AP US Government & Politics
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AP Government
This course is about the American political system. In an era of close elections, war, and terror, many Americans are more closely analyzing patriotism, civic responsibility, and interest in civic education. An active citizenry is the lifeblood of a functioning democracy, and this course is a good place to begin active citizenship and to start building a better world.

General Course Guidelines
1. This is a college-level course. College-level attitudes, work habits and products are expected of all students.
2. This class requires more reading than the typical high school honors class. Successful students must complete all assignments on time. Students who want to do well must attend and actively participate in class.
3. Evaluations are based on tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, and papers.
4. Learning is ultimately the responsibility of the student. In an advanced placement course, students are expected to be interested in their own learning and willing to devote the time necessary to explore the course content fully.

What is the payoff for all this extra effort? Students who do well in this course will be prepared to take the AP exam on Monday, May 6, 2019. A score of 3 or better is considered a passing score. Students who earn a score of 4 or 5 on the exams usually also earn six or more college credits. Many colleges grant credit for a score of 3. Also, students will know more than most about our government. Amaze your parents and friends!

AP Course Philosophy
This advanced placement course has two purposes:
1. To enable students to closely examine and evaluate the intricacies of the course.
2. To provide students with the content and writing skills necessary to pass the College Board Advanced Placement Exam.

The teacher recognizes and acts on the assumption that these students have demonstrated a capability to handle the concepts of a college-level course. One-half of each AP exam consists of free-response essays and one-half multiple choice. All tests and quizzes in this course mirror this model.

AP US Government and Politics Website:

School Philosophy
La Cueva is our office and home. We will conduct ourselves with respect and consideration at all times. You are important to me, and I will work hard to help you succeed.
Readings:
Government in America, 2012
The textbook will be used as a departure point for further reading and investigation. The textbook has a supplemental online workbook. We will also be using a variety of supplementary readings and students will be expected to engage in research. This will include reading the Federalist Papers 10 and 51 in Unit 1 and also selections from Jamie Raskin's We the Students: Supreme Court Cases for and about Students.

Readings should be completed prior to class. In many cases, class time will be spent reviewing the readings. In other cases, we may not discuss the readings at all, except as they apply to other concepts or ideas. Typical to college courses, students are responsible for the content of the readings, whether they are discussed in class or not!!! It will be presumed that the readings have been completed, and, unless questions are raised, understood. Class time at least twice a week will be devoted to discussions on concepts covered in the textbook, seminars/discussion (student-centered) will fill the other day/days. Discussions and activities will center on ideas that are different from, critical or affirming of, or amplifying basic concepts.

AP Examination
The AP US Government and Politics exam is divided as follows:
45 minutes (50%): 60 multiple-choice questions
100 minutes (50%): 4 mandatory (no choices) free-response questions

All students taking this course are encouraged to take the AP exam. All quizzes and tests in this course follow the format and language usage patterns found on the AP exams. Therefore, students will be comfortable dealing with the questions that will be on the exam.

Expectations: You will be expected to do your own work, have it ready on time, attend class on a regular basis, and most importantly, assume the responsibility for your own actions. Your attitude and behavior will determine the way the class is conducted for the semester. Hopefully, we will have an interesting, open, and enjoyable semester.

Make up work: You will have no more than five days to make up any work missed. It will be your responsibility to find out what work was missed and what it is you need to make-up.

Grading Criteria: You will be evaluated in various ways. In the course of the semester, you will take tests and quizzes and engage in projects. Projects: Students will be required to participate in various independent and group projects throughout the semester. Projects will include both individual and group presentations.

Tests and Projects: Tests on chapters fourteen (14) times during the course. Tests will include both multiple choice and free response sections to replicate the AP Test experience. Projects will require research, analysis of data, and action. For example, you will research political parties and run for President; you will research demographic statistics and predict elections; you will research issues and pass legislation in a mock Congress; and you will research Supreme Court cases and participate in mock trials.
AP Government – Course Overview

I. Foundations of American Democracy
   A. Considerations that influenced the formulation/adoption of the Constitution
   B. Separation of Powers
   C. Federalism
   D. Theories of democratic government

II. Interactions Among Branches of Government
   A. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power
   B. Relationships among these four institutions, and varying balances of power
   C. Linkages between institutions and the following
      1. Public opinion and voters
      2. Interest groups
      3. Political parties
      4. The media
      5. Subnational governments

III. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
   A. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation
   B. Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties
   C. Impact of the 14th Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties

IV. American Political Ideologies and Beliefs
   A. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and leaders
   B. Processes by which citizens learn about politics
   C. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion
   D. Factors influencing citizens to differ in terms of political beliefs and behaviors
   E. Political ideologies and belief systems
   F. Political parties and elections
      1. Functions
      2. Organization
      3. Development
      4. Effects on the political process
   G. Interest groups, including political action committees (PAC's)
      1. The range of interests represented
      2. The activities of interest groups
      3. The effects of interest groups on the political process
      4. The unique characteristics and roles of PAC's in the political process
   H. The mass media
      1. The functions and structures of the media
      2. The impacts of media on politics

V. Political Participation
   A. The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life
   B. Voting
      1. Who votes...who doesn’t...and why
   C. Elections, both primary and general
   D. Non-voting participation
      1. Communicating with elected officials, protests, working for campaigns, etc.

Note that Public Policy will be present throughout the course in the form of real-life examples of the above elements and through frequent discussions of current events.
AP Government Projects

Bill Narrative
The student will demonstrate understanding of the legislative process by writing a narrative essay that follows the path of a bill as it becomes a law.

Declaration of Independence
Students will produce their own Declarations of Independence, utilizing and citing the concepts of the philosophers whose ideas led to the writing of the actual Declaration.

Political Ideology Essay
Students will explore conservative and liberal political ideologies by evaluating contemporary politicians representative of each ideology.

Foreign Policy Analysis Essay
Students will analyze US foreign policy by researching and determining our foreign policy goals, the methods by which those goals are to be obtained, and whether or not those methods are successful.

Liberty vs. Security Essay
Students will write an essay analyzing the delicate balance between rights and security that has come under increased scrutiny since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Economic Analysis Essay
Students will examine the current economic climate in the U.S. and evaluate fiscal and monetary policy options to implement to strengthen the economy.

Equal Opportunity Essay
Students will research and analyze whether equal opportunity exists in the US, supporting either why it has or demonstrating what must be done to achieve equality.

Crystal Ball
Students research demographic and voter characteristics and then predict the Presidential, US Senate, US House of Representatives, and gubernatorial races throughout the United States.

Cueva Congress
Students will simulate how a bill becomes a law in US Congress by researching domestic and foreign policy issues, formulating opinions, forming coalitions and then writing and passing bills as Representatives and Senators in US Congress.

Cueva Court
Students will hold mock trials on court cases drawn from each of the four 10th grade subjects: English, Government, Journalism and Media. Students will act as lawyers trying the case and also role-play the defendants, historical figures and “expert witnesses” from the time period.

Debates
Students will engage in two-against-two Oxford-style debates on domestic policy issues, writing resolutions, stating contentions, and arguing and rebutting statements.

Presidential Election
Students will research and choose political parties, develop party platforms, deliver campaign speeches, participate in debates, vote in primary and general elections, and inaugurate the new President.

POTUS
Students conduct a real time Presidential election role playing the following parts: the candidates and their campaign staffs; other politicians and government officials; and reporters who cover the election and produce newspapers and broadcasts.