

# AP GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## SYLLABUS (2015-2016)

### 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 a basic analysis of how our government “works.” Students will develop a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system, as well as their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

This syllabus is not designed to show all that we do in class. Instead, it is an overall guide that will help the students to see where we are starting and where we are going. It will allow them to pace themselves throughout the year. It will also give them a sense of accomplishment as they can highlight the assignments that they have accomplished as the year progresses.

The class is divided into four quarters. In the first quarter we will focus on constitutional foundations. During the second quarter will focus on people and politics. In the third quarter we will focus on the policymakers. During the fourth quarter we will focus on policies. Each quarter is made up of the following things: First, teachings on American government taught through various methods of instruction and based on the book *Government In America*. Second, free-response questions gathered from old AP American government exams and the internet. The students will work with the FRQ’s as homework, class discussion, debate, and on tests. On the tests I will give the students three FRQ’s of which they will have to pick one. Third, primary source readings from the book *American Government: Readings and Cases*. The students will read and be prepared to discuss and be tested on the reading material. Fourth, the students will be given homework’s that will be an assortment of multiple choice questions, maps, graphs, pictures, and drawings. The students will have to analyze the evidence and give their interpretations in their answers. Lastly, a large multiple choice test will be given at the end of each chapter to gage the students comprehension of the material.

### 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.

### TEXTS

Edwards & Wattenberg. *Government In America*. 16<sup>th</sup> AP Edition. Boston: Pearson, 2016.

Woll, Peter. *American Government: Readings and Cases*. Nineteenth Edition. NJ: Pearson, 2011.

Herzog, Bonnie & Wood, Ethel. *AP U.S. Government and Politics Examination*. Sixth Edition. New York: D & S Marketing Systems, 2008.

## **FIRST QUARTER**

### **PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS**

#### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA**

##### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

###### 1.1 Government

###### A. The Functions of Government

###### 1.2 Politics

###### 1.3 The Policymaking System

###### 1.4 Democracy in America

###### A. Traditional Democratic Theory

###### B. Three Contemporary Theories of American Democracy

###### 1.5 The Scope of Government in America

#### **CHAPTER 2: THE CONSTITUTION**

##### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

###### 2.1 The Origins of the Constitution

###### A. The English Heritage: The Power of Ideas

###### B. The American Creed

###### 2.2 The Government That Failed: 1776-1787

###### A. The Articles of Confederation

###### 2.3 Making a Constitution: The Philadelphia Convention

###### A. Philosophy in Action

###### B. Human Nature

###### C. Nature of Government

###### 2.4 Critical Issues at the Convention

###### A. The Equality Issues

###### B. The Economic Issues

###### C. The Individual Rights Issues

###### 2.5 The Madisonian System

###### A. Separating Powers

###### B. Checks and Balances

###### 2.6 Ratifying the Constitution

###### A. Federalists and Anti-Federalists

###### 2.7 Changing the Constitution

###### A. The Formal Amending Process

###### B. The Informal Processes of Changing the Constitution

###### 2.8 Understanding the Constitution

## **CHAPTER 3: FEDERALISM**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 3.1 Defining Federalism
- 3.2 The Constitutional Basis of Federalism
- 3.3 Intergovernmental Relations
- 3.4 Diversity in Policy
- 3.5 Understanding Federalism

## **CHAPTER 4: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND PUBLIC POLICY**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 4.1 The Bill of Rights
- 4.2 Freedom of Religion
- 4.3 Freedom of Expression
- 4.4 Freedom of Assembly
- 4.5 Right to Bear Arms
- 4.6 Defendants' Rights
- 4.7 The Right to Privacy
- 4.8 Understanding Civil Liberties

## **CHAPTER 5: CIVIL RIGHTS AND PUBLIC POLICY**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 5.1 The Struggle for Equality
  - A. The Development of Civil Liberties and Civil Rights by Judicial Interpretation
  - B. Knowledge of Substantive Rights and Liberties
  - C. The Impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the Constitutional Development of Rights and Liberties
- 5.2 African Americans' Civil Rights
- 5.3 The Rights of Other Minority Groups
- 5.4 The Rights of Women
- 5.5 Other Groups Active Under the Civil Rights Umbrella
- 5.6 Affirmative Action
- 5.7 Understanding Civil Rights and Public Policy

## **SECOND QUARTER**

### **PART II: PEOPLE AND POLITICS**

## **CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL ACTION**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 6.1 The American People
- 6.2 How Americans Learn About Politics: Political Socialization
  - A. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders
  - B. Processes by which citizens learn about politics
- 6.3 Measuring Public Opinion and Political Information
  - A. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion.
- 6.4 What Americans Value: Political Ideologies
- 6.5 How Americans Participate in Politics

- A. Conventional Participation
  - B. Protest as Participation
  - C. Class, Inequality, and Participation
- 6.6 Understanding Public Opinion and Political Action

## **CHAPTER 7: THE MASS MEDIA AND THE POLITICAL AGENDA**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 7.1 The Mass Media Today
- 7.2 The Development of Media Politics
  - A. The Functions and Structures of the News Media
- 7.3 Reporting the News
- 7.4 The News and Public Opinion
  - A. The Impacts of the News Media on Politics
- 7.5 Policy Entrepreneurs and Agenda Setting
  - A. The News Media Industry and its Consequences
- 7.6 Understanding the Mass Media

