AP Government COURSE SYLLABUS Kennedy High School
ADVANCED PLACEMENT UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS 1
(5 credits- 1 semester) SGF410

This semester course is a study of the basic beliefs and ideals which underlie American democracy; its historical roots; and how its legal, governmental, and economic institutions affect public policy at the local, state, national, and international levels. Special emphasis is given to preparing the student for the College Board’s Advanced Placement Test in American Government and Politics.

GENERAL INFORMATION
Term and Year: Fall 2015
Name of Instructor: Brett Williams
Room Number: C-304
Telephone Number: (916) 433-5200 Ext.1304
E-mail Address: brett-williams@scusd.edu

TEXTBOOKS AND/OR REQUIRED READING


RECOMMENDED READING

GENERAL COURSE OVERVIEW
Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics is a one-semester course designed to analyze the American political system through both the framework of the Constitution, as developed by the "Founding Fathers", and through the politically charged system that we find operating our government today. A focus of this course, through current events, video clips, and supplemental readings, is on the institutions and processes through which the political system operates and the public policy that is adopted and implemented. AP Government students attempt to answer three main questions:

1. Upon what historical precedents is public policy based?
2. How do people today influence policymaking?
3. What effect does public policy have on the people and the world?

COLLEGE CREDIT
This course is the equivalent of a college course and students are encouraged to prepare to take the AP Exam in the Spring Semester (Tuesday, May 10, 2016, 8am). There are several advantages to taking the AP US Government exam: foremost is the potential to earn college credit while still in high school. The exam is 2 hours and 45 minutes in length. Half of the exam is a 45-minute, 60 question multiple-choice section. The other half of the exam is a 120-minute essay section with four free-response questions. The A.P. U.S. Government exam is graded on a five-point scale. Generally, most public universities (all the UCs) award credit to students who earn a 3 or higher while many private colleges require a score of 4 or higher. For example, a score of 3 or better will fulfill the American Institutions requirement at UC Berkeley. However, since each school is free to set its own policy, students are advised to check the
COURSE REQUIREMENTS & RIGOR

Mastery of content in this class requires participation in group and class discussions and activities, as well as individual study and preparation. After being introduced to a particular topic, students will be expected to prepare at home for in-class content application. This class is void of “busy work”; every assignment is given with the intent of expanding understanding, developing cognitive skill sets, and preparing students for civic engagement. Extra Credit opportunities will be rare in this class, so students should commit to consistently completing assignments and preparing for assessments. Mastery of the course is evaluated in the following ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessments (MCQs, FRQs + Final Exam)</th>
<th>30%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Projects (including class debates, Socratic Seminars)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing (including FRQs)</td>
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<td>Assignments (including daily assignments &amp; PACE requirements)</td>
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ASSESSMENTS

While chapter reading outlines are encouraged, they are not generally collected. If, however, a student scores below 80% on a quiz, he/she may submit an outline for the chapter(s) that quiz covers to receive a grade bump on his or her quiz score. The outline must be signed or stamped by Mr. Williams by no later than the Monday of the relevant quiz.

Vocabulary quizzes will be given at least once a week. Most vocab quizzes and reading notes will fall on Mondays. For those students who opt out of the notes, remember you must still have read the assigned chapters. These vocab quizzes will occur within the first five minutes of class, so don’t be late.

More comprehensive quizzes will be given on Fridays. These quizzes will consist of both short answer and multiple choice.

Quizzes can be made up Thursday mornings at 7:30 sharp. Note that the teacher may use an alternate quiz.

The Final Exam will model the College Board exam as closely as the schedule allows, with Part I consisting of 60 multiple choice questions, and Part II 2-4 Short Answer questions.

NOTE: If students sign up for the College Board exam on May 10, they are excused from the Final Exam for AP Government.

