

Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics - Mr. Said

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College Board: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-united-states-government-and-politics/exam>

Course Overview:

AP U.S. Government and Politics provides a year-long college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. Students will study U.S. foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals to gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behavior. They will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, they will complete a political science research or applied civics project.

Supplies:

- (1) Medium or large size three ring binder
- 4 Easy to access binder dividers that are labeled as “Notes” “FRQ” “Foundational Documents” “Supreme Court Cases”
- (1) Separate notebook or lined paper as part of your binder
- Pencils and pens

Required Supreme Court Cases and Founding Documents

Foundational documents and Supreme Court cases are an integral part of the course and necessary for students to understand the philosophical underpinnings, significant legal precedents, and political values of the U.S. political system and may serve as the focus of AP Exam questions. The course requires the study and analysis of:

- 9 foundational documents, including the U.S. Constitution
- 15 landmark Supreme Court (compare/contrast required cases to non-required landmark court cases)

Disciplinary Practices

The disciplinary practices are the tasks students will apply to the course content using the reasoning processes. Becoming proficient in these disciplinary practices gives students the tools to analyze political information, regardless of the format, and develop a factually accurate, thoughtful, and well-reasoned argument or opinion about an issue related to American government and politics. The disciplinary practices in this course include:

- Practice 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context
- Practice 2: Apply Supreme Court decisions
- Practice 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics
- Practice 4: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources
- Practice 5: Develop an argument in essay format

Unit I: Foundations of American Democracy (September-October)

Enduring Understandings: The U.S. Constitution arose out of important historical and philosophical ideas and preferences regarding popular sovereignty and limited government. To address competing states’ visions for the allocation of governmental authority, compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises have frequently been the source of debate and negotiation in U.S. politics over checks and balances and the proper balance between federal and state power and between liberty and social order.

Unit II: Interactions Among Branches of Government (October-December)

Enduring Understandings: Because power is widely distributed, and checks prevent one branch from usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in the position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern. In this unit students will study the structures and politics of the presidency, bureaucracy, Congress, and the federal courts. Students will analyze the major formal and informal arrangements of power and the relationships among the four institutions. With each sub-topic, students will discuss who holds the power and the struggles for varying balances of power. There will be study on how different national institutions have evolved to possess power and how crises can dramatically change the balance of power within the government

Unit III: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (December-January)

Enduring Understandings: Through the U.S. Constitution, but primarily through the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment, citizens and groups have attempted to restrict national and state governments from unduly infringing upon individual rights and from denying equal protection under the law. Sometimes the court has handed down decisions that protect both public order and individual freedom, and at other times the Court has set precedents protecting one at the expense of the other.

Unit IV: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (February- March)

Enduring Understandings: American political beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, and the changing demographics of the citizenry. These beliefs about government, politics, and the individual's role in the political system influence the creation of ideological trends that span decades impacting public policies. The measurement of public opinion and beliefs can be instrumental in understanding political outcomes

Unit V: Political Participation (March-April)

Enduring Understandings: Governing is achieved directly through citizen participation and indirectly through linkage institutions (e.g., political parties, interest groups, and mass media) that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policy making. Election rules and campaign laws, institutional barriers, and demographics of the citizenry all influence participation.

Overview of the AP Exam – Monday May 4th 2020

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam will be comprised of the following TWO sections:

Multiple-Choice Questions: Number of Questions: 55

Structure – The questions on multiple choice will ask students to:

- Analyze and compare political concepts
- Analyze and interpret quantitative, text-based, and visual sources
- Apply course concepts, foundational documents, and Supreme Court decisions in a variety of hypothetical and real-world scenarios

Timing: One hour and 20 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

Free-Response Questions: Number of Questions: 4

Structure – The four questions on the free response will ask students to:

- Apply political concepts in real-world scenarios
- Compare the decisions and implications of different Supreme Court cases
- Analyze quantitative data
- Develop an argument using required foundational documents as evidence

Timing: One hour and 40 minutes

Percentage of Total Exam: 50%

Grading Scale by Percentage:

100(+)-94 = A 93-90 = A- 89-87 = B+ 86-83 = B 82-80 = B- 79-77 = C+ 76-73 = C 72-70 = C- 69-67 = D+ 66-63 = D 62-60 = D- 59 and below = E

Final Exam

- You are NOT required to take the AP Exam in May 2020. I do not have the authority to force you to do so. Nor, will I will create positive rewards or negative consequences for taking/not taking it. This ensures equity and fair treatment to all students. However, I would still highly suggest and encourage taking it if you are able. If you pass the exam with a 3 or higher you are likely to receive college credit for the class. Last year's fee was \$94. There are also reduced fees for students with families in lower income levels. More info will be available when we schedule exams in early November.
- All students regardless of May 2020 exam status will take their **in-class** final exam at some point during the last week of April. Exact scheduling specifics TBD. It will be worth 10% of your final grade.

Grading Policies

- **80 %** summative (Tests/ Projects) / **20 %** formative (Reading Assignments/Classwork/Binder-Checks)
- Late formative/summative work will receive reduced credit.
- Semester/quarter/progress report grades will **NOT** be arbitrarily curved. Please do not ask.
- AP grading scale is weighted due to the rigor of the course
- Extra credit is not offered on an individual basis and will NOT be a major part of this course. Be focused on preparation and achievement in this class on a daily basis.
- There are no test corrections or retakes this year. I will drop your lowest multiple choice test grade at the end of the semester

Academic Honesty

All students must be honest and forthright in their academic studies. To falsify the results of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another, to cheat on an assignment, or to allow or assist another to commit these acts corrupts the educational process. Students are expected to do their own work and neither give nor receive unauthorized assistance. Any cheating on a test will result in a zero for that test and a call home to parents/guardians or administrative referral. This also includes, but is not limited to, turning in the work of others as your own, copying, taking a picture with your cellphone, or any other "suspicious behavior".

Attendance

- The DHS attendance policy will be enforced. Be mindful of audit and the impact that receiving reduced credit will have on your academic achievement. Good daily attendance is vital for success in AP classes.
- Absent work will be available in the form of physical copies and must be completed within a reasonable time frame.

Cellphone

- The 2019-20 DHS cellphone policy will be enforced.