

COURSE DESCRIPTION

ADVANCED PLACEMENT/HONORS U.S. GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

This course is a college-level introduction to the dynamics of the American political system. It is designed to fulfill state educational requirements and to prepare students for the Advanced Placement examination in U.S. Government and Politics. **This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the “AP” designation for the 2018-2019 school year.**

Through lectures, college texts, scholarly articles, national journals, selected chapters from outstanding works in political science, case studies, and small group discussions, students learn the basic operating principles of the United States government as well as several theoretical and analytic models for understanding the process of American politics at the state and national levels. Course activities prepare students for the College Board AP exam in U.S. Government and Politics with writing exercises similar focused on AP-style questions. In accordance with the AP course guidelines, specific topics include:

- Constitutional Underpinnings
- Political Beliefs and Behaviors
- Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
- Institutions of National Government
- Public Policy
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Throughout the course, students learn the historical origins and foundations of the United States political system. They practice critically analyzing the roles democracy, political thought, civil liberties, and the Constitution play in the American political system and political institutions. Students use case studies to examine the structure and function of Congress, the Presidency, the courts, mass media, interest groups, political parties, the federal bureaucracy, and the part each of these institutions plays in the policymaking process. After completing this course, students have the tools to analyze American economic and political systems, interpret data relating to U.S. governmental affairs, and will be able to explain the roots of patterns within the political processes.

Summer School students in this course take two examinations and write an 8-12-page analytical paper of university caliber demonstrating their understanding of American government. The term paper involves original research and extensive use of the Georgetown University Library. Faculty closely supervises all student research. Classroom material is augmented by a robust speakers program where students attend lectures from premier speakers in their fields.

The course is offered for high school credit and is equivalent to a one-semester Advanced Placement course in U.S. Government & Politics. For students from high schools that do not offer Advanced Placement courses, this class also duplicates an Honors U.S. Government course. Classes are held six days a week. Students accumulate over 85 classroom hours in the program.

The assigned college-level textbook for the course is:

Ginsberg, B., Lowi, T. J., Weir, M., Tolbert, C. J., & Spitzer, R. J. (2017). *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics* (11th ed.). New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co.

*****Please note that that is a SAMPLE syllabus based on one from previous years and the syllabi for this summer will vary, including specific topics covered, daily readings, expected exam dates and paper due dates, based on both the campus and professor *****

(AP) U.S. Government and Politics
Junior Statesmen of America
Summer Session 2018
Syllabus

I. PROFESSOR INFORMATION

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This general introduction to the study of American government and politics focuses on the national level and on the actors and interests who contend for power and influence in Washington, D.C. Students will gain an understanding of the origins, structure, and operation of American government. Topics include American political culture, the framing of the Constitution, political parties, campaigns and elections, interest groups, the media, the Presidency, the Congress, the federal judiciary, and current issues of public policy.

These are exciting times for American Politics. We will keep our eyes on current political events while surveying the institutions that make up our Constitutional system. Aside from an understanding of how American Politics ‘works’, students should expect to gain an understanding of the underlying principles of government. This will allow us to step back from the details of today’s political debates and discuss the broader political questions they represent.

This course is also intended to be of considerable value to those students looking to take the AP American Government exam when they return to their regular school work. While not all the topics on the AP exam will be treated, we will squeeze about as many topics into a 3 week course as is practical.

III. RESOURCES

We will be using the following text for this course:

We the People: An Introduction to American Politics (Ginsberg, Lowi and Weir).

We will have outside readings in addition to the text. Students are expected to stay aware of contemporary news. Any appropriately vetted news source will do, though generally checking more than one source is best.

IV. GRADING

The final grade for the course will be based on the following:

- 5% Class Participation**
- 15% Midterm Exam**
- 20% DW Grade**
- 30% Final Exam**
- 30% Final Research Paper**

V. COURSE POLICIES

- **Assignments-** There will be two in-class exams -- a midterm and a final. **In addition, each student in the Junior Statesmen Summer School is required to write a 12-15 page research paper that will be due on the Sunday before the last week of classes.** A more detailed account of the research paper requirement will be handed out during the first week of classes. Besides the exams and research paper, students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions, and will be required also to participate in a congressional workshop.
- **Readings-** Students are expected to complete the required readings before coming to class. Aside from simply reading over the material, students should be prepared to engage in discussion and apply what has been read. Occasional quizzes will help students test their retention.
- **Honor Code-** Any kind of academic dishonesty or cheating will result in failure in the course and dismissal from the program. There is no reason students cannot succeed in this course. Students who encounter academic difficulty should see me after class. There is a zero-tolerance policy on the issues of cheating and plagiarism.
- **Classroom Behavior-** We will often be discussing controversial subjects. Students are expected to actively participate and respect one another as fellow students at all times.
- **Electronic Devices-** Turn off and put away all electronic devices before class. Eat, sleep, text, and listen to music before and after class (not during).

VI. COURSE CALENDAR - Below is a schedule for the course readings and assignments.

Monday

Morning Session

Topic(s): Introduction, Ideas, and Foundations

Afternoon Session

Topic: Introduction to the United States Constitution and the American Founding Readings

We the People Chapter 1 Thomas Jefferson “Declaration of Independence” (A1-A4 in We the People)

Learning Objectives

- (1) What are the fundamental differences between John Locke and Thomas Hobbes?
- (2) How does the Declaration of Independence demonstrate Lockean themes?
- (3) What were the articles of confederation and why did they fail?

