Welcome
Welcome to AP US Government and Politics! In this class, I will be a facilitator who will ask you hard questions, prompt your own questions, and point you towards answers. It’s going to be great fun collaborating as we learn more about the vital world of politics.

Instructional Philosophy
In this course, we will use a variety of instructional methods, including lecture, multi-media, student presentations, peer review, collaborative group work, project-based learning activities, and group discussions.

I firmly believe that education can and should be individualized, especially in Social Studies. In this course we will utilize traditional methods of instruction, but we will also utilize each student’s interests and abilities pertaining to the subject matter to create a more relevant learning experience. My role is to make learning available for you, but you must take responsibility for your own success.

Goals and Purpose
This year we will not just learn politics, we will also do politics. As Goethe said, “Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one’s thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world.” I hope that by mixing theory, facts, relevant contemporary issues, and opportunities to act on your knowledge, you will have the tools necessary to become political. So sit back, relax, and get political!

Essentials for Course Success

- **Participate:** By coming to class daily, participating actively in discussions and group activities, you WILL learn.
- **Come Prepared:** The most important part of success is being prepared and organized. Having the appropriate materials for class every day will build confidence in your ability to succeed.
- **Civility and Respect for Learning:** Please be on time—coming in late is disruptive to both me and your fellow students. Class is over when I am finished. Please don’t close your notebook, zip up your backpack, etc until we are completely finished. Please turn off/silence, and put away all cell phones and portable electronic devices (and take ear buds out of your ears), before class begins.

Critical Questions and Skills
A number of critical questions guide this course. We won’t answer all of our questions, but our engagement of the questions will lead us to knowledge and insight. Here are some examples of the critical questions that will direct our inquiry:

- How democratic is the United States?
- What are the central American political values?
- How do we reconcile liberty and security in this age of global terror?
- Who does our political system represent?
- Are our civil rights and liberties eroding?

After you’ve completed this course, you will be able to:
AP United States Government and Politics  
COURSE SYLLABUS

- Carry on a cogent political conversation  
- Understand important contemporary political trends  
- Have a critical comprehension of the media  
- Know how to effectively interact with your government  
- Interpret political charts and data  
- Know your legal rights and responsibilities

Textbook


Supplies
Each student will need the following items to be prepared for success in this course:

- 1-2 inch binder  
- Composition Notebook (Journaling)  
- 1- pencil pouch or case  
- Pens (blue or black)  
- Colored pens- (any color other than blue or black for correcting or editing)  
- Fine tip markers or colored pencils  
- Loose-leaf paper  
- Notebook Dividers (5)
  - Readings and Reading Notes  
  - Class Notes  
  - Class Assignments  
  - Homework  
  - Projects

School Rules
School board rules such as *no electronics in the class (OFF and OUT of SIGHT)*, the no tolerance tardy policy, the district dress code, and safe school policies will be strictly enforced.

Classroom Rules
- Be in your seat, prepared with the proper tools, and ready to work when the bell rings.  
- Treat your colleagues, teachers, and their personal property with respect.  
- Communicate in positive ways- foul language or put-downs will not be allowed.  
- Come each day committed to giving your best.  
- Work together as a team so everyone succeeds.

Classroom Policies and Procedures

A. Materials
All students are expected to bring their textbooks, binders, notebook paper, and pencil or pen to class each day unless otherwise instructed.

B. Make-up Work and Attendance
AP United States Government and Politics
COURSE SYLLABUS

1. Students are expected to attend class each day.
2. Excessive absences will make student success very difficult. Excessive unexcused absences (4 or more) will result in points deducted from your class participation grade.
3. It is your responsibility to obtain the work that you missed on the day that you return. You have the number of days equal to the number of days absent to turn in the work. Any work assigned prior to your absence is due on the date you return.
4. Please make arrangements with classmates to get any notes/information you may have missed.

C. Tardiness:
1. It is extremely important to be in class on time.
2. After the first tardy and for each tardy afterwards, there will be a 2 point reduction in your participation grade.
3. Two tardies will result in a call home.

