



Southern Lehigh School District

High School Syllabus

Advanced Placement American Government & Politics 2013-2014

Course Description:

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course is designed to introduce the essential concepts at the core of American government through exploring the fundamentals of American political thought and culture. Students will also develop the analytical and evaluative skills necessary to interpret and question the various institutions, groups, beliefs and ideas that make up the US political landscape.

Course Content:

Unit One: The American Political System & Political & Politics

Study of American Government, Who Governs and to What Ends?

Public Opinion & The Political Agenda

Mass Media and the Political Agenda

Political Parties

Nominations and Campaigns

Interest Groups

Unit Two: The Policy Makers

Congress

Presidency

The Congress, the President, and the Budget: The Politics of Taxing and Spending

The Federal Bureaucracy

The Federal Courts

Unit Three: Public Policy

Economic Policy Making

Social Welfare Policy Making

Policymaking for Health Care and the Environment

National Security Policymaking

Unit Four: Establishing & Defending Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

The U.S. Constitution

Federalism

Federal Judiciary

Civil Liberties and Public Policy

Civil Rights and Public Policy

Required Textbooks and/or Other Reading/Research Materials

American Government, 8th ed. Wilson, John Q. & DiIulio, John J. Jr. Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
Government in America, People, Politics, and Policy, 12th ed. Edwards, George. C. Pearson, 2009.

The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity, Fourth Edition, 2010.

Course Requirements:

Because of the demanding nature of this course, only students that are highly motivated and ready for college level work should only attempt it. Students are expected to complete multiple readings a week and will need to critically reflect on these readings. Students will also analyze current political issues and be expected to discuss these issues and readings in class. Students should prepare for challenging chapter exams and frequent reading and vocabulary quizzes. Students are also required to participate in debates, projects, and presentations.

Grade Components/Assessments:

Each marking period is worth 20% of a student's overall grade. The midterm and final exam are each worth 10% of a student's overall average:

Quarter 1	20%
Quarter 2	20%
Midterm	10%
Quarter 3	20%
Quarter 4	20%
Final	10%

Required Summer Reading/Assignments:

Students will complete a summer assignment with two main components. The first is research on the U.S. Constitution, for which they will be tested on the first day of school. The second is a portfolio of five artifacts which reflect the students' political opinions about various topics. This work will be distributed by the teacher in the May, prior to the start of the following school year.