

**Advanced Placement
United States Government and Politics
(Political Science)
Course Syllabus**

Lincoln High School
2016/2017

Instructor:

Mr. Almeida

Extra Help:

Available after school

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Lincoln High School's Core Values

Respect, Integrity, Safety, Engagement, Unity and Pride

Belief Statements

We believe:

- All students deserve a safe, nurturing and respectful environment in which to learn
- All students are empowered to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in a global
- All students should graduate career and/or college ready through multiple pathways of
- Meaningful and varied assessments inform high quality instruction
- Positive peer and adult relationships foster student success
- Resiliency and perseverance in the face of obstacles are keys to student success

Academic Expectations *(The following expectations will be met through this course.)*

- **Students will be thoughtful communicators who read, write, listen and speak effectively in preparation for careers and/or post-secondary education**
- **Students will be creative and practical problem solvers**
- **Students will be responsible users of technology and media**
- **Students will demonstrate continuous effort towards proficiency in all requirements for graduation**

Social Expectations

- **Students will assume responsibility for their actions**
- **Students will demonstrate the ability to resolve conflicts responsibly**
- **Students will demonstrate respect and responsibility for the well-being and welfare of others within a diverse school community**

Civic Expectations

- **Students will contribute to the well-being of the wider community through service**
- **Students will recognize their importance as participating members of American society within a global context**

Course Objectives

The purpose of the Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics course is to show students how our political system works; that is, the structure of the system and how it functions in our pluralist society. In addition, students will demonstrate an understanding of American politics, the institutions of government, and how different groups of people interact to shape our public policies.

We shall examine the philosophical foundations of our system and well as the Constitution and its major elements such as separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, and judicial review. Students will develop a more sophisticated view of topics such as majority rule, civil liberties and civil rights, political parties, campaigns and elections, interest groups, and lobbying. The course will also focus on the institutions at work within the system, such as the Congress, Presidency, Judiciary, the bureaucracy, and the media.

Hopefully, at the completion of this course, students will have developed a keen awareness of the complexities of our system and the ability to make wise decisions and informed choices regarding political issues. Soon these students will have the opportunity to vote. Hopefully, this course will instill an interest in public issues and motivate students to exercise their rights as citizens in an informed and responsible manner.

Some students will also complete their requirement for community service through this course. In those cases, they will actively link their studies with civic responsibility.

Students will receive many opportunities to fulfill their PBGR requirements throughout this class. The various tasks assigned in this class will meet many of the Lincoln High School mission statement indicators but ultimately it is the student's responsibility to ensure that all PBGR requirements are met.

Course Requirements

Tests contain two components: free response and objective. Tests are expected to be completed within the allotted class time (IEP or 504 Plan provisions excluded). If you are absent the day of the review you are still required to take the test upon your return to school.

Major Assessments such as chapter quizzes, unit tests, papers, and extended projects will make up the bulk of each quarter's grade. Additionally there will be small quizzes every time the class meets on Days 3 and 7. These quizzes will cover the material discussed from the last quiz.

In addition to the above, students should expect minor assessments such as quizzes, class work, and homework. Homework will normally fall into the following grading categories:

√+ = 100

√ = 85

√- = 75

∅ = No credit given. Assignment must be resubmitted for credit.

A) Homework should be handed in on-time. **Late homework will not be accepted.**

B) Work must be completed either in pencil or black/blue ink. Homework in any other ink color will not be accepted.

Each semester there is an exam worth 20% of the semester grade.

Cornell Notes

Students are to take Cornell Notes as they read the text for each chapter. On the day of each chapter's objective quiz the Cornell Notes will be collected and graded. Not only will these notes be helpful to study for chapter quizzes, they will be invaluable when it comes time to prepare for the AP Exam in May.

Academic Dishonesty

There are serious consequences for cheating. Cheating is considered copying work from another student or another source and turning it in as your own. Remember there are consequences for both the copier and the person who allows a fellow student to copy their work. Zeros will be assigned to all students involved. Plagiarism is considered cheating. Receiving a zero on a major grade (essay, test, project, etc.) can have a devastating effect on your grade. Additionally, cheating can result in impeding one's membership into the National Honor Society or expulsion from the National Honor Society. If you do not understand an assignment or you are having trouble, come see me so I can help you.

Attendance and Class Participation

Be on time to class. Passing time has now been increased from four to five minutes to allow students more time in-between classes. Habitual lateness will result in teacher detention.

Barring sickness, you should be in class everyday. Because we will be moving quickly, you are not to miss class for any extra-curricular reasons, such as selling tickets, blood drives, etc. If you do miss class for a valid reason you should refer to the absence folder for any missed handouts or homework assignment. If the folder is empty do not assume that there was no homework. When in doubt please see me.

Students are expected to actively participate in classroom learning experience. Students participate by preparing for class by completing the homework, asking thoughtful and

probing questions of the instructor, classmates, and themselves. Political Science is always open for interpretation therefore students need to think analytically in this course.