D. Assignments
1. **Homework is due at the beginning of class so please do not plan on finishing it in class.**
2. Homework should be placed in the assigned class inbox at the beginning of class unless otherwise instructed. (Even if I do not ask for the homework, it is your responsibility to make sure it is turned in.)
3. LATE ASSIGNMENTS (excluding absences) WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
4. Students should take pride in all assignments. Assignments are graded for quality, not just completion. Work should be completed in blue or black ink or pencil based on the assignment. I will not read assignments written in red, purple, pink, green, or other colored inks.
5. Some essays and select assignments must be typed in 11 or 12 point font.

E. Class Calendar
1. Tests will be given at the end of each chapter/unit. Projects will be assigned throughout that time period and will be used as part of chapter/unit assessment. A course calendar will be created and provided as more detailed time and pacing is determined.

Assignments

Assessments
Throughout the semester there will be announced and unannounced quizzes. Quizzes may be short answer, completion, matching, and multiple choice. We will also have unit tests consisting of a free response question (essay), and multiple choice questions. Tests will assess topics covered in class, during discussion, and from required independent readings. Tests will be both timed and untimed. You can also expect a few practice AP exams.

*******Our AP exam will be on **********.

Projects
We will have several projects throughout the semester. Some will require only a couple of days, some may require several days. For some projects you will be expected to interview other people such as family and friends. Most projects will require you to use the internet and other media sources.

When individual projects are assigned, I expect that you complete them on your own. When group projects are assigned, groups will be responsible for dividing responsibilities, monitoring team progress, and turning in the final product by the deadline. All team members will receive the same grade for the final product.
Individual Assignments
You will complete a number of individual assignments throughout the year. These assignments will include, but not be limited to, reading assignments, preparation for discussion, journal reviews, homework assignments, presentations, and projects. All work is to be completed individually unless stated otherwise. All student work must comply with the Pinellas County Schools’ plagiarism policy and must be completed on time. If you use sources, cite them properly! Use standard formatting for typed papers!

Journal Reviews
A critical media consciousness is a crucial aspect of enlightened citizenship. Each week, you will write a journal review connecting class topics to current events. There are a number of excellent free online resources for you to review. I will provide a list of some acceptable resources; others may be considered. I’ll also give you some small tasks to complete individually for class. You will keep your work in a portfolio/folder which I will collect. Use standard formatting for typed papers! (i.e. size 12 font, double spaced, proper heading, and proper citations)

Personal Glossary
As part of the AP Binder, you will be expected to maintain a personal glossary of terms related to AP Government and Politics. Part of this glossary will be vocabulary for each chapter. You should expect vocabulary tests for each chapter requiring you to briefly define the word, and then explain its significance and/or give examples.

Grading
Grades are calculated each six weeks using a point system.
A sample of points and assignments may be found below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>(5-25 points each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classwork Assignments</td>
<td>(20-50 points each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>(20 points each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>(100 points each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays, Projects, Presentations</td>
<td>(25 -100 points each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>(10 Points/week)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grades are calculated using Pinellas County requirements: 90-100% (A), 80-89% (B), 70-79% (C), 60-69% (D), below 60% (F). For example, a student earning 90-100% of all available points for a grading period will earn an A for that grading period.

Again, the AP US Government and Politics Exam will take place on **********.

Unit Goals/Objectives
In AP US Government and Politics course we will attempt to understand the American political system by focusing on five main units of study: The American System; Opinion, Interest, and Organization; Institutions of Government; The Politics of Public Policy; Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Your teacher reserves the right to change the order of the units depending on current events and class interest, but we will cover all these units. The Lasser Textbook, *Perspective on American Politics*, will be used periodically during the course as a supplement to main text material to extend understanding of course information.
AP United States Government and Politics
COURSE SYLLABUS

Unit 1 - The American System

1. Chapter 1 - Nature of Government
   a. Authority/Power/Legitimacy
   b. Representative vs. Direct Democracy
   c. Distribution of Power: 4 Theories of Elite Influence
   d. Who governs?

2. Chapter 2 - The Constitution
   a. Events post-Freedom
   b. The Constitutional Convention
   c. Plans and Compromise
   d. Key Principles of the Constitution and Democracy
   e. Motivations of the Framers
   f. Modern Views on Constitutional Reform

3. Chapter 3 - Federalism
   a. Structure of Government
   b. What is Federalism?
   c. Federal – State Relations
   d. Devolution of Federalism

4. Chapter 4 - American Political Culture
   a. American Political Culture
   b. US vs. Other Nations
   c. Political Efficacy

Unit 2 - Opinions, Interests, and Organization

1. Chapter 5 - Public Opinion
   a. The Origins of Political Attitudes
   b. Social and Cultural Influences
   c. Political Ideologies

2. Chapter 6 - Political Participation
   a. Examining Nonvoting
   b. The Rise of the American Electorate
   c. Who Participates and Why?

