



# AP United States Government and Politics

Social Studies Department- Anderson County High School

Ms. Lauren Vasser

2020-2021



## Course Overview & Objectives

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a year long high school course that is equivalent to a one-semester introductory college course in U.S. government which allows high school students the opportunity to earn college credit. This course provides a *college-level*, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. Students will study U.S. foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals to gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behavior. They will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, they will complete a political science research or applied civics project. This course will provide students with the political knowledge and reasoning processes to participate in meaningful and thoughtful discussions and debates that are currently shaping American politics and society. By the conclusion of this course, students will be active political scientists who will be able to analyze current and historical political events and develop factually accurate, well-reasoned, thoughtful arguments.

This class also acts as preparation for the College Board AP United States Government and Politics exam that will take place on **May 3, 2021 at 8am**. While you are not required to take the exam, it is highly recommended if you are in this course.

## Text and other Class Materials

- Required Text (to check out from ACHS media center): Edwards, George C. and Martin P. Wattenberg. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*, 16<sup>th</sup> ed, 2014 Elections and Updates Edition. Pearson, 2015.
- Other Materials: Students will also be assigned various readings/assignments from current newspapers, news magazines and news footage from sources such as NPR, The US News and World Report, *The New York Times*, C-SPAN, *The Wall Street Journal*, Major news outlets, BBC, and *Time* to engage with political data and political analysis. They may also use a supplemental text (Wolford, David. *United States Government and Politics*, 2nd ed. AMSCO School Publications, Inc., a division of Perfection Learning, 2018.) or other readings.
- APEX Learning Platform may be used as an additional resource- it will include readings and assignments.
- **Required Foundational Documents** - *The Declaration of Independence*, *The Articles of Confederation*, *Federalist No. 10*, *Brutus No. 1*, *Federalist No. 51*, *The Constitution of the United States*, *Federalist No. 70*, *Federalist No. 78*, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*
- **Required Supreme Court Cases**- Students will read, examine, and analyze the reasoning and court opinions of 15 Supreme Court cases.
- Suggested Resource- Any AP Review Book - Kaplan, Princeton Review, 5 Steps to a 5, etc. - can buy from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc

## Course Outline

The course outline below is a guide for our studying and learning. At the beginning of each unit, students will receive a

more detailed calendar with **specific** due dates and updated readings, activities, etc.

Unit of Study	Approx. Time	Topics	Readings
1- Foundations of American Democracy  <i>15-22% of AP Exam</i>	3-4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduction to government and politics</li> <li>● Theories/Principles of democratic government</li> <li>● Articles of Confederation</li> <li>● Formulation of Constitution &amp; the ensuing debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists</li> <li>● Major ideas found within constitution- separation of powers, checks and balances, etc</li> <li>● Federalism- relationship between states &amp; national government</li> </ul>	<b>Edwards- Ch. 1, 2, 3</b>
2- Interactions Among Branches of Government  <i>25-36% of AP Exam</i>	5-6 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formal and Informal institutional arrangements of power</li> <li>● Relationships among the four institutions and balances of power</li> <li>● Linkages between institutions and public opinions, voters, interest groups, political parties, media, state governments, etc.</li> <li>● Congress               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Characteristics of Legislative Branch and its members</li> <li>- Congressional Elections</li> <li>- Compare/Contrast House and Senate</li> <li>- Congressional Leaders, Committees, Caucuses, Staff, etc</li> <li>- Congressional Decision Making and Bill to Law Process</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Presidency               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Characteristics of Presidential Office</li> <li>- Roles and Powers of President, limits on Presidential power</li> <li>- Office of the President</li> <li>- President and Policy</li> <li>- Presidential Relationship to public, media, congress, etc</li> <li>- Presidential appointments</li> <li>- Impeachment</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Courts               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Characteristics of Judicial Branch</li> <li>- Structure of Federal court system</li> <li>- Responsibilities and role of judicial system</li> <li>- Judicial nominations</li> <li>- Supreme Court &amp; Judicial Review</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Bureaucracy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organization of federal bureaucracies</li> <li>- Role and powers of regulation</li> <li>- Iron Triangles</li> <li>- Effectiveness of Bureaucracies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Edwards- Ch. 11, 12, 14, 15</b>
3- Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	4-5 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation</li> <li>● Difference between civil liberties and civil rights</li> <li>● Knowledge of rights and liberties granted to Americans and debates surrounding them- specifically Bill of Rights, 1<sup>st</sup> amendment, 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment, defendant's rights, right to</li> </ul>	<b>Edwards- Ch. 4, 5</b>

