

Mr. Coia's Class Syllabus and Rules/Procedures for AP Government & Politics

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Room 603

Name: _____

Course Description

AP U.S. Government is a yearlong course that is equivalent to a one-semester introductory college course in U.S. Government and Politics. This course provides a learning experience that incorporates:

- Studying general concepts used to interpret U. S. politics
- Analyzing specific examples that explore the general concepts
- Understanding the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that form U.S. Politics
- Introducing a variety of theoretical viewpoints and explanations for behaviors and outcomes in the U. S. political arena

This class will be taught as though it were a college-level Political Science class. The depth of material and the pace at which it is covered exceed the regular high school semester-long Government course. The textbook is college-level and the activities, Socratic method of instruction, class discussions, required research and policy papers, analysis of contemporary government/politics, and the required thorough understanding of the U.S. system of government in the context of a historical perspective, significantly exceed those of a regular high school course.

It is imperative that all students stay on top of requirements and assignments. Students should come to class prepared to participate in classroom discussions each and every day. These class discussions will critique, assess, debate, and evaluate current events and the readings as they relate to the various aspects of the United States Government.

Course Purpose and Goals

AP U.S. Government and Politics is designed to offer students an opportunity to take a rigorous and challenging class equivalent to an introductory college-level course. This course is open to students who are willing to accept the challenge and responsibility of engaging in a demanding curriculum. Unlike the standard U.S. government semester course, AP Government and Politics requires a yearlong commitment by the student. Students are expected to take the AP U.S. Government and Politics examination at the end of this course.

The following topics are to be covered in the course as specified by **The Course Description Book AP Us Government and Politics**

1. Constitutional Underpinnings of the US Government
2. Political Beliefs and Behaviors
3. Political Parties, Interest Groups and Mass Media
4. Institutions
5. Public Policy
6. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Course Format and Policies

Reading: In order for students to be successful in a college level course, it is essential that they maximize their time and complete all assigned readings prior to class discussions. The readings, lectures and discussions will figure prominently in the content of the quizzes and examinations. The students are expected to learn the basic material in their assigned readings. In class they are expected to apply their knowledge in analyzing and evaluating political issues based on their readings.

Quizzes/Tests:

1. There will be a test at the end of each unit and frequent quizzes mirroring the AP exam. Quizzes may consist of multiple choice, short answer or one free response question.

Homework/class work/class participation: Students will have homework daily. Students can expect approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours of homework for every hour that they are in class. Homework assignments and class work will be completed to foster practice of key objectives and components. The majority of homework assignments are reading a section in the text, taking notes and being prepared for a quiz the following day. Written assignments are due at the beginning of the period on the day it is due. Class participation will be taken through an anecdotal assessment strategy. Students will be expected to thoughtfully take part in classroom discussions. Students must show evidence of higher order thinking skills in order to receive optimal credit.

AP Government Overview

Percentage Value of AP Exam	Timeframe	Topic/Subtopics
5-15%	Weeks 1 - 5	1. Constitutional Underpinnings of the US Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation and Adoption of Constitution • Separation of Powers • Federalism • Theories of democratic government
10-20%	Weeks 6 - 10	2. Political Beliefs and Behaviors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and leaders • Processes by which citizens learn about politics • The nature, sources and consequences of public opinion • The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life • Factors that influence citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life • Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of Political Beliefs
10-20%	Weeks 11-15	3. Political Parties, Interest Groups and Mass Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Parties and elections (Functions, Organization, Development, Effects on the political process, Electoral laws and systems) • Interests groups, including political action committees (Range of interests represented, activities of interest groups, effects of interest groups on the political process, unique characteristics and roles of PAC's in the political process) • Mass Media (Functions and Structures of the media, Impacts of media on politics)
35-45%	Weeks 16-24	4. Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power • Relationships among these four institutions and varying balances of power • Linkages between institutions and the following: Public opinion and voters, interest groups, political parties, the media, sub-national governments
5-15%	Weeks 25-28	5. Public Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policymaking in a federal system • Formation of policy agendas • The role of institutions in the enactment of policy • The role of bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation • Linkage between policy processes and the following: Political institutions and federalism, political parties, interest groups, public opinion, elections, policy networks.
5-15%	Weeks 29 -31	6. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation • Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties • The impact of the 14th Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties

Mr. Coia's Class Rules/Procedures for AP Government & Politics

Name: _____

Period: _____

Rules and Procedures

These rules should help you do your part in creating an atmosphere of learning in our classroom.

Directions: Students, please read and initial each section. Then, put one copy in your Handout section and turn one in to me.

_____ **Unit Guides:** I'll prepare a three-to-four--week course of study to include all assignments, handouts, and due dates. This is a key part of this class. I suggest printing an extra one for parents to follow along. These guides will to keep students and parents informed of the activities and progress of our class.

_____ **Online Access:** I will update grades via GradeSpeed each Friday. In addition, I will post each unit guide and other handouts on **www.mrcoia.com**. You are required to spend at least 15 minutes on the weekend looking at your grade, handouts, upcoming assignments, forum, etc. There may be graded assignments on the forum to ensure that you are checking.