HOMEWORK POLICIES (Read carefully here students)

All of your work should be as thorough, thoughtful and neat as possible. We will be moving very quickly, so get all your work in on time. Late work will receive zero credit. If you are absent, you have as many days as you were absent to make up the material. You are responsible for getting any assignments you missed. If you are turning in work late because you were absent, be sure to tell me so I can check it off rather than marking it late. I will not accept work on a unit of study after we have tested. You will also need to contact me if you are late on the day of a group presentation by phone or email and get clearance from attendance for illness, without these expect a 0.
PROJECT

1. Five Year Plan Project Essays DUE: May 27th

   *A handful of smaller support assignments for this project will be due at varied stages during the semester.

GRADING SCALE

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<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>90%+</td>
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<td>59% or below</td>
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BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to be respectful, courteous, and civil. The following are a few of the more notable expectations students will follow:

1. Be in your seat and ready to begin work when the bell rings.
2. Treat others with respect at all times
3. Be on task, and offer help to others if you finish early (when appropriate)
4. Keep your electronic devices hidden and silent unless the instructor approves use.
5. Adhere to the JFK and PACE expectations of academic integrity.*

*Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the attempt to pass off the ideas, research, theories, or words of others as one's own” (College Board). There are however a number of assignments throughout the year where the teacher will encourage you to talk about your responses with your classmates, but note that your work is your work and should always remain in your possession unless the teacher is currently grading it. Plagiarizing any assignment will result in a 0 for that assignment. Cheating on any quiz or exam will also immediately result in a zero for that assignment. Students caught cheating will not be able to make up the points lost on these assignments. Plagiarizing or cheating a second time will lead to an Unsatisfactory mark for Citizenship for the semester and a parent conference with the possibility of a failing grade for the semester dependent upon the egregiousness of the offense. The teacher and administration determines the degree of the severity, and the teacher also reserves the right to modify these rules dependent upon the degree of the offense whether it is the first or the third.
In this class my ultimate goal is for you to develop YOUR VOICE. You may use the cited ideas and arguments of others to help support your arguments, but they still must be your arguments.

**COURSE EMPHASIS**

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<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>% of Course Emphasis</th>
<th>Unit Outline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government</td>
<td>5-15%</td>
<td>1/4-1/22</td>
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<td>2. Political Beliefs and Behaviors</td>
<td>10-20%</td>
<td>1/25-1/29 *</td>
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<td>3. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media</td>
<td>10-20%</td>
<td>2/1-2/12</td>
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<td>4. Institutions of Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Courts</td>
<td>35-45%</td>
<td>2/16-4/1</td>
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<td>5. Public Policy</td>
<td>5-15%</td>
<td>4/4-4/15</td>
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<td>6. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties</td>
<td>5-15%</td>
<td>4/18-4/29</td>
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*This content area is also heavily emphasized throughout the course*

**A.P. U.S. Executive Summary**

Please sign on the next page to confirm you understand. Students and parents understand that...

- A.P. U.S. Government is as hard, or harder, than a college survey government class.
- Most students do not earn an “A” in an A.P. course.
- Only students who are motivated, persistent, and take the initiative for their learning do well in A.P. classes.
- Students will learn much more in an A.P. class than any regular class.
- Students who take A.P. classes usually do much better in college.
- The A.P. U.S. Government Exam will be given on May 10, 2016 and will cost approx. $91.
- Extensive outside research is necessary for the class.
Student Information Record

Student Name: ___________________________________________________________________________
Student Email: ___________________________________________________________________________

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<th>Parent/Guardian(s) Names</th>
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In the space below, please provide any information about your child that might be pertinent to his/her educational experience this year (i.e., physical or cognitive limitations, exceptional experiences or capabilities).

I have read, understood, and will abide by all of the provisions of the entire A.P. U.S. Government and Politics syllabus, including the AP Executive Summary on the previous page.

_______________________________________________________________   _________________________________________
Student Signature   Date

_______________________________________________________________  _________________________________________
Parent Signature                                     Date

Communication Log (Teacher Use Only)

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