<b>13-18% of AP Exam</b>		privacy, equal protection clause, discrimination, minority groups, and affirmative action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact of 14<sup>th</sup> amendment on constitutional development of rights and liberties</li> </ul>	
4- American Political Ideologies and Beliefs  <b>10-15% of AP Exam</b>	4-5 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic trends, socialization, and ideology- and their influence on politics</li> <li>Public opinion polls</li> <li>Political participation</li> <li>American beliefs and opinions on government</li> <li>Using and interpreting political data</li> <li>Mass Media and Politics- History of, Structure and Function of, Influence of, Involvement in Politics, etc.</li> </ul>	<b>Edwards- Ch. 6, 7</b>
5- Political Participation  <b>20-27% of AP Exam</b>	3-4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functions, Organization, and development of Political Parties</li> <li>Advantages and Disadvantages of Political Parties</li> <li>Effects on the political process</li> <li>Electoral System</li> <li>Elections- primaries, caucuses, etc</li> <li>Political Campaigns – especially finance</li> <li>Voting Behavior</li> <li>Interest groups- role of, types of, activities of, effects of</li> <li>PACs</li> </ul>	<b>Edwards- Ch. 8, 9, 10</b>
<p><b>Public Policy</b> will be integrated throughout each unit - including how it works in a federal system, policy agendas, role of institutions in policy enactment, role of bureaucracy in policy implementations, and the role of linkage institutions in the policy process.</p>			

Throughout the above content units, we will practice skills and reasoning processes. After we have covered all the above units of study, we will spend our remaining time reviewing for the AP exam by completing practice multiple choice exams, practice FRQ timed essays, data analysis practice, and a complete mock exam.



## Instructional Plan

This course is designed to challenge you at a college-level and engage you in the content on a daily basis. Students can expect to engage in the following work during this course:

- Chapter Choice Boards- Students will be asked to complete a total of 3 assignments per chapter outside of our daily coursework. Students will be given a ‘choice board’ that provides 9 options of homework - students will choose 3. These boards will not only prepare students for their chapter quizzes, but also provide time to work with the content- mastering vocabulary, making real-world connections, practicing writing, and practicing skills.
  - Vocabulary Mastery- Students will be responsible for mastering important vocabulary associated with government and politics. Students will use Quizlet (website or cell phone app) to study prior to quizzes and be required to complete specific Quizlet tasks.
  - Textbook Readings – While we are studying topics in class, students will be required to read textbook chapters and/or other readings. Students will complete various question types over their readings.
  - Current Events – As part of our choice boards, students have the option of completing a current event in which students will make connections to news stories and our content.
  - Skill Building- Writing, making connections between topics, comparison, and data analysis are critical skills in this course.

- **Insightful Interpretations-** Once or twice a unit, students will be required to use their skill of analysis to read and interpret charts, graphs, maps, and political cartoons that are relevant to government and politics. This will be completed on Google Classroom and due on Friday evenings.
- **Chapter Quizzes –** At the conclusion of a textbook chapter of study, students will be required to show their mastery of the chapter’s content through a short quiz. The quiz will include multiple choice questions, vocabulary mastery, short answer questions, and a quantitative(data)/qualitative(reading) analysis question.
- **Unit Tests & FRQ Essays-** At the conclusion of each unit of study, students will be required to show and apply their mastery of the unit’s content through an exam that resembles the AP exam. This exam will include multiple choice questions and at least one FRQ essay. There are 5 units of study in this course thus students can expect 5 unit exams, **BUT** students will be given other FRQ essays to practice the skill of writing on their chapter choice boards and throughout the course.
  - FRQ Essays include numerous skills and students will practice these throughout the year. Tests will include any combination of these.
    - SCOTUS Comparison
    - Argument Essay
    - Concept Application
    - Quantitative Analysis
- **Lecture & Note Taking-** Students will be involved in a lecture over a unit topic. These will not take the entire class period nor will they be every day, but students can expect to take notes and listen to a lecture that aids students in their understanding of the basic concepts, patterns, and processes. Students will be expected to be caught up on readings prior to a lecture and aid in the discussions. Resources for each lecture will be posted on Classroom & Google Site.
- **Supplemental Readings-** To further their understanding of concepts, patterns, and processes, students will be asked to read various supplemental documents. These may be primary source materials such as the *Required Foundational Documents*, secondary sources, or current sources. The supplemental readings will often be used as part of class discussions.
- **Writing Workshops -** At least once per unit and during AP review sessions, students will take part in a writing workshop to help students prepare for the AP exam.
- **Discussions, Simulations, & Projects-** Students will have opportunities to engage further into the current topic of study through various discussions, debates, Socratic Seminars, projects, simulations, and research.
  - **POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH OR APPLIED CIVICS PROJECT-** This is a required part of the AP curriculum. This required project adds a civic component to the course, engaging students in exploring how they can affect, and are affected by, government and politics throughout their lives. This will occur after the AP exam in May.
- **Final Exams/Other Assessments-** The first semester final exam will be a traditional cumulative exam of the semester’s content that will count for 20% of the semester grade. If you take the AP Exam in May, that will be your final for the 2nd semester (IF you have a 70% or higher)! If you do not take the AP exam or you do not have a 70% or higher, you will be required to take an in-class final.
  - Students will be required to take the state required Civics test. This is a graduation requirement. Students must earn a 60% or higher on this test. This will occur around Fall Break.

