

Course Description: Economics and Government are required social science classes for graduation. Each student must pass one semester of Economics and one semester of Government in order to graduate. AP Government is a college-level class, requiring students to learn at an accelerated level. In May, students will take the AP test, which can earn them college credit. This course is about the American political system. We will discuss political ideology, the development of the political system and our democratic institutions. Students will be able to evaluate the role of the national government and its relationship to the concept of liberty in a pluralistic society. The discussions will emphasize the changing political culture of American society and its effect on voting patterns, trends and the processes of government.

In this course, students will gain an understanding of:

- the constitutional underpinnings of American government
- political beliefs and behavior
- political parties and interest groups
- institutions and policy development and,
- civil liberties.

To accomplish these goals, each student will be taught to:

- Recall specific facts and interpretations emphasized in lectures, readings, activities, class discussion and independent research.
- Interpret political data by observing, classifying, inferring, comparing and contrasting a variety of primary and secondary sources.
- Evaluate both primary and secondary sources compared against the social, political and economic backdrop of the time period of the event and/or recording of the event then provide reasoned opinions as to their validity and weight.

At the conclusion of the course students should have a more sophisticated understanding of majority rule democracy, constitutionalism and civil liberties. Students will also be able to see the relationships and distinctions between formal and informal institutions and the public policies that are developed as a result of these relationships and be able to apply this knowledge to real-life situations.

TEXT: Burns, James M. et. al. *Government by the People* National Version 18th ed. Saddle River New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS:

Canton, David T. et. al. *The Enduring Debate* 4th ed. New York: WW Norton & Company. 2006. Irons, Peter & Stephainie Guiddon. *May It Please the Court*. New York: The New Press, 1993/1997. Knaupmann, Edward W..

Units of Study:

- Unit One: Constitutional Principles
- Unit Two: Rights and Liberties
- Unit Three: Political Culture, Interest Groups and Parties
- Unit Four: The Media, Public Opinion, Campaigns and Voting
- Unit Five: Policy Making Institutions
- Unit Six: Policies of National Politics
- Unit Seven: AP Exam Review

Evaluation: Progress reports will be sent home every four weeks to allow parents and students to monitor current class grades. Students' final grades for each semester will be derived from a combination of the following:

- daily work, occurs between 1-3 times week, each assignment is usually less than a half hour long along with lecture notes and/or chapter outlines
- quizzes, used periodically to check for understanding and reinforce important concepts
- tests, given as a culminating activity to each unit
- final exam, given as an in class exam at the end of each semester covering the concepts from the beginning of the semester
- attendance, comprises 10% of quarter grade, meant to promote student success in the classroom

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Required Materials

Students will be required to have a notebook dedicated to the sole use for AP Economics/Government and organized with dividers and labeled as follows:

- Lecture Notes
- Handouts
- Reading Guides/Homework
- Class Assignments
- DBQ/FRQ
- Tests

Notebooks will be checked, graded and returned periodically throughout the school year. Due dates for each notebook check will be included with the student homework calendar.

Homework/Reading

Students will be required to participate in reading and homework assignments outside of the class period. Reading guides for each chapter will be distributed to each student along with due dates for each assignment. Students are expected to complete reading and guides before the assigned due dates. It is important that students budget their time wisely in order to be prepared for each class lesson.

CLASS ORGANIZATION:

Students will be given a class syllabus with detailed information about course requirements, curriculum details, and student expectations. The course will include, but is not limited to: reading assignments, class lecture, in-class student activities, group assignments, written essays and responses, discussion seminars, and research projects. As this class is intended to simulate a college course, students enrolled in an AP course can expect to have regular homework and complete work/research assignments/projects outside of the classroom.

