

## Course Description:

This rigorous, college-level course gives students a critical perspective on politics and government. It involves the study of general concepts used to interpret United States politics and the analysis of specific case studies. It also requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that make up the American political reality. Students are expected to register for and complete the AP Government & Politics exam on Wednesday, May 10, 2006. A primary determinant of successful completion of the AP exam is that the student take responsibility for his/her own learning and pride in his/her own abilities.

## Course Outline:

- Unit One: The American System
- Unit Two: Opinion, Interests, & Organizations
- Unit Three: Institutions of Government
- Unit Four: The Politics of Public Policy
- Unit Five: The Nature of American Democracy

## Texts and materials:

In addition to the following core text, students will be assigned primary and secondary sources including articles, speeches, letters, and essays.

Wilson, James Q. and John J. Dilulio, Jr. American Government. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002

Students may wish to purchase the following review book for assistance in understanding the text. Students will be able to purchase this book at school. Details will be sent home with students.

Benson and Waples. Fast Track to a 5: Preparing for the AP United States Government & Politics Examination. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 2005. (This review book was developed to be used in conjunction with the Wilson/Dilulio text we will be using in class)

Students will be asked to purchase an AP Review guide, suggested by the instructor and acquired in the beginning of the second semester, to assist in reviewing for the AP exam on Monday, May 7, 2007. Students will be able to purchase this review guide at a discounted price through RHHS.

## Reading Schedule:

On the first day of class, the student will be given a detailed, daily reading schedule. It is extremely important that the student read the assigned pages BEFORE THE DATE given. As a student in the class, it is imperative that the student make a commitment to learning the material. Completing the assigned readings in the textbook is fundamental to the student successfully completing the course and achieving a passing score on the AP Government & Politics. Please refer to the Reading Assignment Guidelines for further details on this primary aspect of the course.

## **Unit Scope & Sequence:**

Each unit of study will be comprised of the corresponding chapters in the textbook. Each chapter will culminate in an in-class examination that mirrors the AP Exam in format, timing, grading, and structure. Each chapter will utilize the following in-class teaching strategies to assist with student understanding of the course material.

1. Reading strategies
2. Writing strategies
3. Analysis of Primary and Secondary Sources
4. Cooperative Activities
5. Lecture/Discussion of Key questions
6. Reviews for Chapter Exams

## **Research Paper:**

Each student will complete a comprehensive, multi-dimensional research paper. The student will thoroughly analyze both sides of a controversial issue facing American society and/or government. The student will choose from a list of topics provided by the instructor and follow a schedule of due dates, delineating what is expected at each benchmark. At each interval, the research paper will constitute an increasingly more significant percentage of the Projects portion of the student's grade. The topics will be assigned in mid-September, with the final copy due in late May.

## **Course Objectives:**

1. To develop an understanding of the philosophical foundations upon which the American political system is based;
2. To provide varied opportunities for students to challenge and expand their intellectual abilities;
3. To encourage an attitude of mutual respect for the abilities of others when working in groups toward a common goal;
4. To develop essential academic skills including critical reading and thinking, essay writing, note-taking and research;
5. To promote the use of thoughtful discussion as a key tool for generating, developing and evaluating ideas;
6. To encourage students to take responsibility for their own education;
7. To foster a sense of awe for the genius and daring of America's experiment in democracy.

## **Classroom Procedures and Policies:**

**SUPPLIES:** Textbook (covered), pen (black or dark blue ink only), #2 pencils, an ample supply of loose leaf notebook paper (NO WORK COMPLETED ON **ANY TYPE** OF SPIRAL NOTEBOOK PAPER WILL BE ACCEPTED), a light colored highlighter, a stapler (for use at home) and a dedicated three-ring binder.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

- **UNAPPROVED ABSENCE:** If a student is absent from class without approval by a school official, that student is not given credit for any work missed and NO late homework will be accepted.

- **APPROVED ABSENCE:** Students are allowed an equivalent amount of time to that in which they were absent to make up missed work. It is the **STUDENT'S** responsibility to obtain all work missed during his/her absence. It is suggested that students acquire the telephone numbers to AT LEAST two classmates to contact for assignments and topics during the missed class period. As a last resort, the student may obtain information from the instructor.
- **LATE POLICY:** At the ringing of the late bell, students will be in their seats working on the warm-up activity. Any student not working when the bell rings will be considered late and will receive a grade of zero for the warm-up, unless the student has a valid pass from a faculty member or administrator.

**ASSIGNMENTS - ALL assignments completed outside of class MUST BE TYPED and PROOFREAD!**

- Assignments must be ready to be turned in when students enter the classroom. Assignments must have the student's full name, due date, class period on the paper, and must be STAPLED (if necessary) **PRIOR** to entering the classroom
- Use 12pt font, double-spaced, 1" margins, and follow standard writing procedure. DO NOT use *fancy fonts* (fancy fonts), or write in **bold** or UPPER CASE.
- Take pride in the work you produce. Scholarly writing and excellence is expected for ALL homework assignments and projects, Write clearly and succinctly. Points will be deducted for grammatical and spelling errors.
- Homework should be expected EVERY NIGHT.
- Correct citations, following MLA style format, is EXPECTED for all assignments in which ANY source is consulted outside of the assigned text. **Plagiarism, as well as other Academic Integrity violations are serious offenses and will be dealt with according to policy published in your student handbook.**
- Any assignments submitted without clear identification will be displayed by the instructor and receive half-credit grading when claimed and identified.

**Grading:**

Exams (timed)	40%
Projects	25%
Quizzes—announced and unannounced (timed)	15%
Homework/Class participation	15%
Warm-ups	5%

**ABSOLUTELY NO** food, drink (except water), or candy will be allowed in class.