

East Penn School District
Secondary Curriculum

A Planned Course Statement
for

American Government & Politics, AP

Course # 262

Grade(s) 12

Department: Social Studies

Length of Period (mins.) 41

Total Clock Hours: 123

Periods per Cycle: 6

Length of Course (yrs.) 1

Type of Offering: required ✓ elective

Credit: 1.0

Adopted: 4/25/05

Developed by:

Karen Sharkazy
Tom Warnke

Description of Course

Course Title:

American Government & Politics, AP, #262

Description:

The Advanced Placement course in U. S. Government and Politics is designed to give students a critical perspective on politics and government in the United States. This course involves both the study of general concepts used to interpret American politics and the analysis of specific case studies. A study of the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that make up the American political reality will also be undertaken. The students will learn to use specific information critically to evaluate general propositions about politics and government.

Goals:

- Students will acquire a base of knowledge on American government and will develop the analytical tools to evaluate and understand contemporary political events

Requirements:

None.

Text:

Wilson and Dilulio, Jr, American Government: Institutions and Policies, 9th ed., Houghton Mifflin, 2004

Lasser, William, Perspectives on American Politics, 4th ed., Houghton Mifflin, 2004

Key to Levels of Achievement (Listed with each learning objective)

Awareness (A):	Students are introduced to concepts, forms, and patterns.
Learning (L):	Students are involved in a sequence of steps and practice activities which involved further development and allow evaluation of process.
Understanding (U):	Students demonstrate ability to apply acquired concepts and skills to individual assignments and projects on an independent level.
Reinforcement (R):	Students maintain and broaden understanding of concepts and skills to accomplish tasks at a greater level of sophistication.

Unit	Num	Objective	Level	Content	Evaluation	Standard
The American System	1	Students will list two basic questions asked about all governments.	A	Readings Ch. 1, pp. 3-8	Essay test	
	2	Students will explain political power and relate it to authority, legitimacy, and democracy in American government.	R	Readings Ch. 1, pp. 4-6	Multiple choice/Essay test	
	3	Students will differentiate between majoritarian and elitist politics.	L	Readings Ch. 1, pp 8-14	Multiple Choice/Essay test	
	4	Students will discuss the Declaration of Independence as a lawyers' brief.	R	Appendix, A3	Student oral discussion	
	5	Students will discuss the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation.	R	- Readings Ch. 2, pp. 21-22 - Discussion	- Student reports - Multiple choice test - Teacher evaluation of class discussion	
	6	Students will compare the Virginia and New Jersey plans.	R	- Readings: Ch. 2, pp. 25-27 - Declaration of Independence, Appendix A-3	Essay test	
	7	Students will explain why the Bill of Rights was not included in the Constitution, and to explain the reasons for its addition.	L	Readings: 'Federalist' No. 10 and 51, Appendix A-25 and A-31	Essay test	
	8	Students will discuss ways of amending the Constitution.	R	Readings: Ch 2, p. 4	Multiple choice test	
	9	Students will research possible reforms to the document.	L	- Readings: Abstract 'What Constitutional Changes Do Americans Want?' 'Secret Scrutiny: Constitutional Boo-Boos'	Teacher evaluation of research	
	10	Students will understand the difference between federal and centralized system and government.	A	- Readings Ch. 3, pp 49-75 - Readings <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> (1819)	Teacher-made quiz	
	11	Students will understand why we have a federal system.	L	Discussion of questions from manual	Essay: 'Pros and Cons of the Federal System'	
	12	Students will understand how the system works today vis-à-vis the economy.	L	Readings p. 32 regarding costs of federalism vs. unitary systems	Quiz	

