

Mr. Balanda

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AP United States Government and Politics

Course Description: AP U.S. Government and Politics 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 behaviors. They will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In short, you will learn to think like a political scientist.

Suggested Class Materials:

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| ● 3 Ring Binder and/or Notebook | ● Folder | ● Textbook (Covered) |
| | ● Pen, pencil, highlighter | ● AP Test Prep Guide |

Grading: Student work will be divided into two categories: “Assessments” and “Homework/classwork”. “Assessments”, which can be homework, quizzes, tests and projects, will determine 80% of the student’s total grade. “Homework / classwork” which can be short duration homework or in-class assignments, activities and participation will determine 20% of the student’s total grade. Grades will be figured using total points system. This means that each assignment will be assigned a point value. Most assignments will follow these point allotments:

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| ● Tests/Projects/Papers | 100+ points |
| ● Quizzes | 50 points |
| ● Homework | 10 points |

Current Events: An essential part of any study of politics, is an extensive knowledge of the current political climate. Being able to discuss "real world" current events will greatly enhance the understanding of the theoretical concepts studied in class. Therefore, once a week a student will find an article from a reputable media source and give a current event presentation (10-15 min) that connects the chosen current event to the topic of study for the week.

Readings / Homework: In order to be successful in this college-level course, you must complete all readings and assignments prior to class. Required course readings are essential to your success in the class, as they will figure prominently in discussions, activities, projects, chapter tests, and the AP Exam in May.

Late Work: *I do not accept late work, without good reason.* Whether or not late work will be accepted for partial credit will be determined on a case by case basis.

Google Classroom & Remind: Classroom will be used throughout the year as a connection between teacher and student. It is expected that you will check our classroom frequently for assigned readings, activities, study materials, and general class information. **The classroom code is 5wyoh6f.** Additionally, I will use the Remind app to communicate with students outside of the classroom as needed. **To access our class on Remind text @wbalan to 81010.**

Classroom Policies:

1. Always come to class prepared to participate in class activities and discussions.
2. Always be respectful of course material and of your classmates.
3. Always do 100% of your own work. Unauthentic work will result in an automatic zero.
4. Never disrupt the learning environment.

Overview of the AP Exam:

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam is scheduled for May 6th and will be comprised of the following sections:

1. 55 Multiple-Choice Questions:

- a. Taken in 1 hour and 20 minutes and worth 50% of the exam grade

2. 4 Free-Response Questions:

- a. The four questions on the free response will ask students to:
 - i. Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios
 - ii. Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
 - iii. Analyze quantitative data
 - iv. Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence
- b. Taken in 1 hour and 40 minutes and worth 50% of the exam grade

Keys to Success in AP Gov:

Success in this course and on the AP Exam requires far more than the memorization of political knowledge. Instead, students must be able to:

- Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context
- Apply Supreme Court decisions to real world scenarios including other court cases
- Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics
- Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources
- Develop an argument in essay format

Therefore, a successful AP Gov student:

- Is motivated & dedicated to learning
- Exhibits diligent studying and homework habits
- Is prepared and organized
- Is able to multitask, prioritize activities, make deadlines
- Is able to work independently and in groups to accomplish goals
- Is willing to debate and develop political opinions
- Is willing to ask for help when needed
- Exhibits a growth mindset

Required Supreme Court Cases:

This course will incorporate the analysis of the following 15 required Supreme Court cases:

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| 1. <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> (1803) | 9. <i>New York Times Company v. U.S.</i> (1971) |
| 2. <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> (1819) | 10. <i>Wisconsin v. Yoder</i> (1972) |
| 3. <i>Schenck v. United States</i> (1919) | 11. <i>Roe v. Wade</i> (1973) |
| 4. <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954) | 12. <i>Shaw v. Reno</i> (1993) |
| 5. <i>Baker v. Carr</i> (1961) | 13. <i>U.S. v. Lopez</i> (1995) |
| 6. <i>Engel v. Vitale</i> (1962) | 14. <i>McDonald v. Chicago</i> (2010) |
| 7. <i>Gideon v. Wainwright</i> (1963) | 15. <i>Citizens United v. FEC</i> (2010) |
| 8. <i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i> (1969) | |

Required Foundational Documents:

This course will incorporate the analysis and discussion of nine required foundational documents.

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| 1. <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> | 5. <i>Federalist No. 51</i> |
| 2. <i>The Articles of Confederation</i> | 6. <i>The Constitution of the United States</i> |
| 3. <i>Federalist No. 10</i> | 7. <i>Federalist No. 70</i> |
| 4. <i>Brutus No. 1</i> | 8. <i>Federalist No. 78</i> |

9. Letter from Birmingham Jail

Course Outline (33 weeks total):

I. Foundations of American Democracy (4 weeks)

- *The U.S. Constitution arose out of important historical and philosophical ideas and preferences regarding popular sovereignty and limited government. Compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises have frequently been the source of conflict in U.S. politics over the proper balance between individual freedom, social order, and equality of opportunity.*
 1. How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty, while also promoting public order and safety?
 2. How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the U.S. Constitutional system?
 3. How does the development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact citizens and residents of the U.S.?

II. American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (4 weeks)

- *American political beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, elections, political parties, interest groups, the media, and the changing demographics of citizens. These beliefs about government, politics, and the individual's role in the political system influence the creation of public policies.*
 1. How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time?
 2. How do political ideology and core values influence government policy making?

III. Political Participation (8 weeks)

- *Governing is achieved directly through citizen participation and indirectly through institutions, like political parties, interest groups, and the mass media, that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics. The result is many avenues for citizen influence on policy making.*
 1. How have changes in technology influenced political communication and behavior?
 2. Why do levels of participation and influence in politics vary?
 3. How effective are the various methods of political participation in shaping public policies?

IV. Interactions Among the Branches of Government (12 weeks)

- *Because power is widely distributed and checks prevent one branch from usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in a position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern.*
 1. How do the branches of the national government compete and cooperate in order to govern?
 2. To what extent have changes in the powers of each branch affected how responsive and accountable the national government is in the 21st century?

V. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (4 weeks)

- *Through the U.S. Constitution, but primarily through the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment, citizens and groups have attempted to restrict national and state governments from unduly infringing upon individual rights essential to ordered liberty and from denying equal protection under the law.*
 1. To what extent do the U.S. Constitution and its amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from invidious discrimination?
 2. How have U.S. Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?

VII. AP Exam Review and Preparation (1 week)

AP EXAM MONDAY MAY 4, 2020

We have read the attached syllabus:

Student Name (printed)

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

*Please sign and return this to Mr. Balanda . **This is your first homework assignment.***