

Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics is a year-long college level class designed to prepare the student to take the Advanced Placement examination, administered by the College Board and the Educational Testing Service in May of 2011. For students who achieve a score of 3, 4, or 5, some universities grant college credit for taking a one semester introductory college course in United States Government and Politics. Students are encouraged to check with the universities they are considering to determine whether or not that particular school accepts AP credit.

AP Government is a highly structured, very demanding college-level course. Students are required not only to thoroughly read the college-level text, also to augment this material through research and reading of supplemental articles and then critically apply the findings to the political nature of current governmental policies and analyze the ramifications of these policies. One of the primary objectives of this course is to expose students to all areas of information covered on the AP Examination. Thus it is imperative that a high-level academic environment exist and that the student is dedicated to learning, is highly motivated, and is willing to put forth both in and outside of the classroom the time and effort required for a course of this intensity.

Student Learning Objectives: Ideally, at the conclusion of this course, you will have a greater understanding of:

- ◁ *the interaction between politics and government.*
- ◁ *the structure and institutions of American government.*
- ◁ *the political process in the United States and other democratic societies.*
- ◁ *the role of individuals and civil society groups (such as political parties and interest groups) in influencing government behavior.*
- ◁ *key events that shaped the rights and liberties of all American citizens.*
- ◁ *how social scientists study politics and government.*

The choices I make in teaching this course are based on four broad principles. First, time is a major concern. It is important that all relevant material be covered. Second, there are many competing demands for a student's limited time. Third, outside work should add both to breadth and depth of knowledge while helping improve the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate material. Finally, it is my responsibility as an educator, while concerned about scores on the AP exam, to help students improve their ability to THINK.

To re-emphasize, this is a college level class in Political Science. As such I expect students to behave as college students. I will instruct this class in a method that best exemplifies a college course and I expect students to act accordingly. I will not accept or tolerate missing work and absence from class is extremely harmful. Due to the nature of the course and the amount of material involved, students are expected to become learners both IN and OUT of the classroom. This means doing reading when it is required and becoming aware of current

events and political happenings. It is expected that students read quality newspapers such as the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* every day as well as a weekly magazines such as Newsweek. Newsweek has excellent political coverage. National Review (conservative) and The Nation (liberal) are also excellent sources of political information. It is advisable to set your web browser home page to one these sites so as to be able to quickly access it each day. Only in this fashion can students begin to truly understand and apply knowledge. Understand that learning, true learning, does not occur in the vacuum of the classroom.

Throughout this class, we will be discussing issues that are prevalent in 21st Century America.

Please remember that every individual's opinion is to be respected. Of course, you are encouraged to agree or disagree with anybody in the room, even the teacher. However, regardless of how passionate a discussion may be, the debate will be ended if and when it becomes personal. Class participation is extremely important to your success. Saying ideas out loud, and comparing these ideas to the beliefs of others, is important to your own understanding of the material.

SPECIAL NOTE: Ask Questions!

- One of the most important roles in any classroom is the student who is not afraid to ask questions.
- Too often, students in AP courses are afraid to ask a question because they think they are the only person who doesn't understand the topic at hand. Our goal is to learn, so be brave, raise your hand, get your answer and help others who are also seeking clarification. Research shows that when students are active learners, they retain more.

TEXTBOOK: The required course readings include a textbook, *The New American Democracy*, by Morris P. Fiorina, and coauthors, and some short articles on special topics. The textbook in the course presents a wealth of information. Class discussions and lectures, in contrast, will often be argumentative, attempting to add flesh and bones to the "facts" presented in the text.

WEB SITE

A requirement of this class is to make regular use of the course Web site. Class notes, assignments and projects, practice tests, useful links, etc., are all available at the Web site for this course at http://mrfarshtey.net/AP_Gov.html