Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics (2018-19)

Instructor:  Mr. Eric McGee  
B.A. in History *summa cum laude* (California State University, Fullerton)  
M.A. in History (California State University, Fullerton)  
Clear Single Subject Teaching Credential in Social Science (CSUF)  

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Extension: 144  

**Course Description:**

AP U.S. Government and Politics provides a college-level, non-partisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. This class will encourage students to become more civic-minded citizens as they prepare themselves to be part of an educated electorate. 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. The AP U.S. Government and Politics course is organized around five units: foundations of American democracy; interactions among branches of government; civil liberties and civil rights; American political ideologies and beliefs; and political participation. All students enrolled in the course are selected by the instructor to take the AP U.S. Government and Politics Examination on **May 6th, 2019**, for which there is a fee. Those students who achieve a score of 5, 4, or 3 on the examination are eligible for college credit.

Please be advised that this is a college-level course that involves a large amount of studying, independent reading, and examinations that consist of challenging multiple-choice and free response questions!
**Required Readings:**


Link to Purchase:


Link to Purchase:


**Required Class Materials:**

- iPad or laptop for class activities
- Writing utensils and paper
- Coloring utensils for posters / projects

**Grading:**

Examinations will be given at the conclusion of each unit. They will typically consist of multiple choice and free response questions, and students will be notified well in advance of each exam. In addition, students will have quizzes throughout each unit. Homework and classwork will be assigned frequently to assist students in comprehending the material. Current event reflections, projects, and group activities will also be a part of each semester.

**Grading Breakdown:**

- Current Events- 5%
- Homework- 15%
- Classwork- 10%
- Quizzes- 20%
- Unit Examinations / Projects- 30%
- Final Examination- 20%
Grading Scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>89.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89.49</td>
<td>79.50</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>79.49</td>
<td>69.50</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Note: AP classes contain weighted grades on transcripts for a mark of “C” and above because of the difficulty and time commitment of the college level course.

Classroom Policies / Behavior Guidelines:

Expectations for Students:

1. Students will respect themselves and their peers in order to create a safe environment.
2. Students will come to class prepared and punctual.
3. Students will engage in classroom discussion and listen actively to their classmates and to the teacher.
4. Cell phones need to be turned off and placed face down on the student’s desk or in her backpack.
5. Electronic devices such as iPads and laptops are to be used in class with the permission of the instructor and for academic purposes only.

Expectations for Instructor:

1. I will always be prepared. Teaching is a privilege that I do not take lightly.
2. I will challenge all of my students to reach their highest possible potential as a learner and person.

Late Work:

Please be aware that I do not accept late work. All work must be turned in to me on or before the start of the class period it is due or it receives a score of 0. I do this in each of my classes to ensure that all of my students are prepared for college and treated equally. If you are in school on the day a homework assignment is due, it is your responsibility to submit the assignment via email or a hard copy by the start of the class period. If you are absent on the day a homework assignment is due, make sure you make arrangements to turn in a hard copy or to email me the assignment before the deadline (the start of the class period). I always provide sufficient time for all assignments to be completed, post them on the class website, and email deadline reminders.
Classwork assignments are usually due by the end of the period for students present in class that day (unless it is a longer class assignment that requires more time to complete), and must be submitted by the deadline via email or hard copy to receive credit. Any work not submitted by the deadline receives a score of zero. **Remember that it is always better to turn in some completed work than nothing!**

**Class Absence:**

When students are absent it is their responsibility to email or ask me what they missed in class that day. Upon their return, students will be given as many days as they missed to make up any **classwork** assignments. If a student misses a test due to an absence from school, it is the student’s responsibility to see the teacher to arrange for a make-up date. As always, please see me if you have any questions.

**Academic Honesty:**

Cheating and academic dishonesty are contrary to the philosophy of SGMHS. **Any student who plagiarizes or copies from the Internet or another student will receive a score of zero on the assignment and/or examination.**

**Political Awareness / Current Events:**

You should have access to a **reliable** news source. Reliable means a legitimate source such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, CNN, or one of the 3 major networks’ (CBS - channel 2, NBC - channel 4, or ABC - channel 7) national evening news that airs at 6:30 p.m during weekdays. You can view these sources online, in print, or on television. *PBS NewsHour* is another trustworthy news source, and full episodes can be seen online at the following link: [https://www.pbs.org/show/newshour/](https://www.pbs.org/show/newshour/). This will assist you in developing a political vocabulary that will become part of your daily life rather than simply words that have to be memorized for a test. You are encouraged to view multiple news sources so that you are exposed to different ideological perspectives. For example, MSNBC commonly demonstrates liberal views and Fox News frequently airs conservative views. I also suggest you watch Sunday morning political discussion programs at 8:00 a.m. (examples include *Face the Nation* on CBS and *Meet the Press* on NBC) so that you can effectively reference current events (such as the retirement of Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy) during class conversations.
Note on Instructor’s Role as an Educator:

Please understand that my role as a teacher is to provide information about the American system of government and help my students better comprehend a wide range of ideologies. It is not ethical for me to reveal any of my personal political beliefs. I want my students to be able to make educated decisions on their own and to feel comfortable articulating their opinions and defending them with appropriate evidence. It is essential that each student respects the beliefs of those around them. Everyone will not always have the same opinion, but I will ensure that all students are allowed to express their views without fear of retaliation.

Course Outline:

Fall Semester 2018:

Unit 1: Weeks 1-7: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Unit 2: Weeks 8-12: Foundations of American Democracy
Unit 3: Weeks 13-17: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs
   Weeks 17-18: Review Fall Semester Content / Final Examination

Spring Semester 2019:

Unit 4: Weeks 19-22: Political Participation
Unit 5: Weeks 23-31: Interactions Among Branches of Government
   Weeks 31-35: Review for AP Exam / Mock AP Exams (Count as Final Exam)

Monday, May 6th 8:00 am: AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam

Parent / Student Agreement:

This acknowledges that I have read the syllabus for AP United States Government and Politics and understand the guidelines and procedures as mentioned.

Student Name (Printed): _______________________________________________________

Student Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________

Parent Name (Printed): _______________________________________________________

Parent Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________