

Curriculum Guide

Name of Course: Advanced Placement: U.S. Government & Politics

Written/Revised: July 2008

Number of Credits: 5

Level of Course: Advanced Placement

Grade Level Offered: 10-12

Course Description:

This college-level course is designed to provide an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. The course involves both the study of general concepts used to interpret US politics and the analysis of specific case studies. Completion of the course prepares students to take the Advance Placement Test. Those who earn appropriate scores on AP tests become eligible to earn college credit. Students must be enrolled in the course to take the AP exam. Students enrolled in this AP course are required to take the appropriate AP exam.

Core Curriculum Content Standards Addressed:

Standard 6.1 All students will utilize historical thinking, problem solving, and research skills to maximize their understanding of Civics, History, Geography, and Economics.

Standard 6.2 (Civics) All students will know, understand and appreciate the values and principles of American Democracy and the rights, responsibilities, and roles of a citizen in the nation and the world.

Standard 6.4 (United States and New Jersey History) All students will demonstrate knowledge of the United States and New Jersey history in order to understand life and events in the past and how they relate to the present and the future.

Standard 6.5 (Economics) all students will acquire an understanding of key economic principles.

Standard 6.6 (Geography) all students will apply knowledge of spatial relationships and other geographic skills to understand human behavior in relation to the physical and cultural environment.

Course Outline/ Timeline:

In order to properly prepare for the A.P. exam in May it is essential to allow ample review time. Our class uses the text: American Government, 7th edition – Susan Welch. Our

class covers Chapters 1-18 during the first seven months of the school year. We conclude our use of the text in late March and allow six to eight weeks to review and prepare for the exam.

* The Welch text has some support materials. A key supporting tool is a paperback test bank. Each of the following chapters is taught according to the content of the text and the notes offered in this document. Chapter tests mimic the A.P. test given in May – a combination of multiple choice questions and timed essays.

Unit I: THE AMERICAN SYSTEM.

1. American Democracy.
2. The Constitution.
3. Federalism and the Growth of Government.

Unit Goals

Students should be able to:

1. Give three reasons why The Articles of Confederation failed and explain how those issues were addressed at the Constitutional Convention.
2. Characterize the basic provisions of Articles I, II and III of The Constitution.
3. Show how our national government has increasingly grown as it sought to address additional issues.

Unit Objectives

1. Students content knowledge will be evaluated through the use of two or three content quizzes, an objective chapter test (multiple choice, true/false, matching and fill-ins), and an essay test.
2. Students will read, discuss and take a quiz on the Federalist Papers 10 & 51.
3. Students will construct a chart of how federalism has evolved over the past 200 years.
4. Students will examine current Constitutional controversies and write a research paper addressing a contemporary Constitutional dispute.

Unit II: LINKS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT.

4. Public Opinion.
5. News Media.
6. Interest Groups.
7. Political Parties.
8. Elections.
9. Money and Politics.

Unit Goals

Students should be able to:

1. Understand how scientific polling and random sampling has influenced modern political campaigns.

2. Show how our national elections are heavily influenced by party organization, media coverage, fundraising and opinion polls.

Unit Objectives

1. Students content knowledge will be evaluated through the use of two or three content quizzes, an objective chapter test (multiple choice, true/false, matching and fill-ins), and an essay test.
2. Students will read, discuss and take a quiz on Bernard Goldberg's book "Bias".
3. Students will construct a chart of how influential fundraising has been in determining which candidates win Congressional and Presidential elections.
4. Students will examine current newspaper and television coverage to determine the degree of impartiality in the modern media.

Unit III: INSTITUTIONS.

10. Congress.
11. The Presidency.
12. The Bureaucracy.
13. The Judiciary.

Unit Goals

Students should be able to:

1. Give three examples of how each of the four branches influences the other three branches.
2. Explain how and why each of the four branches has had periods of growth and periods of declining influence.
3. Show how our national government is dependent upon these four branches interacting on policy matters despite sharp political, regional and partisan differences.

Unit Objectives

1. Students content knowledge will be evaluated through the use of two or three content quizzes, an objective chapter test (multiple choice, true/false, matching and fill-ins), and an essay test.
2. Students will read, discuss and take a quiz on various journal articles related to these branches of government.
3. Students will construct a chart of how each branch has influenced the other three branches during a recent (1998 – present) policy matter.
4. Students will examine current branches of government and present a persuasive argument as to which branch holds the most power in America today.

Unit IV: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND RIGHTS.

14. Civil Liberties.

15. Civil Rights.

Unit Goals

Students should be able to:

1. Explain the conceptual differences between “rights” and “liberties.”
2. Characterize the basic provisions of The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968.
3. Show how our federal courts have increasingly affirmed the rights of the individual when in conflict with the state.

Unit Objectives

1. Students content knowledge will be evaluated through the use of two or three content quizzes, an objective chapter test (multiple choice, true/false, matching and fill-ins), and an essay test.
2. Students will read, discuss and take a quiz on the Supreme Court’s majority/minority opinions in six noteworthy Civil Rights rulings.
3. Students will examine our current climate regarding personal liberties and evaluate one instance in which they feel individual liberties today should either be expanded or restricted.