## Grading

According to school policy, a student’s grade is determined by a 20% final exam and 80% class grade. Our *in-class grade* will be determined by the following:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| ● Tests, Essays, Quizzes, and Projects (including Required Civic Action Project)                          | 50% |
| ● In-Class Work   | 25% |
| ● Homework (Current Events, Insightful Interpretations, Reading Assignments, Reading Quizzes, Vocabulary) | 25% |

The school’s **AP grading scale** will be used for a student’s in class grade:

**A** 85-100; **B** 75-84; **C** 65-74; **F** 64 and below



**Student Responsibilities and Expectations -** As this is a college-level course, students will be challenged! You may work harder in this class than other classes, but it is to your benefit! All work is purposeful, intentional, and will help you succeed. It is expected that students follow guidelines below:

- This course will require students to be involved in class discussion, activities, and lectures so **regular**

*attendance* is expected.

- If class is missed for any reason, students are **expected to stay on pace** with the rest of the class. Students need to check the Unit Schedule, absent folders in the classroom (all work with your name on it will be placed in these folders), Google Classroom, and the class website (Google Site) to not fall behind and complete any missed assignments or lecture notes.
- This course will also require students to complete work outside of the classroom walls. While students may not have homework every single night, it will be often. Homework serves a great purpose for this class as it allows students to be prepared to be actively involved in class, but also to apply their knowledge to gain a more in-depth understanding of it. It is critical that students **complete assigned homework on time and on their own**. Cheating will not be tolerated!
- If a student falls behind, is confused about content, needs some **extra help**, or just needs a quiet place to complete homework, it is expected that the student **make arrangements** with Ms. Vasser. *Tests and quizzes may only be made up before or after school- never during class.*
- School rules apply in this room- not using the restroom during the first 10 minutes or last 10 minutes of class), using electronic devices only for educational purposes, keep cell phone in class holder unless instructed otherwise, and always have respectful behavior to peers, teacher, and substitutes.
  - **Cell Phone-** *In accordance with school policy, cell phones are not allowed in student possession during class time. Cell phones will be placed in a designated spot. Phones should be silenced or off so they do not distract instruction. Chargers and headphones should not be visible during class. If students do not have phone access for any reason, the teacher must be notified.*

**Student Requirements:** We will utilize our Chromebooks for most of our in-class work. ***It is imperative that your Chromebook is CHARGED.*** It is also helpful for students to have a tool/device to keep and organize resources to be utilized outside of class. **A binder** is recommended-- **Binder organization-** Unit Calendars in front cover, Syllabus in front pocket, 5 dividers/sections (*Unit Notes, Foundational Documents & related work, Required SCOTUS cases & related work, Writing & other handouts, Graded work*) and loose leaf paper. It would be good practice to bring your *Edwards* text to class daily.



