

U.S. GOVERNMENT / AP – COLLEGE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

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FALL SEMESTER, 2017. Welcome! I look forward to exploring the discipline of political science and government with each of you, and assisting you with other academic problems or concerns. I will be available before and after school to answer any questions you may have.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: During this course, we will examine various historical, philosophical, and legal aspects of our government, to gain a fuller understanding of how we as a nation fit into a rapidly changing world. Using the “4 Theories of American Government” as a theme, we will explore the numerous institutions and processes which comprise our system of government.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a *basic* understanding of some of the concepts and terminology used in the philosophy of science and political science.
2. Identify and explain the four most commonly debated theories used to describe our system of government.
3. Identify the historical context and the philosophies of those who framed the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
4. Understand the dynamics of our “separation of powers” and the institutions (the courts, the executive, the legislature, and the media) that comprise them.
5. Identify the principles of federalism, and identify how state and local governments differ from those at the federal level.
6. Analyze and *critically* evaluate some of the important and contemporary issues in the world today, based on 1 – 5 above.
7. Demonstrate the necessary test-taking skills and strategies for success on the AP Government exam given in May of 2018.

COURSE TEXT: James Q. Wilson and John J. Dilulio, Jr. American Government. Instructor will provide other assigned readings which we will read in class and on the web.

COURSE METHODOLOGY: Class will consist primarily of lectures and class discussions, which will serve to amplify and clarify text materials. Students will also be expected to do a significant amount of reading and drills in preparation for the AP Government exam in May. Student progress will be evaluated through class exams and written essays.

EXAMINATION/EVALUATION: Students should be prepared to do a significant amount of written essays and practice AP quizzes. Purchase of an AP exam guide (Barron’s, ARCO, or Kaplan) is *strongly* recommended. Homework will consist of reading and preparing your written research projects. There is no mid-term but you should plan on the final exam in December to be cumulative. Class participation in discussions is encouraged. Student participation in class is an indicator of interest and shows that the student is keeping up with the assigned readings. Grades will break out over a normal letter grade percentage scale (100-90% = “A”, 89-80% = “B”, etc...) and I will supply you with a grade formula so you will always know your grade. Assignment weights will be the following:

10% - Documentary video participation	
20% - Multiple choice quizzes	30% - Essay exams
25% - Final exam	15% - Research thesis

Extra credit projects are neither necessary nor allowed in this course.

COURSE OUTLINE – U.S. GOVERNMENT AP

AG = American Government (class text)

Unit One: *The Nature and Study of American Government*

Readings: AG, Chapters 1 (pp. 1 – 15) and 4 (75 – 96) and 22 (576 – 587).

Unit Two: *The Constitution*

Readings: AG, Chapter 2 (pp. 16 – 47).

Unit Three: *Federalism*

Readings: AG, Chapter 3 (pp. 48 – 74).

Unit Four: *The Legislative Branch (Congress)*

Readings: AG, Chapter 13 (pp. 316 – 366).

Unit Five: *The Executive Branch (President)*

Readings: AG, Chapter 14 (pp. 367 – 408).

Unit Six: *The Judicial Branch (Supreme Court)*

Readings: AG, Chapter 16 (pp. 437 – 466) and IN.

Unit Seven: *The Bureaucracy*

Readings: AG, Chapter 15 (pp. 409 – 436).

Unit Eight: *Public Opinion and the Mass Media*

Readings: AG, Chapters 7 (pp. 154 – 176) and 12 (291 – 314).

Unit Nine: *American Political Parties*

Readings: AG, Chapters 8 and 9 (pp. 177 – 229).

Unit Ten: *Voting and Elections*

Readings: AG, Chapter 10 (pp. 230 – 263).

Unit Eleven: *Interest Groups*

Readings: AG, Chapter 11 (pp. 264 – 290).

Unit Twelve: *The Policy-Making Process*

Readings: AG, Chapter 17 (pp. 468 – 490).

Unit Thirteen: *Economic Policy*

Readings: AG, Chapters 18 (pp. 491 – 510) and 19 (511 – 528) and 21 (559 – 574).

Unit Fourteen: *Foreign Policy and National Security Policy*

Readings: AG, Chapter 20 (pp. 603 – 650).

Unit Fifteen: *Civil Liberties and Civil Rights*

Readings: AG, Chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 97 – 152).