Unit V: PUBLIC POLICIES.

16. Social Welfare Policy

17. Economic Policy

18. Regulation/Environment

Unit Goals

Students should be able to:

1. Give three reasons why federal action was needed in order to address economic, environmental and social issues in post WWII America.
2. Characterize the basic provisions of the Clean Air Act and the Welfare Reform Act of 1996.
3. Show how our national government continues to struggle in its efforts to balance the need for energy and the goal of reducing carbon emissions.

Unit Objectives

1. Students content knowledge will be evaluated through the use of two or three content quizzes, an objective chapter test (multiple choice, true/false, matching and fill-ins), and an essay test.
2. Students will read, discuss and take a quiz on Welfare Reform Act of 1996.
3. Students will construct a chart of how federal regulation of the environment has changed over the past 40 years.

4. Students will examine current debate regarding global climate change and the geopolitical consequences of addressing the escalation of carbon emissions.

*** Sample schedule for A.P. Government**

AP GOVERNMENT

** This schedule will certainly be adjusted – snow days, world events, illness, etc.

September: week of:

20 - test **chapter 1 Democracy**

(*We the People* essay contest)

free response essay test

27 - test **chapter 2 Constitution***

(distribute class Constitutions & require Articles 1-7 to be read by end of week)

free response essay test

October:

4 - test **chapter 3 Federalism/Growth of Gov.**

Federalist Papers 10 & 51 read and discussed (essay test)

NY Times article on federalism

Free response essay test

11 - test **chapter 4 Public Opinion** (four day week)

free response essay test

18 - * 60 minutes piece on focus groups

free response essay test

25 - test **chapter 5 Interest Groups** (last test grade for 1st mp)

guest lecturer from NJ fuel merchants lobby

guest lecturer – Prudential PAC office

free response essay test

November:

1 – (three day week)

8 – test **chapter 6 Political Parties** (first grade of second mp)

free response essay test

15 – test **chapter 7 Elections**

analysis of November elections, www.realclearpolitics.com

free response essay test

22 – 2 day week

29 – test **chapter 8 News Media**

free response essay test

projector: You tube – speeches, political ads and websites of candidates

December:

6 – test **chapter 9 Money and Politics**

free response essay test

McCain-Feingold/ FECA – comparison chart

McCain article in *NY Times*

13 –

20 – test **chapter 10 Congress** (three day week)

free response essay test

analyze chart on growth of federal employees/committees

Read and test on Article I

January:

3 – welcome back!

10 – test **chapter 11 The Presidency** (last test of 2nd mp)

Read and test on Article II

analyze State of the Union Speech

17 – (four day week)

24 – test **chapter 12 The Bureaucracy**

free response essay test

February:

7 – test **chapter 13 The Judiciary**

free response essay test

PBS Documentary on the Judiciary

21 – (two day week)

28 – combined test on **chapters 14/15 Civil Liberties/Rights**

Listen to oral arguments from Gideon, Roe, and Miranda on www.oyez.org

free response essay test

Scenes from “Gideon’s Trumpet” “Skokie” and “Miss. Burning”

March:

7 - test **chapter 16 Social Welfare**

read excerpts from: “A Welfare Mother”

free response essay test

George Will article on poverty & public policy

Chart comparison of social spending as a result of GDP under presidents:

FDR vs. LBJ

14 - test **chapter 17 Economic Policy**

Wall Journal assignment

Federal reserve article – The Weekly Standard

free response essay test

21 - combined test **chapters 18/19 Regulation/Foreign Policy**

June: class trip to the state capitol building

Easter Tuesday – back from four day break – REVIEW BEGINS:

This gives us 25 school days and 43 calendar days (6 weeks) to review for exam!

May 11, 8:00 a.m. – AP TEST

June 14th – last scheduled day of school (if we use 0 snow days)

Additional Assignments and Materials:

Reference/Textbook: American Government, Welch, Susan, *et al.*; Wadsworth, 7th edition, 1999.

Evaluation Tools:

Tests, Essays	:	60%
Homework/Class work /Quizzes		30%
Class Participation		10%

It is the policy of the Social Studies Department that all assignments are to be presented in a timely manner. All assignments that are turned in after their due date will be considered “late.” Assignments that are one day late will result in a permanent loss of credit.

High Point Regional High School’s curriculum and instruction are aligned to the State’s Core Curriculum Content Standards and address the elimination of discrimination by narrowing the achievement gap, by providing equity in educational programs and by providing opportunities for students to interact positively with others regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status.

Additional Course Policies:

The Social Studies Department Honors Policy requires faculty recommendation and an entrance exam for placement into the Honor/A.P. level. Students previously enrolled in an Honors course who has also maintained a “B” average at the end of the first semester may not be required to re-apply for placement at the Honors Level. *A copy of the Department Honors Policy is available by request.*

Faculty recommendation is required for placement into all other course levels. Students at the Honors Level may be required by their Instructor to complete a summer assignment.

Both the Honors Level and the Academic Level require student assessment through the use of a pre-test for reading content.