Student Materials

Bring your textbook, notebooks—which you use *only* for this class—and a writing utensil to class everyday. It is important that you bring your notebook to class everyday as you will be expected to take notes from the lectures and group discussions. In addition to your notebook, you need to bring a folder to class everyday. You will be receiving *many* handouts this year so sticking handouts in the back of your notebook or textbook will not do. It is recommended you use a loose-leaf three-ring binder for class notes (so you can add distributed readings directly to your notes) and spiral notebook for the reading notes.

Required Reading Materials

Students must understand from the outset that there is extensive reading. They must complete the assignments in advance of the class in order for the class to run according to plan. Students should have a separate notebook for assigned reading. Reading notes (i.e., notes taken on a separate sheet of paper and not the text itself) can be used on reading quizzes. It is to your advantage to take notes on all assigned readings as reading quizzes may or may not be announced.

Edwards, III, George C., Martin P. Wattenberg, and Robert L. Lineberry. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*. 16th ed. Boston: Pearson Education, 2014. Print.

Woll, Peter, ed. *American Government; Readings and Cases*. 13th ed. NY: Harper Collins, 1999.

Selected essays from *The Federalist Papers*

Any other pertinent current newspapers and magazines

Community Service Requirement

If you must complete community service (15 hrs), you must write a plan of activism outlining how you will be serving the community, a log of the required 15 hours, and reflection on your experience. No prior community service hours will be accepted if completed prior to the summer before the 2016/2017 school year (type of service must have been approved beforehand).

Calendar of Topics and Due Dates

Every month or so you will receive a calendar detailing all of the readings and assignments for a given month and it extremely important that you keep this calendar close-by all year long. It is the expectation that you turn in all assignments on-time and without having to be reminded by the instructor. The calendar will be modified as needed.

Helpful Links

We live in a technology-centered world in which instant information is at our fingertips. Below is a list of website links which will be useful in our study this year. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but to provide a starting point.

The White House – www.whitehouse.gov

Note the .gov – all official government websites end with .gov.

The US Senate – www.senate.gov

The US House of Representatives – www.house.gov

The US Supreme Court – www.supremecourtus.gov

Oyez – www.oyez.org

Find synopses of US Supreme Court cases.

The US Government's Office Portal – www.firstgov.gov/index.shtml

Web sites devoted to information about local, state, and federal government.

The Library of Congress THOMAS site – <http://thomas.loc.gov>

A comprehensive online journal of the U.S. legislative process where you can look up bills, resolutions, laws, legislative schedules, congressional calendars, past sessions of Congress, committee information, treaties, and presidential nominations.

The Congressional Record – <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/r111query.html>

The official, daily record of the U.S. Congress whose website allows you to access the proceedings and debates of all current and past sessions of Congress dating to 1989 (101st session of Congress).

Fedstats – www.fedstats.gov

The gateway to statistics from over 100 U.S. federal agencies.

Citizens Against Government Waste -- <http://www.cagw.org/site/PageServer>

CAGW is a private, non-partisan, non-profit organization whose mission is to eliminate waste, mismanagement, and inefficiency in the federal government. Former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole has stated, "CAGW researches and identifies the most blatant waste in government and shows how it can be eliminated."

The National Constitution Center – <http://constitutioncenter.org/>

An independent, non-partisan, and non-profit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of, and appreciation for, the Constitution, its history, and its contemporary relevance.

Hail to the Chief – www.opinionjournal.com/hail/

The Wall Street Journal's comprehensive, scholarly ranking of U.S. presidents.

Comprehensive Guide to US Political Parties – www.politics1.com/parties.htm

Polling 101 – http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/education/polling_fundamentals.html

Learn the basics of public opinion surveying from the Roper Center, which along with the Gallup Organization is the oldest and most respected polling organization in the United States.

Project Vote Smart -- www.votesmart.org

Americans young and old volunteer their time, take no money from special interest groups, and have committed themselves to researching the backgrounds and records of thousands of political candidates and elected officials to discover their voting records, campaign contributions, public statements, biographical data (including their work history) and evaluations of them generated by over 100 competing special interest groups.

Campaign Finance E-Guide -- <http://www.cfinst.org/legacy/eguide/>

Online guide to all you need to know to understand the current status and recent history of campaign finance laws.

The Constitution – www.usconstitution.net

All you need to know about the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and Articles of Confederation.

Elections Project – <http://elections.gmu.edu/>

Conducted by George Mason University, the mission of the United States Election Project is to provide timely and accurate election statistics, electoral laws, research reports, and other useful information regarding the United States electoral system. By providing this information, the Project seeks to inform the people of the United States on how their electoral system works, how it may be improved, and how they can participate in it.

FactCheck.org – www.factcheck.org

A nonpartisan, nonprofit, "consumer advocate" for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. We monitor the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews, and news releases. Our goal is to apply the best practices of both journalism and scholarship, and to increase public knowledge and understanding.

OpenSecrets.org – www.opensecrets.org

Created and maintained by the Center for Responsive Politics, a non-partisan, non-profit research group based in Washington, D.C. that tracks money in politics, and its effect on elections and public policy. The web site explains the basics of campaign finances, tracks elections, and details where elected officials get campaign contribution, who gives them the money, and how much money exchanges hands. The Center's work is aimed at creating a more educated voter, an involved citizenry, and a more responsive government.