Tuesday

Morning Session

Topic: The US Constitution Readings
We the People Chapter 2

Afternoon Session

Topic: Debate & Exercise: Federalist v. Anti-Federalist Readings
Federalist #10 & 51 (A33 – A41 in We the People) Brutus (A43 – A50 in We the People)

Learning Objectives

- (1) What elements of the constitution were initially controversial? Why?
- (2) What were the major compromises agreed upon at the constitutional convention?
- (3) What were the arguments in favor of and against the ratification of the constitution?

Wednesday

Morning Session

Topic: Federalism Readings
We the People Chapter 3 10th Amendment Supremacy Clause McCulloch v. Maryland (Course Packet) United States v. Lopez (Course Packet)

Learning Objectives

- (1) What is federalism and how is it different from alternative systems? (i.e. unitary government and confederation government)
- (2) What are the two main types of federalism in the United States? How are they different?
- (3) What are the constitutional issues relating to federalism and why is federalism controversial?

Afternoon Session

Topic: Public Opinion Readings
We the People Chapter 5

Learning Objectives

(1) What is public opinion and how has it developed in the United States political system? (2) What is a poll? What are the elements of a poll? (3) Where is public opinion utilized in the United States political system? Why is this controversial?

Thursday

Morning Session

Topic: The Presidency Reading
We the People Chapter 10 Youngstown Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer (Course Packet)
US v. Nixon (Course Packet) Federalist #70 (Course Packet)

Afternoon Session

Learning Objectives

(1) What are the formal powers and informal of the presidency? (2) What are the theories of presidential power? How does the president interact with the Congress and the Courts? (3) Why is the expansion of presidential power controversial? What issues does this present in terms of checks and balances?

Friday

Afternoon Session

Topic: Interest Groups Reading
We the People Chapter 8

Learning Objectives

(1) Why do interest groups form, what purpose do they serve? (2) How are interest groups regulated and why is regulation difficult? (3) What are the general arguments in favor and against interest groups?

Saturday

Midterm Exam

Wednesday

Morning Session

Topic: The Media Readings

We the People Chapter 6 Groseclose “Media Bias” (Course packet) Fallows “Why Americans hate the Media” (Course Packet)

Learning Objectives

(1) What role does the media play within the American political system? (2) How has media changed since the 1980s and how has the impacted the political system? (3) Assess some of the current controversies involving the media.

Afternoon Session

Topic: Political Parties Readings

We the People Chapter 7 (pages 198 – 218)

Learning Objectives

(1) Why do political parties form? Who(m) do they benefit? (2) What purpose do political parties serve in government? What purpose do they serve for/with the electorate? (3) Why does the United States only have two parties? What obstacles exist to third parties in the United States?

Thursday

Morning Session

Topic: Participation, Elections, and Campaigns Reading

We the People Chapter 7 (220 – 231) Buckley v. Valeo (Course Packet) Citizens United (Course Packet)

Learning Objectives

(1) From a democratic standpoint (theory and practice) why are elections and political participation important? (2) What factors contribute to the decision to vote and how individuals vote? (3) How does the Electoral College work? What are some of the arguments in favor and against the EC?

Afternoon Session

Topic: Congress Reading
We the People Chapter 9

Friday

Morning Session

Topic: Congress Simulation

Learning Objectives

(1) How does Congress operate? Who is in charge? What are the rules, procedures, etc. (2) How is Congress organized? What roles do committees play? What functions do they serve? (3) How does a bill become law?

Afternoon Session

Topic: Bureaucracy & Public Policy

Reading

We the People Chapter 11 We the People Chapter 13 (read pages 400 - 409 and skim remaining)

Learning objectives

(1) What is the bureaucracy, what role does it play, and how has the role changed over time? (2) How do politicians and government officials attempt to control the bureaucracy? What are some of the controversies involved? (3) How is public policy formulated in the United States? What are some of the factors that determine public policy?

Saturday

Morning Session

Topic: The Courts Readings

We the People Chapter 12 Marbury v. Madison (Course Packet) Federalist #78 (Course Packet)

Learning Objectives

(1) What role do Courts play in the United States? What are some of their powers and limitations on those powers? How do cases get to the Supreme Court? (2) What is judicial review? Why is judicial review controversial? (3) What are the two main types of “ideology” and what role does judicial ideology play in determining cases and understanding the role of the Constitution?

Monday

Morning Session

Topic: Civil Liberties Reading

We the People Chapter 4 (pages 92 – 117) Griswold v. Connecticut (Course Packet) Roe v. Wade (Course Packet) Engel v. Vitale (Course Packet) Wisconsin v. Yoder (Course Packet) Tinker v. Des Moines (Course Packet) New York Times v. United States (Course Packet) Schenck v. United States (Course Packet) Gideon v. Wainwright (Course Packet) McDonald v. Chicago (Course Packet)

Learning Objectives

(1) What are civil liberties? Where do they originate from? Why are they controversial? (2) How have civil liberties evolved over time? What are some of the controversies that apply to civil liberties? (3) How are enumerated versus unenumerated rights and liberties different? Why do individuals disagree over these differences?

Afternoon Session

Topic: Civil Rights Readings

We the People Chapter 4 (pages 118 – 134) Brown v. Board of Education (Course Packet) Bakke v. California Board of Regents (Course Packet) Letter from a Birmingham Jail (Course Packet)

Learning Objectives

(1) What are civil rights? How are civil rights different from civil liberties? (2) How have civil rights evolved over time? Why is this controversial for many people? (3) What are some of the contemporary debates over civil rights and how they are applied?

Wednesday

Final Exam

Friday

Research Paper due by 7pm