

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

A.J. Dimond High School—Mr. Lem Wheelles—Fall 2015

Course Description: Welcome to Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics. This course is designed to give the student a basic understanding of political science, the history of the American political system, and the current governmental regime of the United States. The course is designed to provide the tools for mastery of the AP United States Government and Politics examination in the spring. We will explore the following substantive topics in our study of American government and politics:

- I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government
- II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors
- III. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media
- IV. Institutions of National Government
- V. Public Policy
- VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Class Expectations: This course is taught at the same level as a first year college class. The academia will be rigorous. Your level of preparedness for each class will determine your level of preparedness come exam time. Therefore, you are expected to keep up on current events to assist relating theory to real world practice. Most class sessions will involve discussion; it is imperative that you complete all readings and class assignments on time. Failure to do either may result in grade sanctions. No late work will be accepted for credit.

Grading: This class will be primarily assessed through examinations, classwork, participation, and a major research paper and project. The breakdown of points will be as follows:

35% Examinations

15% In-Class Activities

35% Class Assignments

5% Current Events

10% Class Participation/Attendance/Preparedness

Course Credit: Successful completion of this course will fulfill the United States Government graduation requirement. Students are expected to take the AP United States Government and Politics exam in the spring; students can earn college credit based on their exam scores.

Academic Honesty: As this is a college-level course, students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. All writing that uses ideas or quotations from other sources should be cited appropriately using MLA format; plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and repeated offenses may result in failure of the course.

Readings: You will be issued the textbook *American Government (14th ed.)* by Wilson, DiIulio, and Bose (Stamford, CT: Cengage, 2015). You are expected to complete weekly readings (see Course Outline) from the textbook and from other sources as provided in class. In addition, you should stay current on events in the assigned nations by reading the newspaper and online journals. You can access online journals such as the *Economist*, *Foreign Affairs*, and the *New York Times* using EBSCOhost.

Current Events: On Tuesdays and Thursdays we will start class with a current events presentation by a member of the class. One student will be assigned to present each day; a schedule of presentations will be provided during the first week of class along with detailed directions on what you will need to share during your presentation.

AP Comparative Government

Extend your exploration of political science! Follow up AP US Government with AP Comparative Government, offered Spring Semester during 5th Period with Mr. Wheelles. Learn about the political systems of the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Russia, China, Mexico, and Iran. Talk to your counselor to sign up!

Course Outline

The following is a tentative schedule of readings, topics of study, assignments, and exams for the semester. Readings are expected to be completed prior to the unit; definitions are to be completed by the 3rd day of the unit, and assignments are due on the final day of the unit (unless otherwise specified in class for a specific assignment). **This schedule is subject to change.**

- I. Introduction to Political Science (Weeks 1-2: August 19-28)
 - **Lecture topics:** Political science, nation-states, political systems
 - **Read:** Wilson¹, Chapter 1: The Study of American Government
 - **Define:** politics, government, nation, state, nation-state, political system, inputs, outputs, structures, functions, environments, feedback, domestic, foreign, regime, political cleavages, democratic centralism, direct or participatory democracy, representative democracy, elite, Marxists, bureaucrats, pluralist
 - **Assignment I-a:** Evaluate the United States under criteria of being a nation, a state, and a nation-state. Describe the current regime in the United States.
 - **Assignment I-b:** Differentiate between majoritarian politics and elitist politics, explaining the 4 major theories on the political elite.
 - **Exam:** Unit I

- II. Founding and the Constitution (Weeks 3-6: August 31- September 22)
 - **Lecture topics:** Political philosophy, natural rights theory, the Philadelphia Convention, the US Constitution, ratification
 - **Read:** Wilson, Chapter 2: The Constitution
Excerpts from John Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*
Declaration of Independence
Articles of Confederation
Constitution of the United States (and Amendments I-XXVII)
Federalist No. 10 and No. 51 (Madison)
Brutus No. 1 and Centinel No. 1
 - **Define:** sovereignty, legitimacy, authority, power, coercion, state of nature, state of war, social contract, natural rights, civil liberties, republic, Federalists, Antifederalists, Great Compromise, line-item veto, separation of powers, Shays's Rebellion, writ of habeas corpus, bill of attainder, ex post facto law
 - **Assignment II-a:** Choose three passages in the *Declaration of Independence* that mirror passages in Locke's writings. For each passage, explain its meaning, and discuss any changes that Jefferson made from Locke's original wording.
 - **Assignment II-b:** Respond to the following questions or statements:
 - Discuss the defects of the Articles of Confederation and how the Constitution addressed these weaknesses.
 - Compare and contrast the VA plan and the NJ plan. Discuss the inherent biases of each plan and how they led to the Great Compromise.
 - Discuss the two major types of constitutional reform advocated today, along with specific reform measures.
 - **Assignment II-c:** Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist Argument analysis (details given in class).
 - **Assignment II-d:** Constitution Packet (distributed in class).
 - **Activity II:** Ratification debate.