Unit	Num	Objective	Level	Content	Evaluation	Standard
	13	Students will list contributions to the American political culture made by the revolution, religious heritage, and the family.	R	Readings Ch. 4, pp. 77-96	Teacher evaluation of class discussion	
	14	Students will discuss the absence of class-consciousness in the formative years.	L	Readings Ch. 4, pp. 89-90	Book-generated multiple choice test	
	15	Students will define and then test (using their parents) the term political efficacy.	L	- Use a political questionnaire: Book and student generated - Ch. 4, pp. 88-90	Student discussion	
	16	Students will discuss intolerance with specific application to politics.	R	- Use a political questionnaire: Book and student generated - Ch. 4, pp. 93-94	Essay test	
	17	Student will list sources of our political attitudes and indicate which are the most important sources.	L	Notes from previous chapters	Teacher evaluation of debates, class discussion	
Opinions, Interests, and Organizations	18	Students will define political ideology and ascertain why most Americans do not think ideologically.	L	Readings Ch. 5, pp. 103-128	Teacher evaluation of class discussion	
	19	Students will assess the significance of race in explaining political attitudes.	L	Questionnaire in Teacher's Manual, p. 57	Quiz	
	20	Students will understand the current usage and meanings of the term liberal and conservative.	R	Questionnaire in Teacher's Manual, p. 65	Quiz	
	21	Students will discuss the factors that tend to be associated with 'high' and 'low' voter turnout.	L	- Readings Ch. 6, pp. 131-140 - Student debate: 'Who votes? Why? Does it matter?' - Student debate: 'How can we increase voter participation? Should we?'	Teacher evaluation of class work	
	22	Students will compare participation rates in various forms of political activities here and in other countries.	L	Readings Ch. 6, pp. 140-146	Multiple Choice/Essay test	
	23	Students will define political party and understand American party structure compared to those of Europe.	L	Readings Ch. 7, pp. 151-154 and 162-167	Essay test incl. Readings from Ch. 5, 6, 7	

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	24	Students will know the role and function of the two-party system in the U. S.	L	Readings Ch. 7, pp. 171-175	Multiple choice/Essay test	
	25	Students will analyze the persistence of the two-party system.	R	Readings Ch. 7, pp. 171-175	Multiple choice/Essay test	
	26	Students will understand the current role of the party convention.	L	Readings Ch. 7, pp. 172-179	Multiple choice/Essay test	
	27	Students will explain why or political system encourages a multiplicity of interest groups.	R	Readings Ch. 9, pp. 223-226	Teacher-designed multiple choice test	
	28	Students will describe the methods that interest groups use to formulate and carry out their political objectives, especially lobbying techniques.	A	Ch. 9, pp. 227-235	Teacher-designed multiple choice test	
	29	Students will research laws regarding regulation of interest groups ‘revolving door syndrome’ and relate these to First Amendment rights.	U	- Library research (teacher-guided) - Read Abstract C, Teacher’s Manual, p. 126	Teacher evaluation of student work, research skills	
	30	Students will demonstrate how the electronic media have affected the actions of public officials and candidates for national office.	U	Readings: Ch 10, pp. 257-260	Teacher evaluation of student discussion	
	31	Students will assess the impact of the media on politics and indicate why it is so difficult to find evidence to make a meaningful assessment.	U	- View and tape the four networks’ major evening news program and compare sequence and time on the first three stories of the day - Readings: Ch 10, pp. 260-262	Teacher evaluation of student discussion	
	32	Students will discuss First Amendment rights of the electronic media.	R	Panel discussion: Censorship of Radio and TV	- Teacher evaluation of student discussion - Essay test	
	33	Students will understand the functions of an adversarial press.	R	- Readings: Ch. 10, pp. 266-277 - Readings: Abstract I-C: ‘Do TV Media Distort News? – A Pro/Con Discussion’ - Students’ network viewing to determine bias/discrimination, i.e.	Student-made test	

