**Syllabus**

***Advanced Placement***

***United States Government & Politics***

**Parkersburg High School**

**Constructed by David E Woody**

**Effective: August 15, 2018**

**Elements of the Course**

**Instructional Schedule**

This AP US Government & Politics course is taught within a 180-day school calendar that is divided into two semesters of two quarters each. Each class period is 45 minutes long. That the AP Exam usually occurs when there are 2 to 3 weeks remaining in the school year, accounts for the additional unit shown here.

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy [CR 1] {30 days}

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government [CR 2] {45 days}

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights [CR 3] {35 days}

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs [CR 4] {30 days}

Unit 5: Political Participation [CR 5] {32 days}

Unit 6: College Preparedness {8 days}

**Primary Textbook & Supplemental Readings** [CR 16]

1. James Q. Wilson, John J. Dilulio, Jr., Meena Bose. *American Government: Institutions and Policies,* 13th ed. Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2013.
2. Ann G. Serow, Everett C. Ladd. *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*, 5th ed. Baltimore: Lanahan Publishers, Inc., 2011.
3. Supplementary articles from current newspapers, such as the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the Washington Post, etc.; news magazine excerpts from Time, Newsweek, and the Economist, etc.; news footage and documentaries from sources such as PBS, CNN, the BBC, FOX, MSNBC, C-SPAN, etc.; and numerous Web sites.

Naturally, the 9 Foundational Documents and 15 required Supreme Court cases will be featured prominently. [CR 15] Additionally, every unit has associated political cartoons and statistical charts to be analyzed by the students. [CR 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

Having taught Social Studies for over 30 years, I have a wide variety of materials to which we will refer throughout the course. I have numerous primary source documents, visual aids, magazine articles, video and book excerpts, internet links, analytical charts and graphs, political speech texts, other college textbooks, etc. In every unit, we will draw on appropriate selections from those resources, as well as elements of current newspapers, magazines, websites and television/radio shows to help develop a firm grasp of the practical realities of American politics and government so that we can compare them to the theory that created them. Students will develop their critical-thinking and analytical skills on a daily basis. [CRs 8-12] All students will have access to my website wherein all PowerPoints and documents necessary for the class will be stored. This ensure that course materials are available at all times and places. ( <http://www.misterwoodynotebook.us> )

**Major Class Activities**

Students will complete 4 projects during the run of the course, with three of them emphasizing major elements of the course study.

**Project 1** is to help the students gain a full grasp of the order, philosophy, and application of the United States Constitution. [CR 1, 7, 10, 14] Students will each be assigned a portion of the Constitution (including the Bill of Rights) to present to the class. In doing so, they will demonstrate knowledge of the contents of their section, historical applications of that section, and implications that section may hold for the future of our nation.

**Project 2** will help students understand the complexity and nuance of Supreme Court decisions. Students will be paired up to present the 15 required Supreme Court cases to their class (including precedent or subsequent cases inherent in or affected by the decision) in an oppositional debate format. Each student will present one side of the arguments made in the case to demonstrate the logic of both positions. Class members will be given time to decide which side they support most, then the presenters will show the Court’s decision, the reasoning behind it, and the implications it holds for society. [CR 2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15]

**Project 3** will allow every student to explore their personal political stance on a variety of issues. In doing so, they will come to understand the positions of politicians and political parties, and discuss their own role in advancing their positions on the political stage. Students will engage in a variety of research activities that will help them see the philosophy and ideals underlying political theory, and establish solid reasoning for the positions they hold. Their findings will be presented in the form of a persuasive essay (similar to the AP Argument Essay) supported by the information they have gathered throughout the project. [CR 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14]

**Project 4** is our traditional Genealogy project which enables students to connect to historical events by researching their family members who may have participated in major events of U.S. history. By exploring how past civic involvement has led our nation to its current condition, they will be able to envision how their future civic involvement can shape our future nation. (Allowances are made for students from “non-traditional” families.) [CR 7, 14]

**Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy**  [CR 1] {30 days}

**Essential Questions**

1. How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty, while also promoting public order and safety? **[LOR-1]**

2. How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the U.S. Constitutional system? **[CON-1,2]**

3. How does the development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact citizens and residents of the U.S.? **[CON-1]**

4. What is the philosophical origin of the primary ideals present in the U.S. Constitution? **[LOR-1]**

**Instructional Activities**

Through lecture, discussion, debate, and research students will explore the following topics:

* How the Founders attempted to balance the freedom of the individual with the needs of societal living and government **[LOR-1]**
* How the failure of the Articles of Confederation contributed to the structure of the Constitution **[CON-1]**
* The essential necessity of compromise in creating our current system and the state of compromise today **[CON-1, PMI-1]**
* The effect of separation of powers along with checks and balances on individual liberty **[LOR-1, PMI-1]**
* The delicate synergy of Federalism, and the changing nature of policies affected by it **[CON-2]**
* How competing ideas create new approaches to solving problems [CR 6]**[PMI-1]**

**Resources** (minimum)

All students will engage with the following items, but other resources may be accessed by individuals or the class, depending upon the issues raised during instructional activities. [CR 7-11]

Excerpts from Magna Carta, The Rights of Man, the English Bill of Rights, The Social Contract, *L’Esprit de Lois*, and the Mayflower Compact

Declaration of Independence, The Crisis

Articles of Confederation

Federalist #10 & #51, and Brutus #1

The United States Constitution

**Assessment**

During the progress of each unit, students will examine sample questions provided by the College Board. In preparation for the test, each student will construct questions they believe to be similar to those that might appear on the AP Exam. This will include FRQs.

In this particular unit, Project 1 will allow students to demonstrate a firm grasp of major elements of the U.S. Constitution [CR 14]. They will be given an objective test on the basic facts of the Constitution and the time period, with some items relevant to the underlying philosophy that informed the Founders’ principles. One FRQ will be a Concept Application question, evaluating an important current issue as viewed under the Articles of Confederation versus the Constitution [CR 12]. Students will also write an Argument Essay debating the relative merits of the different types of representative democracy. [CR 13]

**Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government** [CR 2] {45 days}

**Essential Questions**

1. How do the branches of the national government compete and cooperate in order to govern? **[PMI-1]**

2. To what extent have changes in the powers of each branch affected how responsive and accountable the national government is in the 21st Century? [CR 7] **[CON-3]**

3. How closely does the current structure and operations of the Legislative Branch resemble the ideals proposed by the Founders? [CR 7, 8]**[CON-3]**

4. How have the powers, role, and impact of the Presidency changed in the past 220 years? [CR 6-8]**[CON-4]**

5. How has the nature of the Supreme Court changed since its inception? [CR 7, 8]**[CON-5]**

6. How has the size, power, and complexity of the Bureaucracy changed over time? [CR 6]**[PMI-2]**

**Instructional Activities**

Through lecture, discussion, debate, and research students will explore the following topics:

* The qualifications for and similarities/differences between the Houses of Congress **[CON-3]**
* The role of each House in creating policy [CR 6]**[CON-3]**
* How the behavior of Congress is affected by election processes, partisanship, and divided government **[CON-3]**
* How the President formulates, encourages, and benefits from public policy **[CON-4]**
* How informal Presidential powers sometimes become more formalized **[CON-4]**
* The effects of politicization on the role and perception of the Supreme Court  **[CON-5]**
* The public perception of the Federal Bureaucracy (including misperceptions)  **[PMI-2]**

**Resources** (minimum)

All students will engage with the following items, but other resources may be accessed by individuals or the class, depending upon the issues raised during instructional activities. [CR 7-11]

U.S. Constitution

The 15 required Supreme Court cases, as well as necessary adjuncts

Federalist #70 & #78

“How Newt Gingrich Crippled Congress” by Alex Seitz-Wald, Ed. ThinkProgress.org

Inaugural Addresses of John F. Kennedy, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump

Movie: *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington*

**Assessment**

During the progress of each unit, students will examine sample questions provided by the College Board. In preparation for the test, each student will construct questions they believe to be similar to those that might appear on the AP Exam. This will include FRQs.

In this particular unit, Project 2 will have the students presenting the 15 required Supreme Court cases in a debate-style format, demonstrating a knowledge of the underlying political, social, and legal ramifications of the incidents that caused the cases, as well as those of the decision itself, and possible implications for the future. [CR 9, 10, 12, 15] Students will be given an objective test on the basic structure and powers of the branches of government, and the balance of power between them. They will have an FRQ regarding a Quantitative Analysis of the effect of the Electoral College on Presidential elections, and one on the effect of gerrymandering on a selection of localized elections. [CR 9] They will also write an Argument Essay [CR 13] based on either (A) that the distribution of political power has shifted so drastically that checks and balances are no longer evident, **[CON-2]** OR (B) that the current powers of any given branch of the government are exactly (or NOT) what the Founders envisioned. [CR 8]**[CON-3,4,5]**

**Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights** [CR 3] {35 days}

**Essential Questions**

1. To what extent do the U.S. Constitution and its amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from invidious discrimination? **[LOR-2, PRD-1]**

