

COURSE: Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics

LENGTH: Year

GENERAL STATEMENT: Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics (APUSGP) provides interested students with a college-level survey course in American government and politics. The course seeks to equip students with the ability to identify and analyze some of the central questions suggested by the theory and practice of American democracy. Further, students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the factual and theoretical knowledge associated with such identification and analysis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES CR 7-9

Additional Information: (Amended to include more evidence of satisfaction of CR 7. (viz. practice in analyzing and interpreting data and other information relevant to US government and politics)

Each unit of instruction shall include opportunities for students to refine skills in analyzing and interpreting data relevant to US government and politics. These opportunities will include (but are not limited to) student employment and evaluation of various graphs and charts displaying statistical evidence regarding aspects of American Government and politics. Such exercises will be in the form of homework.

assignments, longitudinal project work, data necessary for debates and presentations, and employment of statistical analyses components on quizzes and tests. Such charts and graphs are present in the course texts and available on several pertinent websites.

Examples of such websites include:

C/net

<http://www.search.com>

Election Line

<http://www.electiononline.com>

The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/Ropercenter/>

Political Science Resources

<http://www.clark.net/pub/lshank/web/polysci.html>

Vote Smart

<http://www.vote-smart.org>

As delineated above, APUSGP intends to provide interested students with college-level instruction in US government and politics. As the College Board states in its *Teacher's Guide to AP United States Government and Politics* (1998) the teaching objectives of this course are focused upon three salient intentions:

- Understanding relationships among actors and institutions
- Developing and sharpening analytic skills
- Acquiring strong, diverse, and usable writing skills

In the realization of these objectives, students must obtain mastery over a wide body of content including factual material, particular terminology, and conceptual abstractions. Analytic skills are honed via case studies, debates, and analytical essay assignments. Testing in APUSGP is designed to replicate the AP exam for the course. Writing assignments and objective components are formulated to assure that strong and usable writing skills are being obtained and exercised. Each unit, students are assigned individual projects to present to the class within the context of the material under review. These projects typically include (but are not limited to) Critical Reviews (Reading an essay from a scholarly journal of opinion, summarizing the arguments made, researching the topic and formulating an analytical response to it), Debates (Assigning students pro and con sides on some issue, e.g. “Is welfare reform succeeding?” or “Has the federal system tilted too much toward central power?”), or completing Case Studies (Assign a student to a SCOTUS case such as Miller v. California 1973. Student is to research the case and present to class on the facts of the case, arguments of either side, significance, and controversy associated with the matter).

A final note on academic exercises associated with this course. Students take at least two full-length released AP Exams as part of the preparation for the actual exam. In this way,

event those students who choose not to sit for the actual exam are given a score that is broadly indicative of the level of course competence they have acquired.

COURSE MATERIALS CR8

Materials employed in this course include (but are not limited to):

Additional Material (Amended to satisfy directive for More Contemporary News Analysis)

Printed Material

Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

CQ Guide to Current American Government. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press. Annual

The National Journal, 1730 M Street., NW, Suite 1100, Washington DC 20036

The New York Times

Newsweek Magazine

WEB SITES

National Political Index

<http://www.politicalindex.com>

PoliticsUSA

<http://www.cloakroom.com>

Rock the Vote

<http://www.rockthevote.org>

The National Budget Simulation

<http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/budget/budget.html>

Printed Material

Annual Edition: American Government, Edited by Bruce Stinebrickner, (Dubuque, Iowa: McGraw Hill, 2007)

Hofstadter, Richard, *Great Issues in American History* (3 Volumes), NY: Vintage Books, 1958)

Irons, Peter, *May It Please the Court: The First Amendment* (The New Press, 1997)

Living American Documents, Edited by Starr, Todd, and Curti, (NY: Harcourt Brace and World Inc., 1961)

McClenaghan, William A., *Magruder's 2005 American Government*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005)

Our Nation's Archive: The History of the United States in Documents, Edited by Erik Bruun and Jay Crosby, (NY: Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, 1999)

Smith, James L., *Ideas That Shape A Nation*, (Las Cruces, NM: Suncrest Publications, 1998)

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues (12th Edition), Edited by George McKenna and Stanley Feingold, (Guilford, Conn.: McGraw Hill, 2001)

The American Reader, Edited by Diane Ravitch, (NY: First Harper Perennial, 1990)

Wilson, James Q., and Dilulio, Jr., John J., *American Government: Institutions and Policies (8th Edition)*, (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001)

Web Sites **CR8**

Web Resources in United States Government

Title: [A Hypertext on American History](#)

Annotation: A collection of web resources that document American History, from revolution to reconstruction.

URL:<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/>

Title: [American Government- Holt, Rinehart and Winston Online](#)

Annotation: Extensive resources for teaching American Government from Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. Twenty-three Chapters that include such topics as: Role of Government, Origins of U.S. Government, The U.S. Constitution, Executive Branch as Work, Fundamental Freedoms, Political Parties, Comparing Political and Economic Systems, and more. Each chapter includes student activities; online student resources including: Holt Researcher, Holt Grapher, Current Events, Content Updates, and State Resources; and chapter resources including homework practice and chapter enrichment links.

URL:<http://go.hrw.com/hrw.nd/arbitr/pRedirect?project=hrwonline&siteId=695&pageId=6279>

Title: [American Memory](#)

Annotation: Provides links to primary source photos & prints, documents, motion pictures, maps, sound recordings and searchable database.