¹ Wilson, James Q., John J. Dulilio, and Meena Bose. *American Government* (14th ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage, 2015.

III. Federalism (Weeks 6-7: September 24-30)

- **Lecture topics:** Federal vs. Unitary Government, Devolution, fiscal policy
- **Read:** Wilson, Chapter 3: Federalism
- **Define:** devolution, block grants, categorical grants, conditions of aid, dual federalism, cooperative federalism, grants in aid, intergovernmental lobby, mandates, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, nullification, revenue sharing, 10th Amendment, unitary government, initiative, referendum
- **Assignment III-a:** Define and give an example of layer-cake federalism. Define and give an example of marble-cake federalism. Describe a situation within the last 30 years in which states and the federal government have had a conflict over power.
- **Extra Credit Assignment III-b:** Make a cake representing either dual federalism or cooperative federalism. Be prepared to explain what the parts of your cake represent.
- **Activity III:** Moot Court: *McCulloch v. Maryland*.
- **Exam:** Units II & III

IV. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (Weeks 7-9: October 1-15)

- **Lecture topics:** Supreme Court, key civil rights cases, due process
- **Read:** Wilson, Chapter 5: Civil Liberties
Wilson, Chapter 6: Civil Rights
*We the People*² Lessons 15, 18, 19, 27-32
Letter from Birmingham Jail
- **Define:** freedom of expression, freedom of religion, clear-and-present-danger test, procedural due process, substantive due process, libel, symbolic speech, wall-of-separation, probable cause, free exercise clause, establishment clause, exclusionary rule, Jim Crow laws, separate-but-equal doctrine, *de jure* segregation, *de facto* segregation, affirmative action, equality of opportunity, equality of condition
- **Assignment IV-a:** Respond to the following statements.
 1. List and give examples of the three ways in which, according to Wilson, civil liberties claimed by some can become major issues in politics.
 2. What appear to be the major forms of expression today that are not automatically protected by the Court's interpretation of the 1st Amendment?
 3. What tests has the Supreme Court developed for the constitutionality of State aid to church-run schools? How do you think this will affect the policy of aid to "faith based groups?"
 4. Explain the Court's rationale in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decisions of 1954 and 1955 to overturn the separate-but-equal doctrine. Be sure to discuss the role of the 14th Amendment.
 5. Why do many judicial scholars consider the 1st Amendment to be the most important of them all?
 6. Describe and assess the Supreme Court's use of selective incorporation to protect and expand the rights of the accused.
- **Assignment IV-b:** Prepare a Case Analysis on your selected case and present to the class.
- **Activity IV:** Landmark Supreme Court Case Studies
- **Exam:** Unit IV

² Leeson, Susan M., Margaret S. Branson, Scott E. Casper, Charles N. Quigley, et al. *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution (Level 3)*. Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 2009.

V. Political Ideology (Weeks 10-11: October 19-27)

- **Lecture topics:** Civic participation, political ideology, public opinion polling
- **Read:** Wilson, Chapter 4: American Political Culture
Wilson, Chapter 7: Public Opinion
Wilson, Chapter 8: Political Participation
- **Define:** political ideology, political efficacy, internal efficacy, external efficacy, political socialization, political cleavage, ethnicity, fundamentalism, mass media, conservative, liberal, libertarians, random sample, sampling error
- **Assignment V-a:** Data and Perspectives: *Political Culture Poll*, *Freedom of Speech*, and *Voter Perspectives* (distributed in class)
- **Assignment V-b:** Create a chart comparing the stance of conservatives and liberals on fiscal policy and monetary policy.
- **Assignment V-c:** Evaluate which has a greater impact on citizens' political beliefs and behavior: traditional journalism (print, radio, TV, and internet) or social media. Then analyze whether citizens are better off today than past generations in terms of access to political information.
- **Activity V:** Political ideology survey, data analysis and discussion.

