

(Essential questions are subject to change. Do Not print too far in advanced)

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS SYLLABUS

Instructor: Ms. Boudinet

Class Location: Room # 310

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is concerned with the nature of the United State political system its development over the past two hundred years, and how it functions today. We will examine in detail the principle processes and institutions through which the political system functions, as well as some of the public policies these institutions establish and how they are implemented. We will look primarily at the national government and national politics.

METHODOLOGY:

This course is conducted using a variety of methods: lecture/discussion, cooperative learning activities, and independent research. **All students are responsible for reading the assignments before coming to class.** Students are also encouraged to become familiar with current events through the reading of online political news outlets, and news-oriented TV broadcasts.

GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Completion of all assignments, and performance on exams are important contributors to the success of an AP course. All assignments must be handed in on time. Exams will be given following each major topic/unit. Exams will be announced one week in advance. Reading quizzes on assigned reading material may or may not be announced.

Each unit of study will require student analysis of graphs, charts and other interpretive data and a minimum of one free response question relative to the chapter.

Sample analysis of data include the following:

Political Culture:

- ✓ Describe three trends in the differing political views between men and women. (the gender gap)

Public Opinion:

- ✓ List the key criteria involved in an effective survey. Create a survey that utilizes these components.

Political parties:

- ✓ Create a timeline that shows the evolution of the two-party system in American Politics.

Elections & Campaigns:

- ✓ Describe the incumbency advantage in congressional races. Refer to the graph on Page 208 to support your answer.

Interest Groups:

- ✓ Analyze the money spent by PACS in the 2012 election.

Your grades for first quarter will be based on a percentage of category points, which will include (This is subject to change as situations arise and may vary each quarter):

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| ➤ Homework assignments | 25% |
| ➤ A Media Journal | 20% |
| ➤ Reading quizzes | 15% |
| ➤ Unit and Chapter Tests | 25% |
| ➤ Classroom participation/SSR | 15% |

Test and Quizzes will be announced on the calendar of Ms. Boudinet's website (see above).

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- 1) Write a comparison of unitary, federal and confederate system.
- 2) What do we call the powers that are delegated to the National government? (3)
- 3) Describe the powers that are specifically denied under the U.S. Constitution?
- 4) What was the impact of the Marshall Court on Federalism?
- 5) Define Dual Federalism, Define Cooperative Federalism.
- 6) Why is the national/state relationship in so much conflict?
- 7) How are these conflicts resolved?
- 8) Compare the different types of local governments.
- 9) Describe government relations with Indian nations.
- 10) What are the sources of state and local government revenue?

Theme: The Congress

O'Connor Chapter 7 Congress

Project – Simulation of a bill's process

- 1) Describe the demographics of the members of Congress?
- 2) Who do they represent?
- 3) What are the formal powers of Congress?
- 4) Explain How is Congress organized?
- 5) What are the legislative procedures of the House and the Senate?
- 6) How does the committee system operate and who sits on committees?
- 7) What are the responsibilities of committees?
- 8) What is wrong with Congress?
- 9) Is government able to function with the cross pressures put on member of Congress?
- 10) To whom are Congress-people responsible?

Theme: The Presidency

O'Connor Chapter 8 The Presidency

Project – Presidential Debate

- 1) What are the formal and informal powers of the Presidency?
- 2) What leadership characteristics make successful presidents?
- 3) How do presidents get their agendas passed in Congress?
- 4) How do presidents administer the federal government?
- 5) What is the role of the cabinet and how do cabinet members run bureaucratic agencies?
- 6) What factors constrain presidential power?

Theme: The Bureaucracy

O'Connor Chapter 9 The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy

Project – Presentation on executive agencies

- 1) What is the bureaucracy? What does it do?
- 2) Who are the bureaucrats?
- 3) How does the bureaucracy help make public policy?
- 4) Who controls the bureaucracy?
- 5) What is the relationship between the bureaucracy and the economy?
- 6) What is the relationship between the bureaucracy and the executive and legislative branches?

Theme: The Judiciary

O'Connor Chapter 10 The Judiciary

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Janda: Chapter 14 The Courts

Woll: The Judiciary

Project – Socratic Seminar on Federalist # 78

- 1) What is the scope of judicial power and how does the rule of law operate under the principle of judicial review and the rule of precedent?
- 2) What is the jurisdiction of the federal courts?
- 3) How does politics enter into the selection of federal judges?
- 4) How has politics entered into the selection of Supreme Court justices?
- 5) What is the proper role of courts in a democracy?
- 6) What is the relationship between the people and the courts?