Unit	Num	Objective	Level	Content	Evaluation	Standard
				race, gender, age, nationality, etc.		
Institutions of Government	34	Students will compare/contrast Congress and Parliament.	L	Readings Ch. 11, pp. 281-285	Multiple choice test	
	35	Students will outline the process for electing members to Congress.	L	- Videotape: 'The Power Game: Congress' - Readings: Ch 11, pp.289-294	Multiple choice test	
	36	Students will explain the impact of committee reform on the organization of Congress.	L	- Computer simulation; 'How a Bill becomes a Law' - Readings: Ch 11, pp. 297-320	Multiple choice test	
	37	Students will explain ethical problems facing Congress.	R	Readings Ch. 11, pp. 322-323	Multiple choice test	
	38	Students will identify those factors that help explain Congresspersons' voting behavior.	U	Readings Ch. 11, pp. 294-297	Multiple choice test	
	39	Students will understand that Congress is a government of limited powers.	U	Readings Abstract A: 'Congress as a citizen legislature' p. 164, Teacher's Manual	Multiple choice test	
	40	Students will discuss incumbency and the American way.	R	- Panel discussion - Readings: Abstract C 'Role of Congressional Hearings', p. 177, Teacher's Manual 'Ethics in Congress' Theme E, p. 181, Teacher's Manual	- Teacher evaluation - Teacher-made essay test	
	41	Students will explain the differences between the positions of president and prime minister.	A	Readings Ch. 12, pp. 330-331	- Student reports on presidential style - Reagan contra Bush	
	42	Students will enumerate and discuss various facets of both formal and informal presidential power.	L	- Readings Theme C: 'How the President is Selected', Teacher's Manual p. 200 - Readings: Ch 12, pp. 340-341	Essay test	
	43	Students will explain the reasons for growth in the bureaucracy in the past and its current status.	L	Readings Ch. 13, pp. 394-391	Chapter test – multiple choice/short answers	
	44	Students will understand the rationale used by various bureaus.	R	Readings Ch. 13, pp. 378-384	Multiple choice/short answer	
	45	Students will understand the complexities of its workings and the statement 'You can't fire it, and you can get it to work'.	U	Library research regarding legislation of the past creating the bureaucracy and current legislation trying to control it	Teacher evaluation of research	

Unit	Num	Objective	Level	Content	Evaluation	Standard
				Readings Abstract B, Teacher's Manual, p. 218: 'Problems in Reforming the Bureaucracy'		
	46	Student will discuss power exercised today by the court and the opposing viewpoints on the desirability of judicial activism.	L	Readings Ch. 14, pp. 411-427	Student oral reports on their particular case	
	47	Students will develop arguments for and against an activist Supreme Court.	U	Assignment of a landmark case for each student for research in the library. Each student will then write a legal brief for their case.	Student-made test on the important judicial concepts of the landmark case.	
	48	Students will list steps that cases go through in order to reach the Supreme Court.	U	Readings Ch. 14, pp. 417-420	Quiz	
Politics of Public Policy	49	Students will discuss the roles played in the process of public policy formation by people's perceptions, beliefs, interests, and values.	U	- Readings: Ch. 14-16, selected pages - Readings: Data/Perspective for Analyses in Business Regulation, p. 25, Teacher's Manual	Teacher-made test	
	50	Students will understand 'Supply side – Demand Side' economic theory and assess the nature and impact of 'Reaganomics'.	L	Readings: Abstract for Theme C: 'Cures for the Federal Deficit: The Balanced Budget Amendment and the Liquidation of U. S. Assets'	Multiple choice test/Essay test	
	51	Students will understand the definition and the goals of America's Social Welfare Program.	U	Readings Ch. 17-19, pp. 479-495	Teacher-made multiple choice test	
	52	Students will relate to three major legislative acts regarding welfare programs.	R	Readings Ch. 16, pp. 459-477	Essay	
	53	Students will be conversant with the terms: family assistance, negative income tax, safety net, indexing, food stamps, Medicare, means test, job corp.	L	Video from PBS 'The Second American Revolution'	Student review of video presentation	
	54	Students will discuss the Bill of Rights, its relationship to democracy, and give examples of the tensions between majority and	R	Readings Ch. 18, pp. 503-521	Multiple choice test/Essay test	

Unit	Num	Objective	Level	Content	Evaluation	Standard
		minority rights.				
	55	Students will discuss the role of the Supreme Court in civil liberties/civil rights.	A	Research – landmark Supreme Court decisions	Student evaluation of discussion	
	56	Students will gain knowledge of the 14 th and 5 th amendments vis a vis civil liberties/civil rights.	L	Readings Ch. 19, pp. 523-539	Quiz	
	57	Students will understand the differences in the two movements: African-American and women's.	U	Readings Ch. 19, pp. 539-543	Class debate	
	58	Students will compare constitutional powers, as stated, and reality in foreign policy.	R	Readings Ch. 20, pp. 553-583	Essay test	

Other supplemental sources will be added during the year.