

Advanced Placement American Government and Politics

2023-2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This Advanced Placement course in American Government and Politics is designed to give students a critical perspective on government and politics in the United States of America. It involves the study of general concepts used to interpret American politics and the analysis of specific case studies. It requires familiarity with various institutions, groups, beliefs and ideas that make up the American political reality. Students will be prepared for intermediate and advanced college courses by making demands upon them equivalent to those of full year introductory college courses. Students will be prepared to take the Advanced Placement Exam in American Government and Politics.

Prerequisite(s): teacher recommendation

REQUIRED TEXTS

Janda, Berry & Goldman. The Challenge of Democracy. Eighth ed., Houghton-Mifflin, 2005, Boston, MA.

Herzog, B. AP U.S. Government and Politics Examination. Eighth ed., D&S Marketing, 2020, Brooklyn, NY.

Wolfford, D., Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics. Third Ed., 2021, Perfection Learning, Des Moines, IA.

COURSE GOALS and STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

AP U.S. Government and Politics is an introductory college-level course in U.S. government and politics. Students cultivate their understanding of U.S. government and politics through analysis of data and text-based sources as they explore topics like constitutionalism, liberty and order, civic participation in a representative democracy, competing policy-making interests, and methods of political analysis.

COURSE STANDARDS

Foundations of American Democracy
Interactions Among Branches
Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
American Political Ideologies and Beliefs
Political Participation

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Chelmsford High School is committed to supporting the success and well-being of all students, regardless of varying abilities and levels of adaptive skills. The Special Education office provides services and resources to empower each student to attain their highest level of academic success and learning independence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Chelmsford High School, students are expected to maintain high moral and ethical standards, as exemplified by the final sentence of our mission statement: *"A spirit of respect is fostered, as members take responsibility for their actions and acknowledge the rights and differences of others."* (CHS Mission Statement)

Students should respect themselves, other students, staff members and the school. The acts of cheating and plagiarism violate expectations that students will exhibit respectful, ethical behavior.

[The Academic Honor Code](#) exists to address the issues of cheating and plagiarism.

GRADING POLICIES

Students are graded by weighted categories: Classwork 20%; Homework 15%; Participation 15% and; Test and Performance 50%

Students will be able to monitor academic progress biweekly through X2/ASPEN.

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the academic support programs and services (such as PRIDE Block, after-school help, etc.) available to them to help ensure and support success. Information about these services can be found at

COURSE SKILLS

Rote memorization
Analytical Reasoning
Written and Verbal Communication
Listening
Self Discipline
Group Collaboration

COURSE OUTLINE

Units

I Concepts, Themes and Foundations of Government

- Government is what government does
- The Political Spectrum
- Procedural v. Substantive views of democracy
- Majoritarianism and Pluralism
- Roots of U.S. Democracy
- The US Constitution
 - Republicanism
 - Separation of Powers
 - Checks and Balances
 - Federalism

II Interactions Among Branches of Government

- US Constitution: Article I

Structure, Power, and Functions of Government
Congressional Norms of Behavior
Committees
Trustees or Delegates

US Constitution: Article II
Roles and Powers of the President
Evolution of the office.
Presidential Communication and Characteristics.

US Constitution: Article III
The State and the Federal Court systems
Judicial Review
Judicial activism and restraint
Loose interpretation and strict constructionist.
The Bureaucracy
US Constitution Articles I & II
Iron Triangles and Sub Governments
Administrative Policymaking (formal & informal
Policy Making
Economic Policy
Reforming the Bureaucracy
Federalism
US Constitution Articles IV & VI
The Evolution of US Federalism
Article I Section 8, Clause 3
Amendments 9, 10 and 14.

III Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

U.S. Constitution: Amendments 1 - 10, 14
Free Exercise and the Establishment Clause
Selective Incorporation
Due Process and the Rights of the Accused
Liberty v. Order
Liberty v. Equality
Equal Protection Clause
Balancing Minority and Majority Rights
Government Responses to Social Movements

IV American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

The US Political Spectrum
Factors of Political Socialization
Measuring and evaluating Public Opinion
Ideology and Political Parties
Ideology and Economic Policy
Ideology and Social Policy

V Political Participation

Majoritarianism and Pluralism

Conventional and Unconventional Political Behaviors

Voting Rights and Turnout

Party influences on citizen behavior

Third Party Politics

Interest Groups

The Federal Election Commission

Congressional and Presidential Elections

The Media and campaigns

This syllabus and course outline are subject to change as Chelmsford High School seeks to continually improve the learning experiences for all students.

"We foster PRIDE* in our pursuit of excellence."

PRIDE refers to our five core values – Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Empathy. These five pillars represent our points of emphasis in supporting the development of quality students and quality citizens.