Theme: Political Culture

O'Connor Chapter 11 Public Opinion and Political Socialization

Tocqueville, “Democracy in America” Lasser, pp. 144 – 152

Project – Demographic tracking

- 1) What is political opinion?
- 2) Where do we get our political opinions?
- 3) What impact does opinion have on policy?
- 4) What effect does; ethnicity, race, gender, age, wealth, educational, and income have on voting behavior and political beliefs?
- 5) What are public opinion polls and how does sampling take the pulse of the electorate?

Theme: Media

O'Connor Chapter 15 The News Media

- 1) What is the media?
- 2) Who is the media?
- 3) Who controls the Media?
- 4) What is the effect of the media on elections, politics and public policy?
- 5) Is the media corrupting democracy and the democratic political process? If so “how?” if not “why not?”

Theme: Participation and Voting

Woll: Reading # 35 Key Jr

- 1) What are the problems of participation and voter turnout?
- 2) Who votes and who doesn't vote? Why?
- 3) Describe the difference between group and movement politics?
- 4) What institutional obstacles lead to non-participation?

Theme: Political Parties

O'Connor: Chapter 12 Political Parties

Woll: **Reading # 26 Federalist 10 Madison, # 27 Party Government**

Schattschneider, # 33 Ginsberg and Shefter

Project – Create your own third party platform

- 1) What are political parties?
- 2) What do they believe in?
- 3) Why do we have a two party system?

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- 4) What have been the traditional roles of parties?
- 5) What has been the result of election reform on the power of political parties?
- 6) What are the party differences?
- 7) How are the parties doing at the National, State and local levels?
- 8) What is the effect of third parties?
- 9) What roles have third parties played?
- 10) Has partisanship changed? How?

Theme: Campaigns and Elections

O'Connor Chapter 13 Elections and Voting

Janda: Chapter 9 Nominations, Elections, and Campaigns

Woll: **Readings # 36 Buckley v. Valeo, and # 40 Mann and Ornstein**

Documentary: "Journeys with George"

- 1) Who wins, who doesn't? Why?
- 2) Why do we have an electoral college?
- 3) How does one run for the House and Senate?
- 4) How do we elect presidents?
- 5) What is the impact of the media on presidential elections?
- 6) Do the rich buy elections?... Buy interest groups?
- 7) How can we interpret the results of the 2010 and 2012 elections?

Theme: Interest Groups and Movement Politics

O'Connor Chapter 16 Interest Groups

Woll: in Chapter 5; page 239 readings # 41 Berry, pg. 245, # 42 Truman, # 43 Lowi, # 44 Rozell and Wilcox, # 45 Sabato

- 1) What are interest groups?
- 2) What effects do interest groups have on the political system?
- 3) How does the system respond to interest groups?
- 4) What are PACS?
- 5) What is the difference between interest groups and PACS?

Theme: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

O'Connor Chapter 5 and 6 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Woll: Read all of Chapter 3

- 1) How does the national bill of rights apply to citizenship rights?
- 2) How is freedom of religion protected in the U.S.?
- 3) How far is religious belief protected under the constitution?
- 4) How far does the right of free speech go?
- 5) Can the government control speech?
- 6) What is the scope of the right to assembly?
- 7) What is the equal protection of the laws?
- 8) What effect has judicial interpretation had on the equal protection clause?
- 9) What was the impact of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?
- 10) What was the effect of the Voting Rights Act of 1965?
- 11) What has been the effect of affirmative action programs?
- 12) What is procedural due process? How does procedural differ from substantive?
- 13) What is the scope of the right to property?
- 14) What is the scope of the right of citizenship?

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- 15) What is the scope of the right to privacy?
- 16) What is habeas corpus?
- 17) How just is justice?
- 18) Is justice a process or an end of the judicial system?
- 19) What of the rights of the victim?

Theme: Making Public Policy

O'Connor Chapter 17 Domestic Policy
 Chapter 18 Economic Policy
 Chapter 19 Foreign and Defense Policy

- 1) How is public policy made?
- 2) What are the three main types of public policies?
- 3) What tools are the primary tools of public policy?
- 4) What re the four main stages in the policymaking process?
- 5) What causes the fragmentation that often occurs in policymaking in America?
- 6) What means are used to achieve coronation of policies?
- 7) Explain the dynamics of issue network politics.
- 8) Describe the role of the nonprofit sector in the provision of public services.

APPROZIMATELY TWENTY DAYS HAVE BEEN BUILT INTO THE END OF THE CLASS FOR CASE STUDY AND REVIEW (Also room for the unexpected).