2. How have U.S. Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?  **[LOR-3, CON-6]**

3. How can we measure the relative valuation given to personal liberty and government power? **[LOR-2, CON-6]**

4. Are there limits to personal liberty outside the constraints of social government? [CR 7,8]

5. How did the concept of “right to privacy” come to be?  **[LOR-2, CON-6]**

6. How can we, as citizens, advocate for our rights and for those of others?  **[PMI-3]**

7. How do we explain Supreme Court decisions and government actions that seem inconsistent with our Constitution and/or stated beliefs? **[LOR-2][CON-6]**

**Instructional Activities**

Through lecture, discussion, debate, and research students will explore the following topics:

* The essential reasons for the inclusion of the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution [CR 6, 7]
* How the public’s interpretation of various rights has changed over time **[LOR-3, PRD-1, PMI-3]**
* How selective incorporation has changed state laws in relation to individual freedoms **[LOR-3]**
* The dramatic impact of the 14th Amendment  **[PRD-1, LOR-3]**
* How social movements have expanded our definition of “civil rights” **[PMI-3]**

**Resources** (minimum)

All students will engage with the following items, but other resources may be accessed by individuals or the class, depending upon the issues raised during instructional activities. [CR 7-11]

The Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment

Most of the 15 required Supreme Court cases, as well as other relevant cases

“Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Assessment**

During the progress of each unit, students will examine sample questions provided by the College Board. In preparation for the test, each student will construct questions they believe to be similar to those that might appear on the AP Exam. This will include FRQs.

In this particular unit, the effects of Project 2 [CR 12] will be fully felt, as students should now be able to apply the lessons learned from their study of Supreme Court cases to the state of civil rights in the U.S. Students will be given an objective test on the civil rights at the heart of various Court cases. They will also write an FRQ of Concept Application in which they are presented with a civil situation and asked to apply what they know from various Court decisions to determine its likely outcome. [CR 10, 12]**[CON-6, LOR-2]** They will also have an FRQ of SCOTUS Comparison in which they relate a case they know well to a case that they do not, making hypotheses regarding essential elements and likely outcomes. [CR 12, 13, 15]

**Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs** [CR 4] {30 days}

**Essential Questions**

1. How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time? **[MPA-1]**

2. How do political ideology and core values influence government policy making? **[PMI-4]**

3. What are the core political beliefs of our nation? **[MPA-1]**

**Instructional Activities**

Through lecture, discussion, debate, and research students will explore the following topics:

* How cultural and familial factor influence political attitudes and socialization **[MPA-1]**
* How polling gathers information and reflects public opinion **[MPA-2]**
* How the two major parties shape our debates, and the role minor parties might play in our national conversation **[PMI-4]**
* How political ideologies reflect our individual and collective economic values **[PMI-4]**
* How political ideologies reflect our individual and collective positions on social questions **[PMI-4]**

**Resources** (minimum)

All students will engage with the following items, but other resources may be accessed by individuals or the class, depending upon the issues raised during instructional activities. [CR 7-11]

Current Democratic and Republican party political platforms [CR 6, 8-11]

**Assessment**

During the progress of each unit, students will examine sample questions provided by the College Board. In preparation for the test, each student will construct questions they believe to be similar to those that might appear on the AP Exam. This will include FRQs.

In this particular unit, students will complete Project 3, which will enable them to begin to put “labels” on their political beliefs and stance. [CR 6-11, 14] As a group, the class will create a statistical chart to show where they fall on the political spectrum, both individually and collectively. We will then discuss the meaning of that information as it relates to what we have learned in the unit. Students will be given an objective test to assess their knowledge of parties and their roles, as well as the changes in government social and economic policy over time. They will also have a Quantitative Analysis FRQ that asks them to analyze polling data from a particular election, and determine whether or not it was accurate and why. [CR 10, 11]**[MPA-2]** There will also be an Argument Essay in which they defend their chosen area on the political spectrum, using factual support for their positions. [CR 13]

**Unit 5: Political Participation** [CR 5] {32 days}

**Essential Questions**

1. How have changes in technology influenced political communication and behavior? **[PRD-3]**

2. Why do levels of participation and influence in politics vary? **[MPA-3, PMI-5, PRD-2,3]**

3. How effective are the various methods of political participation in shaping public policies? **[PRD-2, PMI 3,5]**

4. What did the Founders believe about political participation by the citizens and/or residents of the United States? [CR 7]**[LOR-1]**