VI. Voters, Parties, Campaigns, and Elections (Weeks 11-12: October 28-November 6)

- **Lecture topics:** Electoral College, party platforms, interest groups
- **Read:** Wilson, Chapter 9: Political Parties
Wilson, Chapter 10: Campaigns and Elections
Wilson, Chapter 11: Interest Groups
- **Define:** political party, critical or realigning periods, split ticket, national convention, national committee, congressional campaign committee, superdelegates, caucus, incumbent, political action committee, malapportionment, gerrymandering, closed primary, independent expenditure, soft money, lobbyist, interest group, public-interest lobby, junket
- **Assignment VI-a:** "The Two-Party System and the Electoral College" (distributed in class)
- **Assignment VI-b:** Discuss how the selection of presidential candidates by political parties has evolved throughout American history, specifying the change in method of selection within different time periods.
- **Assignment VI-c:** Summarize the major provisions of federal election policies (i.e. Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, the Motor-Voter Act, the McCain-Feingold Act), election-related Supreme Court rulings (i.e. *Citizens United v. FEC* and *Buckley v. Valeo*), and electoral amendments (15, 19, 24, and 26).
- **Assignment VI-d:** Summarize the four major models of voting behavior. Which would you be most inclined to use? Justify your choice.
- **Activity VI-a:** Prepare a 3-5 slide briefing on a special interest group, including demographics of the group membership, focus of the group, sources of funding, and strategies to effect policy change.
- **Activity VI-b:** Party Platform Presentations (details provided in class).
- **Exam:** Units V and VI

VII. Legislative Branch (Weeks 13-14: November 9-18)

- **Lecture topics:** Expressed vs. Implied powers, influences on lawmaking, committees
- **Read:** Wilson, Chapter 13: Congress
- **Define:** bicameral, filibuster, party whip, congressional caucus, public bill, private bill, discharge petition, rider, quorum call, cloture rule, voice vote, teller vote, roll-call vote, pork-barrel legislation, franking privilege
- **Assignment VII-a:** Describe (with a graphic and captions) the formal process in which a bill becomes a law.
- **Assignment VII-b:** Analyze the similarities and differences between the House and the Senate. Be sure to address leadership, committees, rules, and priorities.
- **Assignment VII-c:** Discuss the 3 theories on how congressmen vote on issues. Which do you think provides for the most legitimate decision?
- **Activity VII-a:** Public Laws Review
- **Film:** *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*

VIII. Executive Branch (Weeks 14-16: November 19-December 2)

- **Lecture topics:** Executive Orders, bureaucracy, head of state vs. head of government
- **Define:** *Chapter 14:* cabinet, veto message, pocket veto, line-item veto, trustee approach, delegate model, legislative veto, impeachment, lame duck; *Chapter 15:* bureaucracy, spoils system, laissez-faire, discretionary authority, iron triangle, authorization legislation, appropriation, trust funds, annual authorizations, red tape
- **Read:** Wilson, Chapter 14: The Presidency
Wilson, Chapter 15: The Bureaucracy
- **Assignment VIII-a:** Discuss 3 audiences the President uses to wield his power and describe how this power affects congress and the party. How has the evolution of communications technology impacted the president's efficacy with these audiences?
- **Assignment VIII-b:** Describe ways in which you would reform the structure and procedure of the bureaucracy. Cite problems in the current system (look at recommendations from the National Performance Review of 1993 and the 9/11 Commission report) and suggest changes that would address these defects, both internal and external.
- **Assignment VIII-c:** Identify and describe two major expansions and two major contractions of presidential power. Be sure to discuss the long-term consequences of each.
- **Assignment VIII-d:** Describe how Congress, the President, and federal courts each exercise oversight over the bureaucracy. Analyze the effectiveness of each branch's oversight of the bureaucracy.
- **Activity VIII-a:** Executive Orders Review
- **Activity VIII-b:** Bureaucratic Agency Case Study

IX. Judicial Branch (Weeks 16-17: December 3-11)

- **Lecture topics:** jurisdiction of courts, judicial review, Supreme Court
- **Define:** judicial review, strict-constructionist approach, activist approach, district court, court of appeals, litmus test, civil law, criminal law, writ of certiorari, in forma pauperis, plaintiff, defendant, fee shifting, standing, class-action suit, brief, amicus curiae, stare decisis
- **Read:** Wilson, Chapter 16: The Judiciary
- **Assignment IX-a:** Draw a graphic describing the Federal court system. Include in the graphic the jurisdiction of each level of court.

- **Assignment IX-b:** Discuss ways in which the Court can make policy. How do the concepts of life-tenure and judicial independence affect the court's ability to make policy?
- **Assignment IX-c:** Discuss the various checks that the other branches of government have on judicial power, and the checks the judiciary can exercise on the other branches.
- **Assignment IX-d:** Differentiate between the following types of Supreme Court opinions: majority, unanimous, concurring, dissenting, and per curiam.
- **Activity IX:** Mock Supreme Court Oral Arguments
- **Exam:** Units VII-IX

X. Final Review and Exam (Week 18: December 14-17)

- **Activity X:** Review Packet
- **Exam:** Final Exam (cumulative)