



- **Course Title:** AP American Government and Politics
- **Instructor Information:**
Mr. Lee Boyer (419) 824-8580 ext. 6138
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Available for conferencing 2nd and 9th periods or by appointment

- **Course Description:** *Prerequisite: Recommendation from a former social studies teacher!*
The Advanced Placement course in U.S. Government and Politics is designed to give students an analytical perspective on politics and government in the United States. This course involves both the study of general concepts used to interpret United States government and comparative government review to promote greater depth of comprehension. Familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs and ideas that constitute U.S. politics is necessary for success in the course. Units include; Constitutional Underpinnings; Political Beliefs and Behaviors; Political Parties, Interest Groups and Mass Media; Institutions of National Government; Public Policy and Civil Rights & Civil Liberties. At the conclusion of the course, students will have the opportunity to take the Advanced Placement Examination with the goal of qualifying for college credit.

- **Goals/ Expectations:** My goal is to ensure that when you leave my classroom in June, you will have accomplished these things:
 - ✓ Become a better person
 - ✓ Gain an understanding of the political process and government
 - ✓ Understand current developments
 - ✓ Participate in the political process
 - ✓ Score well on the AP exam in May

- **Textbooks, Readings, and Materials:**
 - o TEXTBOOK: O'Connor & Sabato: American Government Continuity and Change. Pearson Longman, 2006.
 - o READINGS: Lasser, William. Perspectives on American Government Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.
 - o Relevant supplemental reading material will be available with each unit.
 - o REQUIRED MATERIALS: either a 1.5" or 3" 3 ring binder with 3 dividers; lined loose-leaf notebook paper; pen; and pencil.

- **Grading/Assessment:**
 - A **POINT SYSTEM** is used. All earned points are added up at the end of the grading period and divided by the total possible points. This is converted to a percent and the equivalent letter grade.
 - **GRADING SCALE: A**
 - **A+ 100-98/ A 97-93/ A- 92-90/ B+ 89-87/ B 86-83/ B- 82-80**
 - **C+79-77/ C 76-73/ C-72-70/ D+69-67/ D 66-60/ 59 and Below F**
 - **TYPES OF ASSESSMENT** for which points are earned include:
 - chapter study guides/ vocabulary/ essays
 - writing assignments
 - oral projects
 - video creations
 - intelligent participation in class discussion
 - in-class activities/ assignments
 - quizzes/ tests
 - student taught lessons
 - current events-> Weekly, on the topic of my choice. It will correlate with the subject matter being studied.
 - video and movie analysis
 - Tests will be Multiple Choice and Essay
 - **EXTRA CREDIT** will be given as an opportunity to enrich learning only. Assignments will be given with each unit or at other announced times. No extra credit will be given to raise grades at the end of a grading period. **Also, if you miss more than one homework assignment in a given quarter, extra credit will not be counted in the final grade.**

- **Course Policies and Expectations:**
 - **RULES:**
 - 1.) *Do not disrupt our class.*
 - a. Anything that I consider a disruption will result in the below discipline policy being employed beginning at any level. Count on this being strictly enforced.
 - 2.) Everything else falls under *the golden rule*, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
 - a. This includes showing respect to others, interrupting another, swearing, ridiculing others, Etc.
 - **Discipline Policy**
 - 1.) 1st violation: Warning or any of the below depending on the seriousness of the violation
 - 2.) 2nd violation: Demerit and or the below.

- 3.) 3rd violation: Dismissed from class and sent to the principal's office; phone call to parents.
 - 4.) Academic honesty: If you cheat, you lose. Cheating will result in at least a zero on the given assignment, test, quiz, etc.
 - 5.) Punctuality: If you are late, you are late. No exceptions. Be on time. The School's tardy policy will be enforced.
- o ***My philosophy on discipline is very simple: Do not disrupt our class.*** We have a limited amount of time each day to cover a vast amount of material
 - o **Late Policy**
 - 1.) I will deduct 5 points off each day an assignment is late
 - 2.) **Projects and papers will not be accepted late.** If you are sick or absent, put it in my mailbox or room by 2:30! In the real world we have to meet deadlines, thus lets become responsible now!

More About This Class...

- Success in this class can be achieved if you stay caught up with the readings and discussions. Give it a chance, participate, do your work and let's have some fun. This class will be demanding and require discipline and motivation. It will challenge you, but it will be worth in the end. We also will conduct review sessions in the Spring prior to the AP test.

The course will be broken down into 6 major Units.