Grading: Grades are based on the accumulation of points in each grading period and includes 10% attendance. Percentage grades will be equal to the following letter grades:

A+ 97%-100% ~ A 94%-96% ~ A- 90-93 %
B+ 87%-89% ~ B 84%-86% ~ B- 80%-83%
C+77%-79% ~ C 74%-76% ~ C- 70%-73%

D+ 67%-69% ~ D 64%66% ~ D-60%-63%

Below 60% ~ Failing Grade

Additional Information

Homework/reading guides and other classroom assignments are expected to be turned-in on the required due dates. Late work will result in half credit or no credit after 5 days. Illegible or incorrect formatting of assignments will be returned (not graded) to students. Students that are absent with a valid excuse as per school policy on the day an assignment is due should make every effort to have an associate student turn in their assignment or have their assignment ready on the day of their return. Projects and long term assignments will be considered late if not received on the designated due date. All tests must be taken on the assigned date. In the event of illness or valid excuse as per school policy, students will be expected to make up their test on the day of their return or with special arrangements with the instructor. Tests or quizzes that are not made up within 5 days will be entered in the gradebook as a "0".

Completion of assignments

- 1) All assignments except notes, worksheets, study guides and tests must be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt font or will not be accepted.
- 2) All assignments will be turned in on time or early. Students that are absent for valid excuses will be allowed an equivalent amount of days to turn in missed assignments during class. Students that turn in late assignments will be assessed a 50% reduction in grade and will only be allowed ONE DAY for late assignments.
- 3) Assignments/projects that are assigned prior to a student's absence will be expected to be turned in on time or will result in a zero grade for that assignment. Please make arrangements to have your assignment/project turned in if you will be absent. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- 4) Students who do not do all of the required work will fail the class.

Time management is crucial for students to be prepared for each class period. Assignments will include homework, student activities, writing prompts, and research projects that will vary in length. It is important that students budget their time and use the assignment calendar to plan ahead. As this course is designed to simulate a college course, students are expected to treat the course as such and provide the necessary effort to create a successful classroom experience. Students are encouraged to seek help and ask questions to the instructor rather than become discouraged! Consistent effort and the willingness to improve are essential keys to achievement.

Student Conduct:

1. Respect:~ students are expected to respect themselves, others and our environment
2. Punctuality~students are expected to be in their seat and ready for class when the bell rings.
3. Preparedness~students are expected to always bring materials to class, i.e. assignments, textbooks, notebook, pen and pencil
4. Students are expected to adhere to all school rules as set forth in the Sutter Union High School student handbook

Behavior: Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Any actions not befitting the nature of this class will be met with disciplinary action and/or removal from the AP class.

Getting Help: It is your responsibility to ask for help if you feel it is needed. Help is available before school and after school, but please make arrangements with me so that I can devote time to your individual needs.

Requirements for grades in Semester One

1. Three projects:

A) *Clippings File* -Each student must compile a "clippings file." The purpose of this assignment is to ensure that students stay up to date with the current political trends and occurrences and so that students start to see the relevance of what they are studying in class. Details of the file will be distributed at the beginning of the semester. This is an

ongoing assignment throughout the semester.

. B) Analysis

of a Bill ~ Students will read a bill and create a written analysis.

C) Interest Group Research Project and Presentation. Details of the assignments will be distributed during class.

2) Unit Tests and Cumulative Final Exam

4) Homework, classroom assignments and “mini” projects

Cheating:

Students are encouraged to help each other and work together; however cheating will not be tolerated. Cheating includes attempting to take credit for someone else’s effort including homework assignments, essays, and plagiarism of another’s work. Any student found cheating will receive a negative 100% (NOT a “0”) and a parent conference.

Extra Credit:

Extra credit will be offered occasionally throughout the school year and will be available to all students. Students are encouraged to take advantage of extra credit, but not to rely on extra credit to maintain their grade standing.

Please detach and return the bottom portion of the syllabus on the next school day ~ Keep the remaining syllabus in the front of your binder

I have read, discussed, understand and agree to abide by the provisions of this course syllabus for AP Government.

Student Name and

Signature: _____

Parent Name and Signature:

Date: _____ Period: _____ Home Phone:
