

Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics - Mr. Bertich

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Course Overview:

AP U.S. Government and Politics provides a year-long 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. In addition, they will complete a political science research or applied civics project.

Supplemental Texts:

Barron's AP U.S. Government and Politics 11th Edition

Required Supreme Court Cases and Founding Documents

Foundational documents and Supreme Court cases are an integral part of the course and necessary for students to understand the philosophical underpinnings, significant legal precedents, and political values of the U.S. political system and may serve as the focus of AP Exam questions. The course requires the study and analysis of:

- 9 foundational documents, including the U.S. Constitution
- 15 landmark Supreme Court (compare/contrast required cases to non-required landmark court cases)

Disciplinary Practices

The disciplinary practices are the tasks 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 2 sources
- Practice 5: Develop an argument in essay format

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)

Course Outline

Public Policy is integrated within each of the following units

Unit I: Foundations of American Democracy

Enduring Understandings: The U.S. Constitution arose out of important historical and philosophical ideas and preferences regarding popular sovereignty and limited government. To address competing states' visions for the allocation of governmental authority, compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises have frequently been the source of debate and negotiation in U.S. politics over checks and balances and the proper balance between federal and state power and between liberty and social order.

Unit II: Interactions Among Branches of Government

Enduring Understandings: Because power is widely distributed, and checks prevent one branch from usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in the position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern. In this unit students will study the structures and politics of the presidency, bureaucracy, Congress, and the federal courts. Students will analyze the major formal and informal arrangements of power and the relationships among the four institutions. With each sub-topic, students will

discuss who holds the power and the struggles for varying balances of power. There will be study on how different national institutions have evolved to possess power and how crises can dramatically change the balance of power within the government

Unit III: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Enduring Understandings: Through the U.S. Constitution, but primarily through the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment, citizens and groups have attempted to restrict national and state governments from unduly infringing upon individual rights and from denying equal protection under the law. Sometimes the court has handed down decisions that protect both public order and individual freedom, and at other times the Court has set precedents protecting one at the expense of the other.

Unit IV: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Enduring Understandings: American political beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, and the changing demographics of the citizenry. These beliefs about government, politics, and the individual's role in the political system influence the creation of ideological trends that span decades impacting public policies. The measurement of public opinion and beliefs can be instrumental in understanding political outcomes

Unit V: Political Participation

Enduring Understandings: Governing is achieved directly through citizen participation and indirectly through linkage institutions (e.g., political parties, interest groups, and mass media) that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policy making. Election rules and campaign laws, institutional barriers, and demographics of the citizenry all influence participation.

Applied Civics Research Project

This year students will be required to formulate a research question related to one of the units of study in AP U.S. Government and Politics. Students will engage throughout the year in applied civics or politics research to collect data on their respective topic. Applied research involves collecting and analyzing qualitative or quantitative data by participating in a process and/or activity. This is also a great opportunity to connect big ideas and enduring understandings across different units. Participation can come in a variety of forms: interviews, volunteering, or attending meetings, among others. Possible research questions include:

- Creating a voter guide – how do candidates' positions compare on key issues?
- How do political parties allocate resources to accomplish their goals?
- Which strategies do interest groups use to influence policy, and how effective are these strategies?
- How does law enforcement balance individual liberty with public safety?
- To what extent does the news media contribute to increasing polarization?
- How does the cost of elections impact the activities of members of Congress?
- How should the federal budget be balanced?

Overview of the AP Exam – May 4th, 2019 (8:00am)

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will 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%

Grading Scale by Percentage:

Category	Percentage	Description
Tests	30	Chapter/Unit
Homework	25	Assignments
Readings/Projects	17.5	Articles/Text
Quizzes	17.5	Sectional
Professionalism	10	Tardies/Materials

Citizenship: Professionalism Grade:

Variables that can affect your citizenship: classroom behavior, tardiness, and lack of materials.	
100 - 95	O
95 - 80	S
79 - below	S-U-N

Participation:

Participation is critical in this class, much like it is in our government. Therefore, you must adhere to classroom rules and allow EVERYONE an opportunity to speak. I WILL Not tolerate put-downs or negativity toward anyone else in this class. Engage me and others, so the conversions can engage you.

Cheating:

Plagiarism or dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes turning in information from the internet as your own work. Consequences of plagiarism include a score of "0" on the assignment, involvement of the principal and your parents, and possible failure of the course.

Electronic Devices:

All electronic Devices must be stored throughout the hour unless the teacher instructs students to use their hand-held devices for instructional purposes. Electronic devices serve a purpose until they become a distraction. Avoid all distractions to have a chance at success.

Movies in Class – Permission Slip:

Parents if you will allow your child to watch the movies shown in Mr. Bertich's class, and have no objections, please sign the syllabus.

Student's Signature:

Please Print

Sign

Parent's Signature:

Please Print

Sign