

AP U.S. Government Course Description

Course Description:

AP Government and Politics is an introductory course designed to provide students with a thorough understanding of the principles of government and politics in the United States. This course involves both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific case studies. It also requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that make up U.S. political reality.

First Trimester	Second Trimester	Third Trimester
Textbook: <i>Government in America</i> , by George C. Edwards		
Unit 1: Introduction to Government in America	Unit 6: Nominations, Campaigns, Elections and the Voters	Unit 10: Public Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government, Politics and Public Policy ● Political Models- Lasswell and Schattschneider ● The Political System ● Classifying Governments ● Theories of Democratic Government <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/ Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapter 1 ● Activity: Pre-Test: The 1965 Alabama Literacy Test ● Lasswell Model Activity ● Activity: The FRQ (analysis of FRQ and how to approach writing a FRQ) ● Unit 1 Exam- 30 M/C and 1 Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nominations and Campaigns ● Elections ● The Electoral College: A Special Type of Election ● Campaign Finance ● Political Participation ● Voting and Voter Behaviors: Legal Restrictions on Voting ● Voting and Voter Behaviors: Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors ● Voting and Voter Behaviors: Voting and Non-Voting in National, State and Local Elections <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/ Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapters 9 & 10 ● Readings: V. O. Key: “The Responsible Electorate”; “Buckley v. Valeo” ● Unit 6 Exam- 60 M/C ● Unit 6 Timed Writing-1999 (#1); 2000 Graphic (#3); 2000 (#4); 2002 (#4); 2003 (#2); 2005 (4); 2007 (#1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public Policy Making in a Federal System ● Formation of Policy Agendas ● Stages in Policymaking Process ● Types of Public Policy ● Politics and the Policy Process <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/ Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapters 17-19 ● Unit 10 Public Policy Project: This unit consists of group presentations on several areas of public policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Policy ○ Social Welfare Policy ○ Health Care Policy ○ Environmental Policy ○ Education Policy ○ Foreign and Defense Policy ● Group presentations include a written and oral presentation of the assigned policy area. Presentations must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Background information ○ Major actors in this policy area (Executive & Legislative) ○ Major policy initiatives ○ Interest Group Influences ○ Current issues in the policy area ● Unit 10 Timed Writing- 1999 Graphic (#4); 2002 Graphic (#2); 2006 Graphic (#2)

Unit 2: Constitutional Underpinnings	Unit 7: Institutions of Government-Congress	Review for AP Exam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Origins of the Constitution/Declaration of Independence ● Articles of Confederation: Government that Failed/Philadelphia Convention ● Writing the Constitution: Considerations that Influenced the Formulation and Adoption of the Constitution ● Ratification Debates: Federalists versus Anti-Federalists ● The Constitution: Preamble, Articles and Amendments ● Basic Principles of the Constitution: Popular Sovereignty, Limited Government, Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, Federalism <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/ Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapters 2 & 3 ● Readings: Locke: “Second Treatise of Civil Government”; Declaration of Independence; Articles of Confederation (excerpts); George Mason’s Objections to the Constitution (excerpts); Federalist Papers 10 and 51; U.S. Constitution; ● <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> (1819) ● Unit 2 Exam- 60 M/C ● Unit 2 Timed Writing- 2000 (#1); 2001 (#1); 2003 Graphic (#3); 2005 (#2); 2007 (#4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Congress: Structure and Organization ● Getting Elected to Congress ● The Legislative Process: How a Bill Becomes a Law ● Powers of Congress ● Role of Congress in Budget Process <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/ Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapter 12 ● Readings: Fiorina: “The Rise of the Washington Establishment”; Fenno: “If... How Come We Love Our Congressmen” ● Activity: Youth Leadership Initiative E-Congress (Internet Congress) www.youthleadership.net ● Unit 7 Exam- 60 M/C, ● Unit 7 Timed Writing-1999 (#3); 2001 Graphic (#2); 2003 (#4); 2006 (#4) 	<p>April 17th – May 2nd will be spent reviewing course material in preparation for the AP U.S. Government & Politics Exam, which will be held on Thursday, May 4th</p>
<p>Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporation Doctrine and the Bill of Rights: Impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the Constitutional Development of Rights and Liberties ● Development of Civil Liberties and Civil Rights by Judicial Interpretation ● Case studies: Knowledge of Substantive Rights and Liberties- freedom of speech, assembly, 	<p>Unit 8: Institutions of Government- Presidency and the Bureaucracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Power and the Presidents ● The Executive Establishment ● The Public Presidency ● Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the President ● Federal Bureaucracy: Structure and Organization ● Federal Bureaucracy: Policy Making and Implementation <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/</u></p>	

<p>and expression; rights of the accused; and rights of minorities and women</p> <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/ Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapters 4 & 5 ● Presentations: Students will present to class various Supreme Court decisions, citing the background, issue/question, decision/reasoning, and significance of each case assigned ● Readings: Supreme Court cases/excerpts ● Unit 3 Exam- 60 M/C ● Unit 3 Timed Writing- 2001 (#3); 2005 (#3); 2007 (#2) 	<p><u>Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapters 13 & 15 ● Readings: Neustadt: “Presidential Power”; Jones: “The Presidency in a Separated System”; Woll: “Constitutional Democracy and Bureaucratic Power” ● Unit 8 Exam- 60 M/C ● Unit 8 Timed Writing- 2002 (#1); 2003 (#1); 2004 (#1); 2006 (#3); 2007 (#3) 	
<p>Unit 4: Public Opinion, the Media and the Political Agenda</p>	<p>Unit 9: Institutions of Government- Federal Courts</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political Socialization: Process by Which Citizens Learn about Politics ● Public Opinion: Beliefs that Citizens Hold about their Government and its Leaders ● Nature, Sources and Consequences of Public Opinion ● Political Ideology ● The Mass Media: Structure and Functions ● Role of the Media/Impact of the Media on Politics <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/ Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapters 6 & 7 ● Readings: Key: “Public Opinion and American Democracy”; Sabato: “Feeding Frenzy” ● Unit 4 Exam- 60 M/C ● Unit 4 Timed Writing- Teacher developed FRQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Court Structure and Jurisdiction ● Politics of Judicial Selection ● Background of Judges and Justices ● Development of Court’s Role in Government ● Relationship of Court to Congress and President ● Courts as Policymakers: Judicial Decision Making ● Power of the Courts/Activism v. Restraint/ Implementation of Court Decisions <p><u>Major Readings/Assignments/ Assessments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edwards: Chapter 16 ● Readings: Federalist #78; Brennan: “How the Supreme Court Arrives at a Decision” ● Unit 9 Exam- 60 M/C ● Unit 9 Timed Writing- 2000 (#2); 2005 (#1) 	
<p>Unit 5: Political Parties and Interest Groups</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● American Political Parties: Nature, Functions and Organization ● Political Parties and Ideology ● Historical Development of Political Parties ● Political Parties Today: Effects on 		

the Political Process/Electoral
Laws and Systems

- Interest Groups: Nature,
Functions and Range of Interests
Represented
- Interest Group Politics: Activities
of Interest Groups
- Effects of Interest Groups on the
Political Process
- PACS: Characteristics and Roles in
the Political Process

**Major Readings/Assignments/
Assessments**

- Edwards: Chapters 8 & 11
- Readings: Truman: "The
Governmental Process"; Key: "A
Theory of Critical Elections";
Ginsberg: "Politics By Other
Means"
- Unit 5 Exam- 60 M/C
- Unit 5 Timed Writing-1999 (#2);
2001 (#4); 2004 (#2); 2004
Graphic (#3); 2006 (#1)