3. Chapter 7 - Political Parties
   a. What are Political Parties
   b. History of American Political Parties: Rise and Fall
   c. National, State, and Local Parties
   d. Two-Party System and Minor Party Involvement
   e. Nominating a President

4. Chapter 8 - Elections and Campaigns
   a. Congressional vs. Presidential Campaigns
   b. Primaries vs. General Campaigns
   c. Funding Campaigns
   d. What Wins and Loses Elections?

5. Chapter 9 - Interest Groups
   a. The Birth of Interest Groups
   b. Kinds of Organizations
   c. Interest Groups and Social Movements
   d. Where is the Money From?
   e. Bias
   f. How they Operate in the Political Scene

6. Chapter 10 - The Media
   a. Influence of Media Throughout History
   b. The Media Structure
   c. How to Govern the Media
   d. The Effect of Media on Politics
   e. Government and the News
Unit 3- Institutions of Government
1. Chapter 11- Congress
   a. Congress vs. Parliament
   b. Who’s in Congress?
   c. Representation
   d. Ideology and Civility in Congress
   e. Organization of Congress: Parties, Committees, and Staff
   f. How a Bill Becomes a Law
   g. Ethics in Congress
2. Chapter 12- The Presidency
   a. Presidents vs. Prime Ministers
   b. Government Gridlock
   c. Evolution of the Presidency
   d. Presidential Power
   e. The Office of the President
   f. Appointing Officials
   g. Power of Persuasion
   h. Veto Power
   i. How Powerful is the President?
3. Chapter 14- The Judiciary
   a. The Development of the Courts
   b. The Structure of the Federal Court System
   c. Jurisdiction
   d. Supreme Court in Action
   e. The Power of the Federal Courts
   f. Checks on Judicial Power
4. Chapter 13- Bureaucracy
   a. What Makes American Democracy Stand Out?
   b. Origins of Federal Bureaucracy
   c. Functions of Bureaucracy Today
   d. Congressional Oversight
   e. Reforming Bureaucracy

Unit 4- The Politics of Public Policy
   a. Agenda Setting
   b. Decision Making
   c. Majority Politics
   d. Interest Group Influence
   e. Business Regulation
   f. Perceptions, Beliefs, Interests, and Values
2. Chapter 16- Economic Policy
   a. Politics of Prosperity
   b. Taxing and Spending
   c. Economic Theories and Political Needs
   d. Operating Economic Policy
   e. Budget Making
3. Chapter 17- Social Welfare
   a. Social Welfare in the United States
   b. Welfare Politics
4. Chapter 20- Foreign and Military Policy
   a. Types of Foreign Policy
   b. The Constitution and Legal Context
   c. Foreign Policy and Public Opinion
   d. Use of Military Force and the Defense Budget
   e. The War on Terror
5. Chapter 21 - Environmental Policy  
   a. Environment in America  
      i. Global Warming  
      ii. Pollution and Cars  
      iii. Acid Rain  
      iv. Agricultural Pesticides  

Unit 5 - Civil Rights and Civil Liberties  
1. Chapter 18 - Civil Liberties  
   a. Interpreting the First Amendment  
      i. What is Speech?  
   b. Who is a Person?  
   c. Church and State  
   d. Crime and Due Process  
2. Chapter 19 - Civil Rights  
   a. Sex, Race, and other things  
      i. The Black Predicament  
      ii. Women and Equal Rights  
      iii. Gay Rights  

Student and Parent Signatures  
To acknowledge that you and your parents have read and discussed the information on this syllabus and  
1. Accept the curriculum as offered.  
2. Understand the importance of daily attendance and active involvement to success, please return your signed  
syllabus and then keep it in your AP Binder.  

Student Signature: __________________________________________ Date: _______________________

Parent/Guardian Signature: __________________________________ Date: _______________________

“Our Commitment to Each Other”  
We agree to work together to be the best that we can. When we do not understand, we will  
ask. We will challenge ourselves and we will not give up. We take pride in what we will  
accomplish together… student, parents, teacher, Boca Ciega family.