5. What type(s) of strategy are most effective in helping a candidate get elected, and does our opinion on that vary depending on the office being sought? **[PRD-2,3 PMI-5]**

**Instructional Activities**

Through lecture, discussion, debate, and research students will explore the following topics:

* Explanations for the extreme variation in voter turnout in different elections **[MPA-3, PMI-5, PRD-2]**
* The role of linkage institutions (parties, media, interest groups) in encouraging or discouraging voter turnout **[PMI-5]**
* Why minor parties have a difficult time creating and/or maintaining a significant impact in American politics **[PMI-5]**
* The effect of the Electoral College on Presidential elections and national turnout **[PRD-2]**
* The wide range of other factors that might have a major impact on the outcome of an election (strategy, organization, funding, PACs, incumbency advantage, etc.) **[PRD-2,3 ; PMI-5]**
* How the media helps to shape public opinion and voting behavior **[PRD-3]**

**Resources** (minimum)

All students will engage with the following items, but other resources may be accessed by individuals or the class, depending upon the issues raised during instructional activities. [CR 7-11]

Movie: *The Candidate*

Federalist #68

The Gutenberg Galaxy by

**Assessment**

During the progress of each unit, students will examine sample questions provided by the College Board. In preparation for the test, each student will construct questions they believe to be similar to those that might appear on the AP Exam. This will include FRQs.

In this particular unit, the full effect of Project 3 will be felt, as students use what they have learned while creating it to help them understand how certain of their opinions and positions may have been affected by outside forces. **[PRD-3, PMI-5]** Students will take an objective test to determine their level of knowledge regarding the elements of this unit. They will also have a Quantitative Analysis FRQ requiring them to interpret demographic data from an election and make inferences about the outcome. [CR 9] A Concept Analysis FRQ will ask them to read a news excerpt and reflect on the ways in which political processes have affected the reasoning in it. [CR 8, 10]

As this is the final unit before the AP Exam, students will also be asked to write an Argument Essay reflecting on a major issue we have discussed this year, using specific evidence they have collected along the way to defend their position on the topic they have chosen. [CR 7-10, 13]

**Appendix A: *Curricular Requirements***

CR1 The course includes the Foundations of American Democracy Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

CR2 The course includes the Interactions Among Branches of Government Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

CR3 The course includes the Civil Liberties and Civil Rights Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

CR4 The course includes the American Political Ideologies and Beliefs Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

CR5 The course includes the Political Participation Unit and addresses all related big ideas (BIs) and enduring understandings (EUs).

CR6 The course integrates public policy within each unit.

CR7 The course addresses the big ideas by connecting enduring understandings across one or more units.

CR8 The course provides opportunities to analyze and compare political concepts.

CR9 The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret quantitative data to explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

CR10 The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret qualitative sources (primary and secondary sources including the nine required foundational documents) to explain how they relate to political concepts.

CR11 The course provides opportunities to analyze and interpret visual information to explain how the elements of the visual illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, and behaviors.

CR12 The course provides opportunities to apply course concepts and Supreme Court decisions in real-world contexts or scenarios.

CR13 The course provides opportunities to develop an argument in the form of an essay, supported by relevant evidence, about a concept described in the *AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework*.

CR14 Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the *AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework* that culminates in a presentation of findings.

CR15 Students are provided opportunities to analyze the 15 required Supreme Court cases as described in the *AP U.S. Government and Politics Curriculum Framework* and connect them to other non-required landmark cases.

CR16 Students and teachers have access to a college-level U.S. government and politics textbook.

**Appendix B: Required Supreme Court Cases** [CR 15]

*Marbury v. Madison* (1803)

*McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819)

*Schenck v. United States* (1919)

*Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)

*Baker v. Carr* (1961)

*Engel v. Vitale* (1962)

*Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963)

*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District* (1969)

*New York Times Co. v. United States* (1971)

*Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972)

*Roe v. Wade* (1973)

*Shaw v. Reno* (1993)

*United States v. Lopez* (1995)

*McDonald v. Chicago* (2010)

*Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010)

Additional cases to be studied: *Dred Scott v. Sanford; Griswold v. Connecticut; Loving v. Virginia; Mapp v. Ohio; Miranda v. Arizona; New Jersey v. TLO; Obergefell v. Hodges; Plessy v. Ferguson; United States v. Nixon; West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette*

**Appendix C: Required Foundational Documents** [CR 10]

The Declaration of Independence

The Articles of Confederation

Federalist #10

Brutus #1

Federalist #51

The Constitution of the United States

Federalist #70

Federalist #78

Letter from a Birmingham Jail