### **Class Communications and Website Information**

- ❖ Ms. Vasser's email address- [Lauren.Vasser@anderson.kyschools.us](mailto:Lauren.Vasser@anderson.kyschools.us)  
Parents and Students- use this as a communication tool if you have any questions.
- ❖ Ms. Vasser's Website (Google Site)- class resources, calendar, and links
  - <https://sites.google.com/anderson.kyschools.us/apugovernmentandpolitics>
    - This website will include class resources, class calendar, and links.
- ❖ We will utilize Google Classroom almost daily. It is critical that all students join the classroom and log on to it daily.
- ❖ We will utilize the app 'Remind' to send reminders, information, and snow day assignments. Parents are also encouraged to join if they wish to stay up-to-date with class events! If students have questions, they can send Ms. Vasser a message through the APP (From 7:30am- 8:00pm; I will not answer messages past 8:00pm!).
  - How to Join Remind:
    - ❖ Text number 81010 with message @apgopachs
    - ❖ Or download the APP and use class code @apgopachs

### **Class Resources to ensure you know/can access:**

#### **Google Classroom**

AP US Government & Politics  
2020-2021

Stream Classwork People Grades

Class code aq3mscl  
Meet link Generate Meet link

Upcoming  
No work due soon  
View all

Share something with your class...

Communicate with your class here

## Ms. Vasser's Google Site

AP U.S. Government and Politics

Home  
Class Resources  
Class Calendar

AP GoPo  
Ms. Lauren Vasser  
lauren.vasser@anderson.kyschools.us

Welcome to Vasser's AP GoPo page! On this site, you can find resources for class as well as links, class notes, videos, etc. Remember, our [Google Classroom](#) page is where you will turn all your work in!

LEVEL 2  
CERTIFIED  
Educator  
Google for Education

## Remind

**A** If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

[rmd.at/apgopochs](http://rmd.at/apgopochs)

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.

**B** If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message @apgopochs to the number 81010.

If you're having trouble with 81010, try texting @apgopochs to (502) 215-4770.

\* Standard text message rates apply.

## Syllabus Signature Sheet- AP U.S. Government and Politics- Ms. Vasser

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print student name), acknowledge that I have read the class syllabus, know the expectations of me as a student in this class, and agree to the following behaviors: try my hardest, do my own work, be an active participant in class, have a positive attitude, respect others, ask for help when needed, check my unit schedule **everyday**, and to stay up to date on my homework/classroom assignments. I understand that failure to do so may result in an unhappy you and an unhappy Ms. Vasser.

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians,

I am so excited for this year of AP Government and Politics and to have your child in class. I wanted to write you this short letter to inform you of the AP program and my hopes for this year.

The AP designation on a class means that the course has been approved to be a part of College Board's Advanced Placement program. College Board is an organization made up of high school teachers and college professors who have designed challenging curriculum for high school students who wish to go above general studies. If students pass the national test given in May (cost of exam is \$65), they can receive college credit! We will begin signing up for this exam soon, so be planning ahead!

With that being said, this class will be taught as a "college practice round" with high expectations and challenging work. I understand that these are Sophomores, but I want these students to experience higher level learning as well as academic responsibility, which will be expected of them in college. Students will be given a unit schedule at the beginning of each unit with due dates included on it. **I will remind them, but it is their responsibility to keep track of upcoming assignments and not fall behind.** All the work they receive is **intentional** and will help them be successful in the course! It is imperative that students attempt all work on their own, complete assignments on time, and ask for help when they need it.

What I ask of you is simply support and encouragement for your child. Help me help them be successful! Encourage them to stay ahead of their due dates and to study for their tests so they do not feel overwhelmed. Please also encourage them to not give up if it gets hard and to power through the struggle. This class will be challenging and students may face some adversity along the way. Struggling through adversity is a great life skill that I hope will carry them forward. Their hard work will be beneficial in the long run and I promise to do all I can to help them learn and receive that college credit!

Lastly, please know I am always here to help in any way I can. If your child is falling behind, needs a quiet place to work on assignments, or needs to use school technology, I stay after school for ESS (Extended School Services) on Thursdays from 3:30-4:30. Please encourage them to attend.

If you ever have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to email me at [lauren.vasser@anderson.kyschools.us](mailto:lauren.vasser@anderson.kyschools.us). You may also call me at school during my planning (11:18-12:52).

Let's have a great year!

Lauren Vasser  
Social Studies Teacher  
Instructional Leader  
Anderson County High School

**Please sign below to acknowledge you have read this letter and class syllabus**, specifically that you know the following information:

- What the AP distinction in front of the class name means, what the AP test is, and the benefits
- How your child will be graded & what they can do if they need extra help
- What type of classwork & homework students can expect & how they will know it in advance
- How to get in contact with me

**Parent Signature** \_\_\_\_\_