Unit One:

- ❖ **Chapter 1- The Political Landscape**-> An in-depth analysis of philosophical thought and theories on *democracy* and how we came to our unique democratic system. Students will explore the Roots of American Government, our Political Culture, Changing America, Ideologies and Current Attitudes in American Government.
- ❖ **Chapter 2- The Constitution**-> An analysis of the six basic principles of government: popular sovereignty, federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, limited government and judicial review. Topics include: Madison and the *Federalist's* influence on ratification, the Bill of Rights, Amendments (formal and informal) and a contemporary analysis of the founders intentions with application in today's world.
- ❖ **Chapter 3- Federalism**-> An analytical look at federalism and its evolution throughout American history. The study includes the types and classification, the supreme courts interpretation, and the constant struggle between the States and the Federal government.

Unit Two:

- ❖ **Chapter 11- Public Opinion and Political Socialization**-> Students will research the sources of public opinion, cleavage, and explore differing ideologies. Highlights include self assessment of their political ideologies, and creation of a public opinion poll. Students will create, conduct and give results of the experiment.
- ❖ **Chapter 12- Political Parties** -> Students will study the historical evolution as well as a comparative look at our two-party system. Students will also research the effect of and types of third parties. Highlights will include the creation of a new party including platforms, symbols, presentations and advertisements.
- ❖ **Chapter 13- Voting and Elections**-> Students will explore the US electorate, types of elections, voting trends, and voting attitudes. A comparative analysis with other westernized democracies and types of participation will also be included. Students will also analyze primaries, caucuses, delegates, national conventions, the Electoral College and our overall electoral system. Students will also explore differing options to the Electoral College.
- ❖ **Chapter 14- The Campaign Process** -> Students will study the structure of a campaign, the media's influence, money and campaign finance reform movements. Students will also take an in-depth look at the 2004 presidential election.
- ❖ **Chapter 16-> Interest Groups**-> Students will explore the evolution and growth of interest groups. They will analyze how interest groups act as a linkage institution. Students will also explore the Federalist #10 and Madison's analysis of factions. Lobbying and money will be highlighted in this chapter. Students will produce examples of 527 commercials or other types of media.

Unit Three:

- ❖ **Chapter 18- Financing the Government, Taxes and Economic Policy**-> Students will study where the money comes from and where it goes. Students will study the different types of taxes, how to file taxes and how to deduct and exempt dollars from their taxable income. Students will also create a federal budget and explore monetary and fiscal policy.

Unit Four:

- ❖ **Chapter 10- The Judiciary**-> Students will explore the evolution of our federal court system from the questioning of strength to the watchdog of the constitution. Students will study jurisdiction, judicial review, incorporation and the overall power and structure of the courts. Also included will be judicial philosophies and selection criteria. Highlights will include research and presentations of landmark supreme court cases
- ❖ **Chapter 5- Civil Liberties**-> Students will study the Bill of Rights and the Constitution to gain an understanding of the rights of the accused, our various freedoms and the right to privacy. Students will act as defense attorney's to show off their constitutional knowledge. Students will also

look at contemporary issues like the war on Terror and how it affects the home front.

- ❖ **Chapter 6- Civil Rights**-> Students will study the history of the civil rights movement and how the courts, media and public opinion finally granted suffrage and other civil rights to African Americans. Students will also analyze the equality of opportunity v. results argument as it applies to affirmative action. Students will view *Eyes on the Prize* and create a presentation on one of the events of the Civil Rights Movement.

Unit Five:

- ❖ **Chapter 7- Congress**-> Students will explore the Constitution and study the power (expressed and implied) of Congress, how it has grown and how Congress fits into our overall democratic system. Highlights will include organization, committees, how a bill becomes a law, leadership, and types of representation. Students will produce a piece of legislation and try to persuade classmates to pass the bill in a mock Congress setting. Other highlights include assessing our elected representatives voting patterns and matching them to our own.

Unit Six:

- ❖ **Chapter 8- The Presidency**-> Students will explore the Constitution and study the power (expressed and implied) of the Executive, how it has grown and how the institution has evolved and changed throughout American history. Is the President all powerful or weak, in comparative terms, to the other branches of government and other western leaders? Students will study the media, divided government, agenda setting, public opinion, the Vice President and succession. Students will create a Help Wanted Advertisement.
- ❖ **Chapter 9- The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy**-> Students will explore the structure, growth and overall roll in creating and enforcing public policy. Themes will be broken down into the Whitehouse Office, Executive Office of the President, the Cabinet and Independent Agencies. Students will create a PowerPoint presentation on the agency of their choice.
- ❖ **Chapter 19- Foreign and Defense Policy**-> Students will study the evolution of our foreign policy and explore the tools and players who create and conduct our foreign policy. NATO, the UN and other alliances and trade partners will be explored. Highlights include our future role in the UN, the Bush Doctrine and future challenges in the Twenty-First Century.

- **Affidavit:**

I have read the course syllabus. I am aware of the requirements and expectations for this class.

Student Name _____ Date _____

Course _____ Period _____

Student Signature _____

Parent Name _____

Parent Signature _____