## **CHAPTER 8: POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 8.1 The Meaning of Party
  - A. Functions of Political Parties
- 8.2 The Party in the Electorate
- 8.3 The Party Organizations: From the Grass Roots to Washington
  - A. Organization of Political Parties
- 8.4 The Party in Government: Promises and Policy
- 8.5 Party Eras in American History
  - A. Development of Political parties
- 8.6 Third Parties: Their Impact on American Politics
- 8.7 Understanding Political Parties

## **CHAPTER 9: CAMPAIGNS AND VOTING BEHAVIOR**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 9.1 The Nomination Game
  - A. Effects of Political Parties on the Political Process
- 9.2 The Campaign Game
- 9.3 Money and Campaigning
  - A. Electoral laws and Systems
- 9.4 The Impact of Campaigns
- 9.5 Whether to Vote: A Citizen's First Choice
  - A. Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors
- 9.6 How Americans Vote: Explaining Citizens' Decisions
  - A. The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life
  - B. Party Identification
  - C. How Americans See the Candidates
  - D. Policy Voting

- 9.7 The Last Battle: The Electoral College
- 9.8 Understanding Campaigns and Voting Behavior

## **CHAPTER 10: INTEREST GROUPS**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 10.1 The Role of Interest Groups
  - A. The Activities of Interest Groups
- 10.2 Theories of Interest Group Politics
- 10.3 What Makes an Interest Group Successful?
- 10.4 How Groups Try to Shape Policy
  - A. The Effects of Interest Groups on the Political Process
  - B. The Unique Characteristics and Roles of PACs in the Political Process
- 10.5 Types of Interest Groups
  - A. The Range of Interests Represented
- 10.6 Understanding Interest groups

## **THIRD QUARTER**

### **PART III: THE POLICYMAKERS**

Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts

- The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power

- Relationships among these four institutions and varying balances of power

- Linkages between institutions and the following:

- Public opinion and voters
- Interest groups
- Political parties
- The media
- State and local governments

## **CHAPTER 11: CONGRESS**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 11.1 The Representatives and Senators
- 11.2 Congressional Elections
- 11.3 How Congress is Organized to Make Policy
- 11.4 The Congressional Process and Decision Making
- 11.5 Understanding Congress

## **CHAPTER 12: THE PRESIDENCY**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 12.1 The Presidents
- 12.2 Presidential Powers
- 12.3 Running the Government: The Chief Executive
- 12.4 Presidential Leadership of Congress: The Politics of Shared Powers
- 12.5 The President and National Security Policy
- 12.6 Power from the People: The Public Presidency
- 12.7 The President and the Press
- 12.8 Understanding the American Presidency

**CHAPTER 13: THE BUDGET: THE POLITICS OF TAXING AND SPENDING**  
**BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 13.1 Federal Revenue and Borrowing
- 13.2 Federal Expenditures
- 13.3 The Budgetary Process
- 13.4 Understanding Budgeting

**CHAPTER 14: THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY**  
**BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 14.1 The Bureaucrats
- 14.2 How the Federal Bureaucracy Is Organized
- 14.3 Bureaucracies as Implementors
- 14.4 Bureaucracies as Regulators
- 14.5 Controlling the Bureaucracy
- 14.6 Understanding Bureaucracies

**CHAPTER 15: THE FEDERAL COURTS**  
**BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 15.1 The Nature of the Judicial System
- 15.2 The Structure of the Federal Judicial System
- 15.3 The Politics of Judicial Selection
- 15.4 The Backgrounds of Judges and Justices
- 15.5 The Courts as Policymakers
- 15.6 The Courts and Public Policy: A Historical Review
- 15.7 Understanding the Courts

**FOURTH QUARTER**

**PART IV: POLICIES**

Public Policy

- Policymaking in a Federal System

- The Formation of Policy Agendas

- The Role of Institutions in the Enactment of Policy

- The Role of the Bureaucracy and the Courts in Policy Implementation and

Interpretation

- Linkages between Policy Processes and the Following:

- Political Institutions and Federalism

- Political Parties

- Interest Groups

- Public Opinion

- Elections

- Policy Networks

**CHAPTER 16: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICYMAKING**  
**BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 16.1 Economic Policymaking

- 16.2 Types of Social Welfare Policies
- 16.3 Income, Poverty, and Public Policy
- 16.4 Helping the Poor? Social Policy and the Needy
- 16.5 Social Security: Living on Borrowed Time
- 16.6 Social Welfare Policy Elsewhere
- 16.7 Understanding Economic and Social Welfare Policymaking

## **CHAPTER 17: POLICYMAKING FOR HEALTHCARE, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND ENERGY**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 17.1 Health Care Policy
- 17.2 Environmental Policy
- 17.3 Energy Policy
- 17.4 Understanding Healthcare, Environmental, and Energy Policy

## **CHAPTER 18: NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **BOOK READINGS (EDWARDS & WATTENBERG)**

- 18.1 American Foreign Policy: Instruments, Actors, and Policymakers
- 18.2 American Foreign Policy Through the Cold War
- 18.3 American Foreign Policy and the War on Terrorism
- 18.4 Defense Policy
- 18.5 The New National Security Agenda
- 18.6 Understanding National Security Policymaking