_____ **Note-taking:** Each class period requires you to have your notebook opened to your "LA Classwork" section, dated at the top before the bell rings. You are expected to take notes on our class discussions, lectures, in-class reading, etc. Please do not expect me to tell you when to take notes. Take notes each class.

_____ **Food and Drink:** Bottled water is the only food or drink allowed in class. Please eat and drink before school and at lunch.

_____ **Electronics:** No phones or iPods are permitted. This is in compliance with the Student Handbook. The item will be turned into the office for parents to pick up.

_____ **Discussions:** Class discussions and sharing are the cornerstone of this class. Be prepared to speak. Sitting quietly is not acceptable!

_____ **Late Work:** Your work is due regardless of power outages, lack of printer ink, stolen computer, etc. Be responsible and plan ahead. I will accept late work for a maximum of 50% assigned value within two weeks past due. Be sure to write *LATE* and the date.

You will receive a coupon for two free late turn-ins per semester. If you decide to use it, tear off one and staple it to the top of the late assignment. Put it in the inbox in the classroom by the next day (not the next class period).

_____ **Attendance:** You are expected to attend class every day and follow attendance guidelines as stated in the student handbook. ***Poor attendance, whether excused or unexcused, will negatively affect your grade and, more importantly, your understanding of the material.***

_____ **Tardy Policy:** You must be in your chair with all materials opened and ready on your desk when the bell rings. Tardy = lunch detention.

_____ **Excused absences:** Since all of the assignments are in the unit guide and online, you will have the information to complete assignments even when you are absent. You must get the appropriate materials by asking a student, checking the web site, or talking to me outside of class time. The start of class is not the appropriate time to get your missing information. I will post homework and handouts online.

_____ **Far East, Field trips, and planned absences:** You are expected to get any work that you will miss before you leave and have it in at the same time as other students. For extended trips, please set up a meeting with me before you leave so that you can have it on your return. You will have the same amount of time to work on assignments, so I will meet with you to explain all work one or two weeks before your absence to give you plenty of time to work on it before leaving. This accomplishes two things: first, if you have any questions as you complete the assignments, we can discuss problems before leaving; second, this makes you work ahead and not behind so when you return to class, you are not lost and can quickly continue in the course of instruction with your peers. This takes more planning on my part, but I think it is valuable for students.

_____ **Family trips and extended vacations:** As per DoDEA policy, these are considered unexcused absences, and the work must be completed before you leave to be counted for credit.

_____ **Unexcused absences or unexcused tardies:** Sorry, you cannot make-up the assignment, quiz, or exam.

_____ **Note:** ***Students are responsible to take quizzes and exams regardless of an absence prior to the test day.*** Talk to students or me when you are out. Again, all information will be online and in your unit guide.

_____ **Cheating & Plagiarism:** Please do your own work. You will receive a zero for the test or assignment, as well as a referral to the office. This zero cannot be made up. If you are unsure if you plagiarized something, use this simple rule: "Did someone else write this, and do I not have quotation marks around it?" This includes copying from the Internet or from another student. For copying work, both the giver and receiver are equally guilty, and the penalty will apply to both.

_____ **Extra Credit:** There may be an additional assignment or two offered for you to earn extra credit. These extra points may help make up for a missing assignment. *Work hard on the credit throughout the year, rather than stressing about the extra credit.*

_____ **Bathroom breaks/ leaving the room:** Please use the rest room, get a drink, etc. during passing time. Of course, if it is an emergency, you are able to go.

_____ **Classroom Management:** My hope is that you will be self-managers in the classroom to nurture a positive atmosphere. If needed, here are the steps to discipline that I follow:

1. Verbal reminder in class
2. Verbal reminder in hall and/or lunch detention
3. Contact parents
4. Referral to office

_____ For **some offenses**, the students may get a lunch detention (e.g. tardy) or a referral (insubordination, dress code, etc.) without the reminder first. This set of directions and the student handbook act as the first reminder.

_____ **Chain of Command:** I want to treat students as responsible learners and self-advocates. If there is an issue, **I expect students to make contact with me first about it before a parent does.** This will allow me to work with the student directly to ensure the issue is quickly addressed. If the student is unsatisfied, then parent contact is appropriate.

_____ **Grade Policy:** We will follow the DoDEA grading scale in this course. For the grade, we'll use these categories:

50%	Tests/Writing/Projects
30%	Quizzes/Class work
20%	Homework

Semester exams count toward 20% of the final semester grade

Need Assistance? I want you to succeed in class and will help you as much as I can. Seminar works best, along with before and after school, and lunch. Let me know when you need some extra time. I'll be happy to meet with you to discuss assignments.

Required Supplies

- THREE tabbed sections in your school binder. Title these tabs: *GOV HANDOUTS* and *GOV CLASSWORK* and *GOV OUTLINES*. A few paper pockets will help keep your work neat and organized. You do not need to have a separate binder for this class, but you will need the tabs.
- Several packs of index cards (I can provide them in small quantity each week, but it is encouraged for you to have your own at home)
- Plenty of loose-leaf paper, highlighter, pencils, pens, eraser, etc. *No ripped paper from spirals allowed.*
- A ream of paper to print at home. You will print unit guides, articles, etc. outside of school.
- A planner is highly suggested. You will start each period by writing down the homework.

