

AP® Government and Politics Syllabus

Teaching Strategies and Activities

The course is evenly divided between lecture and Socratic seminar. Students are responsible for keeping up with all readings from the textbook and supplement materials. Students are also responsible for keep up with events in the news. Each class begins with a discussion of current events (public policy, international relations, etc.). The current events provide concrete connections for each lesson. Students will have access to the Cengage website, with online quizzes, review materials, and links to supplementary materials. In addition, a Google Classroom will be set up for the posting of assignments.

Course Overview/Description

This course explores the political theory and everyday practice that direct the daily operation of our government and shape our public policies. The express purpose of this course is to prepare students to take the AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam. The course is for all intents and purposes taught on a college level, and it requires a substantial amount of reading and preparation for every class.

The objectives of this course go beyond basic analysis of how our government “works.” Students will develop critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system, as well as their rights and responsibilities as a citizen.

Course Readings

There are three required texts for this course:

Wilson, James Q., John J. Dilulio, Jr, Meena Bose. *American Government: Institutions and Policies (AP Edition)*, 14th ed. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2014

Serow, Ann G., Everett C. Ladd. *The LANAHAN Readings in the American Polity, 6th edition*. Baltimore MD: LANAHAN Publishing, 2016

These readings will be supplemented with classroom handouts throughout the semester.

Grading and Course Requirements:

Grades are figured on a cumulative point basis. Each test, quiz, homework assignment, etc., is worth a given number of points according to the quality and level of completed work. At the end of a marking period, a grade average is determined by dividing the total points possible by points earned.

For example:

Assignment	Points Possible	Your Points	Grade
Vocab	10	8	.80 or 80%
Quiz	10	6	.60 or 60%
Test	40	38	.95 or 95%
Worksheet	20	16	.80 or 80%
OVERALL GRADE	80	68	.85 or 85%

Eighty percent of the final course grade is based on the cumulative average of homework, quizzes, current events, essays group presentations, and chapter tests for each quarter. The remaining twenty percent is made up of the final exam.

Current Events

Students are responsible for keeping up with daily events in the nation and the world. Students will need to read the front page of *The Washington Post*, *New York Times* or *USA Today*; listen to NPR or another radio news program; watch TV news station, such as CNN or Fox News; or access a reliable online source. Students are **required** to read a current event article every week. Students will submit a report on their reading every Friday to Google Classroom.

Test & Quizzes

Students are tested on their understanding of quantitative and visually presented information (maps, graphs & data charts) at regular intervals in quizzes and tests. In addition, **practice FRQ's** will be included in all chapter tests.

Readings Assignments and Course Calendar

Week one

Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government

Due this week: Wilson, Chapters 1 & 2

Serow, Part 1: "Democracy in America" pp. 3-6, "Race Matters" pp. 39-45

Serow, Part 2: "The Federalist 10 and 51" pp 67-78, "Executive Privilege" pp. 99-110

Week two

Federalism

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 3

Serow, Part 3: "Federalism and the Tug of War Within" pp. 123-132

Week three

American Political Culture

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 4

Serow, Part 9: "Feeding Frenzy" pp. 403-410

Week four

Mass Movement Politics: Political Parties & Interest Groups

Due this week: Wilson, Chapters 9 & 11

Serow, Part 12: "The Swing Vote" pp. 583-592

Serow, Part 10: "Democracy in America" pp. 427-430

Week five

Campaigns & Elections

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 10

Serow, Part 11: "Ground Wars" pp. 528-540, "Big Money" pp. 518 - 527, "Going Dirty" 497 - 505

Figure 10.1 - 2012 Campaign Spending, selected items

Table 10.3 - Changes in state Representation in the House of Representatives

Week Six

Campaigns & Elections: Public Opinion & Media

Due this week: Wilson, Chapters 7 & 12

Serow, Part 9: "Public Opinion and American Democracy" pp. 389 - 394, "How the Mass Media Divides Us" pp. 418-426

Figure 12.1 - Evening News Audience Continues 30 Year Decline

Week Seven

Public Policy and the Institutions of National Governance: Congress

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 13

Serow: Part 4: "Congress: The Electoral Connection" pp. 141-144 "Homestyle" pp.145-150

Table 13.1 - Blacks, Hispanics, Women in Congress, 1971-2013

Table 13.2 - Who's in Congress 1991-1992 vs 2013 - 2014

Week Eight

Public Policy and the Institutions of National Governance: Presidency

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 14

Serow: Part 5: "Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents" pp. 195-201, "With the Stroke of a Pen" pp. 237-245

Figure 14.1 - Presidential Popularity

Table 14.2 - Partisan Gains and Losses in Congress in Off Year Elections

Week Nine - Spring Break

Week Ten

Public Policy and the Instruments of National Governance: Judiciary

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 16

Serow: Part 7: "The Federalist 78" pp. 293-297, "The Dynamic Constitution" pp. 303-309

Figure 16.1 - Economics and Civil Liberties Laws Overturned by the US Supreme Court by decade, 1900 - 2006

Week Eleven

Public Policy and the Instruments of National Governance: Bureaucracy

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 15

Serow: Part 6: "Bureaucracy" pp. 272-277

Week Twelve

Civil Liberties

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 5

Serow: Part 8: "Gideon's Trumpet" pp. 339-348

Week Thirteen

Civil Rights

Due this week: Wilson, Chapter 6

Serow: Part 8: "All Deliberate Speed" pp. 357-365, "You Can't Say That!" pp. 379-388

Week Fourteen

Public Policy

Due this Week: Wilson, Chapter 17, 18, & 19

Serow: Part 13: "The Price of Inequality" pp. 598-606, "Understanding Environmental Policy" pp. 629-636

Serow: Part 14: "Blowback" pp. 669-675, "Foreign Policy Begins at Home" pp. 685-690

Week Fifteen

Review for AP exam