you can.

## **Classroom Supplies**

Feel free to help yourself to the supplies in the classroom should you need them. Please use them appropriately and throw out any trash.

- Basic supplies such as paper, pencils, handouts, etc. are found on the supply table next to the bookcase. These items may be taken from the classroom.
- Markers, colored pencils, highlighters, and more are on the bookcase. Please return these items when you are finished using them.
- Tissues are located throughout the room. Feel free to step outside if you have a particularly loud sneeze or need to blow your nose. Please throw used tissues in the trash! (The trash can is located next to the door.)
- The Pit Stop is located next to the door. Use the hall pass and other items appropriately.

## **Contacting Mrs. Oels**

All classes are located in Room 232 .

<b>Block</b>	<b>A Day</b>	<b>B Day</b>
1	AP U.S. Government & Politics	Global Perspectives
2	You & the Law	AP U.S. Government & Politics
	Lunch	Lunch
3	You & the Law	Global Perspectives
4	Prep	Prep

In most cases, I'm available before or after school in room 232. Please let me know if you'll be stopping by so I can arrange to be here. Most mornings I'm here by 7:30, but please keep in mind that I do have an extra-long commute and can't control the traffic.

You can also contact me through email: [boels@spfk12.org](mailto:boels@spfk12.org)

- Please note: Emails received after 8:00 PM will be answered the following morning.

### Student Acceptance of Guidelines

Read through the guidelines with a parent/guardian. Then sign below and return this paper to your class bin at the beginning of our next class.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the guidelines and agree to abide by them this year.

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Student Name (Please Print!)

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Student Signature

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Date

### Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge that my student has agreed to abide by these guidelines.

Note: If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mrs. Oels via email at [boels@spfk12.org](mailto:boels@spfk12.org). Every attempt will be made to address your concerns.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date