



Dear Parent or Guardian,

United States Government and Politics AP will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. This course includes both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. government and politics and the analysis of specific examples. It also requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute U.S. government and politics. Students should become acquainted with the variety of theoretical perspectives and explanations for various behaviors and outcomes, topics usually covered in all college courses.

This course will use a college-level textbook and supplemental readings, documents, essays, and books on specific topics and themes.

Extra time is required on the part of AP students for class preparation, outside reading, and completion of assignments. AP courses provide students with a learning experience equivalent to that obtained in most college introductory courses. Students who take U.S. Government and Politics AP are expected to take the Advanced Placement Exam in the spring.

1st 6 Weeks Overview

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

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.

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

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.

Making the Civic Connection

Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP U.S. Government and Politics course framework that culminates in a

presentation of findings. The project can involve student participation in nonpartisan service learning opportunities, government-based internship programs, or a choice from a teacher-approved list of research project ideas. While the project is not part of the AP Exam grade, it does provide students the opportunity to engage in a sustained, real-world activity that will deepen their understanding of course content and help them develop the disciplinary practices that are assessed on the exam.

Celebrate Freedom will take place during the 1st 6 weeks and the students will be exposed to the intent, meaning and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution including the Bill of Rights, in their historical contexts.

Throughout the 1st 6 weeks, grading period, student knowledge and understanding will be assessed in a variety of ways, such as:

- Thinking Maps and Graphic Organizers
- Collaborative Small and Large Group Discussions
- Document Analysis of Primary and Secondary Sources (Federalist Papers)
- Critical Listening and Note Taking/Summarizing
- Critical Questioning
- Formative and Summative Assessments
- Released Free Response Questions

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding your student. We look forward to working with you and your child to ensure academic success.

Respectfully,

AP Government Teachers