URL:<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html>

Title: [CapWeb](#)

Annotation: CapWeb was designed to be an effective means of providing information about Congress and links to related Internet resources via the World Wide Web.

URL:<http://capweb.net>

Title: Congress.Org

Annotation: Provides easy access to the day to day events in Congress. It has a complete Congressional directory with email links and a list of all House and Senate committees.

URL:<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>

Title: Contacting Congress

Annotation: Up to date contact information for all of congress as well as links to other government sites.

URL:<http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/>

Title: Holt, Rinehart and Winston: Holt Researcher

Annotation: The Holt Researcher Web site will help you find valuable information and facts about American History, World History, and Economy and Government. There are several ways to find information about a certain person, place, or event in history including subject area searches, keywords, and pull-down category menus.

URL:<http://researcher.hrw.com/index.jsp>

Title: Supreme Court Watch

Annotation: Teachers and students can use this site to browse featured topics, access fast facts, research classic cases, and find information on Supreme Court Justices. From Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

URL:<http://go.hrw.com/hrw.nd/arbitr/pRedirect?project=hrwonline&siteId=1258&pageId=9519>

Title: The American Experience: The Presidents

Annotation: This PBS site provides information about presidents from T. Roosevelt to Reagan. It has pictures, biographical sketch, the era, domestic & foreign policy, politics and includes teachers' guide and more information about featured presidents.

URL:<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/>

UNITS OF INSTRUCTION: APUSGP includes the following instructional units:

SEMESTER ONE

UNIT ONE: Foundations of American Government *CRI*

This vitally important unit introduces students to college-level inquiry into constitutional government and representative democracy. Sub-topics include the basic philosophy and practice of democratic government, significant antecedents for the US Constitution, vital issues at the Constitutional Convention, the basic Constitutional principles and systems, detailed knowledge of the text of the Constitution.

Texts: Magruder CH 1-4, Wilson CH 1-3

UNIT TWO: The Legislative Branch *CRI,3*

A detailed look at the Constitutional basis of congressional authority is made. Controversy rising from such const include issues of immigration and naturalization, rights and obligations of American citizenship, fundamental freedoms and civil rights in

American law and tradition, significant developments in the civil rights history of the USA.

Texts: Magruder CH 10-12, Wilson CH 11

UNIT THREE: Executive Branch CR 1,3

An examination of Article Two of the United States Constitution to make an evaluation of the presidency in theory and practice. Points of focus will include the “hats” of the president, the president as chief diplomat and commander in chief. Evaluation of the “Imperial Presidency” thesis of Arthur Schlesinger will be conducted.

Texts: Magruder, CH 13-17, Wilson CH 12

UNIT FOUR: Judicial Branch CR 1,3

Article Three of the Constitution is studied and an assessment of the operations and practices of the federal judiciary is then conducted. Particular stress is placed upon the jurisprudence and structure of the branch. Stress points include judicial philosophy, and

judicial activism.

Texts: Magruder CH 18 Wilson CH 14

SEMESTER TWO

UNIT FIVE: Government and Citizens CR 1,2,6

A critical analysis of the relationship between citizens and government from the perspective of three critical areas will be conducted. These will include social welfare, civil liberty, and civil right. Taking a case studies approach, students will describe and evaluated majoritarian and client welfare programs and discuss reform proposals for each. In the are of civil liberty, salient SCOTUS rulings on 1st Amendment matters (e.g.

Abington v. Schempf, Texas v. Johnson) and other Bill of Right issues (e.g. gun control, Miranda warnings, exclusionary rule) will be undertaken. In the area of Civil Rights, a consideration of problems, progress, and unfinished work will be made in matters related to minorities, women, and gay and lesbians.

Texts: Magruder CH 19-21, Wilson CH 17-19.

UNIT SIX: Politics American Style. CR 2,3,4,5

A primer on American political behavior and practice will take place. This will include a look at political parties, voting, elections, mass media and public opinion, and interest groups. Controversies concerning each of these elements will be described and evaluated. Particular focus will be made on the role of media and interest groups in influencing political behavior in general and election outcome in particular.

Text: Magruder CH 5-9, Wilson CH 4-10

UNIT SEVEN: Formulation of Policy. CR 2,3,5

A detailed consideration of the apparatus of policy making by government from proposal through to implementation will be undertaken. Large elements of this unit will concern the economic policy making of the US government. A treatment of the nation's

environmental policies will also be conducted. As in other units, this study will stress identifying the problems and controversies arising under policy making and the proposal of viable solutions and alternatives.

Text: Magruder CH 16, Wilson CH 15-16,21

UNIT EIGHT: The Nature of American Democracy: CR 2-6

A broad philosophical consideration of the nature and purpose of American political culture is undertaken here. Students will be presented with elements of political behavior (e.g. Interest Group Politics and Entrepreneurial Politics) and evaluate their influence and propriety. Similarly, students will understand different theories of political power (e.g. Marxist theory, Pluralist theory) and will likewise assess and analyze them. Finally, students will reflect upon the proper role, size, and power of government and assess and evaluate current political structure from that perspective.

Text: Wilson CH 22-23

UNIT NINE: State and Local Government CR 1,5

After the AP Exam has been administered in May, the conclusion of the course will focus upon the topic of state and local government. A look at different state constitutions, a comparison of state government, and analysis of problems facing contemporary state governments. A consideration of local government and finance will then follow. County, municipal government will be examined in a manner similar to that which was applied to the state government.

Text: Magruder CH 24-25.

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