

AP United States Government and Politics (AP GOPO)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course serves as an introduction to the US national government. It is taught with the conviction that students want to know not only who governs but also what difference it makes who governs. As citizens we all deal with the consequences of federal, state and local laws and regulations. For example, the age we are allowed to drive or drink legally are determined by some type of government. As a student in high school, your rights of privacy are all subject to, and often determined by the power of the government. Explaining both who governs and to what end cannot be done without investigating the politics of policymaking. We will examine the government institutions which make these type of policies and the impact they have on people throughout the US. This course is designed to enable students to develop a critical perspective towards government and politics in the US. Students will examine general political concepts as well as specific case studies. A stress will be placed on citizenship as well as relevant current events, such as the 2016 Presidential Election. This class will also help prepare you for what will be expected of you in college.

Throughout the semester, you will

- *communicate ideas through increased participation in class discussions about current events and politics
- *improve listening, note-taking, information literacy and writing skills
- *analyze and synthesize varied sources of information, citing sources accurately using a recognized and accepted system when necessary
- *establish and substantiate your own claims

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- *Assigned AP GOPO textbook
- *A folder or divider for HWs/other assignments
- *a hole puncher or tape/glue for handouts
- *A notebook solely for this class (to which you will include any handouts—there will not be many)
- *Various media
- *A positive attitude ☺
- **Internet access and use of a printer....Speak with me ASAP if this poses a problem for you.

ASSUMPTIONS YOU CAN MAKE ABOUT ME

derived from <http://bellarmine2.lmu.edu/theology/amir/assumptions.html>

- *I will give you the respect that I ask you to give me and the other members of this class.
- *I will begin and end the class on time.
- *I will grade fairly and responsibly, returning your assignments to you in a timely manner.
- *I will regularly update our class website, msberger.weebly.com **NOTE: the classroom is the main place of communication**
- *I will assign work that is meaningful.
- *I will accept late work within reason, with penalty
- *I will be available to help you, but you must let me know that you need help. I can arrange to be available during period(s): _____
- *I will establish neutral grounds of discussion where all opinions are welcomed and nurtured.
- *I will follow and enforce both the Social Studies Department policies as well as official school policies; thus, familiarize yourself with both.

ASSUMPTIONS I MAKE ABOUT YOU

derived from <http://bellarmine2.lmu.edu/theology/amir/assumptions.html>

IN THE CLASSROOM (behavior, class work, use of electronics):

- *You will be an active, engaged learner.
- *You will attend class regularly and on time. You will provide notes for absences and sign the latebook when tardy.
Points for excessive lateness may be deducted from test grades. No food allowed in class if you are late!
- *You will observe basic classroom decorum. Please refrain from: your phone, side convos, putting on makeup, doing puzzles or math HW, etc.
- *You will follow all Department and school-wide policies. *You will not use the pass excessively.
- *You will participate in class discussion and will be prepared to be called on at random. You will participate in various group exercises.
- *You will show respect and not interrupt others when they are speaking, and when possible, will refer to your classmates by name.
- *You will be open to new ideas (you do not have to agree) and feel comfortable asserting your opinion.
- *You will adhere to the BYOD school policy; **electronics will not be permitted unless specifically directed to use by the instructor, or individually mandated.** You will turn off and put away ALL electronic devices. I will assume that any student with hands in lap, behind a book or in a bag is using a phone; you can assume I will take your phone away. *Recording devices are not permitted unless individually mandated.*
- *You will share your personality, knowledge, skills and special expertise with the rest of us throughout this semester.☺☺

IN REGARDS TO WORK (note-taking and assignments):

- *You will have an organized, neat **notebook**, and you will take notes in it daily. You will create sections if required and maintain any handouts.
***notes must be taken manually, unless mandated otherwise.** See: Mueller, Pam A., and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. "The pen is mightier than the keyboard advantages of longhand over laptop note taking." *Psychological science* (2014): 0956797614524581.
- *You will complete assignments on time. If a hardship develops, you will talk to me about working something out.
- *You will number your HWs if applicable and keep them in chronological order in your homework folder or section as necessary.
- *You will take the responsibility to figure out which assignments you may be missing, if necessary. HWs may or may not be collected.

*You will regularly and responsibly monitor the class website, **msberger.weebly.com**. If you are unsure of the requirements for an assignment, or when it is due, you will find the information there. *Several tasks throughout the semester will be online.*

*You will print out and bring in any required documents from the class website.

*You will work to improve your writing skills and verbal communication throughout this class.

*If you have a question, any question, you will ask it.

******Plagiarism, or failure to acknowledge the words and/or ideas of another writer, can result in a failing grade in our course and/or school suspension or worse. You must write using your own words! There are a variety of acceptable ways to acknowledge outside sources. If you have any uncertainties or questions, please ask before you act!******

IF YOU ARE ABSENT:

*YOU will be responsible for all of the material that we cover in class. If you are absent, call a friend or email me!

**If you are absent on the day of a test, you may only take a make-up exam (at my discretion) with a valid absence note. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to arrange a make-up.* Do not assume you will take the same test that you missed. A missed test is a ZERO!

***YOUR PARENT/GUARDIAN WILL EMAIL ME IF YOU'RE OUT ON A TEST DAY OR MAJOR DUE DATE (or—point deduction for late)**

COURSEWORK

*Coursework will be varied and specific to each topic.

*Work will often be dictated by current news and events.

*A stress will be placed on gathering and analyzing evidence, critical thinking, and formulating well-substantiated claims.

*Any film or other media viewed in class will be followed by an assessment.

**All major assignments must be typed (12 pt font, double-spaced, 1' margins).*

*Exams will be varied in format and length and will not cover any material not discussed in class or assigned for homework.

*Assessments will be varied.

GRADING POLICY remember—each marking period is cumulative

50% MAJOR ASSESSMENTS: exams, quizzes, projects, essays, critiques, research papers, etc

25% CLASSWORK: punctuality, attendance, respectful attitude, participation in discussions and group work, note-taking, attentiveness, preparedness, engagement in lessons

15% HOMEWORK: will vary in style and format; both anticipatory and supportive

10% FINAL: format TBD

Late work will be accepted with penalty commensurate to duration of lateness and weight of assignment, but not beyond the marking period assigned. *Grades will be updated and accessible via Jupiter Grades on a periodic basis. Any student or parent can ask for a "live snapshot" at any time. However, please allow appropriate time for meaningful grading and feedback.*

BASIC CURRICULUM OUTLINE summarized from collegeboard.org

The Rights and Responsibilities of US Citizenship

Constitutional Underpinnings of the US Government

Political Beliefs and Behavior

Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media

Institutions and National Government (Congress, the presidency, the court system, the bureaucracy)

Public Policy

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Local and National Politics/Current Events *2016 Presidential Election*

TUTORING

There is tutoring available in every subject in the library during every lunch period. No appointment is necessary! Please take advantage of this service should you need some extra help.

A FINAL NOTE

You will always be given ample notice for all assignments. **DO NOT FALL BEHIND.** You will find that I am a very reasonable person, but, I cannot fudge the numbers to make it work for you. As previously stated, I will help you, but I will not do your work for you or make any special exemptions. Bottom line: I will work with you if you work with me.

AGREEMENT

I have read and understood the minimum requirements necessary to succeed in this class. I will conduct myself in a manner appropriate for a High School Senior. I will take ownership of my studies and be responsible for work both in and out of class. I will communicate with my teacher if I am experiencing a problem. **I will keep this syllabus as a part of my notes, and I will consult it often.**

X_____

Parent/Guardian email: _____ phone # _____