**Curriculum**

**Advanced Placement Government and Politics**

**Course Overview**

This year-long elective is designed to give students a sound understanding of government and politics. About half of the course is dedicated to the United States, while the other half focuses on other political systems. Throughout, students learn about political processes and structures, behaviors and consequences. Students will develop their analytical and interpretive skills as they draw on a wide array of sources and examine specific political phenomena through various perspectives.

**Department Standards**

Expected Outcomes:

1. Knowledge of and interest in history, the social and behavioral sciences and related subjects.
2. Constructive participation in a democratic society.
3. Understanding of various societies throughout history.
4. Development of critical analysis skills.
5. Development of research skills.
6. Development of communication and presentation skills.

**Benchmarks**:

Students will...

\* comprehend--with a significant degree of detail--political processes, structures, behaviors and consequences;

\* develop an informed appreciation of the influence of political parties, interest groups, and the media on government;

\* understand the nature of change, in the context of political traditions, globalization, and other challenges;

\* apply their knowledge of politics thoughtfully and flexibly (particularly to current problems), in class discussions, debates, and other activities;

\* write coherent and effective essays; make compelling oral presentations; and

\* prepare thoroughly for the AP exam.

**Performance Indicators**

**1st Quarter**

Students will be able to:

 engage in discussions constructively, with shared leadership

 analyze partisan perspectives using polling data

 identify the foundations and tools used by unconventional participation

 explain the connection between civil society and voter turnout

 analyze media pieces for bias

 identify issues and values of both parties and major cleavages

 write effective free-response essays

 assess free-response essays using AP guidelines

 demonstrate--through discussion, writing, and tests--a strong grasp of the

 institutions, dynamics, and challenges of the content presented

**2nd Quarter**

Students will be able to:

 engage in debates constructively, with shared leadership

 explain the role of committees and leadership in the development of bills

 differentiate between the president's informal powers and the institution of the

 presidency

 present evidence of the difficulties the government has in controlling agencies like

 the CIA

 respond to arguments about order vs. freedom, with respect to terrorism

 speak formally about the death penalty

 memorize vital Supreme Court cases (about 35)

 differentiate the ways in which the Fed behaves like a business and like a regulator

 debate the salient issues of current health-care reform

 write complete free-response essays, consistently

 demonstrate--through discussion, writing, and tests--a strong grasp of the

 institutions, dynamics, and challenges of the content presented

**3rd Quarter**

Students will be able to:

 understand and use a full range of comparative-politics special vocabulary

 write a coherent, accurate party platform for a Russian political party

 analyze the obstacles faced by democratization in China, and the future opportunities for reform

 debate one current, major issue facing Parliament in the UK, from a partisan perspective of a party ò develop questions for and participate meaningfully in talks with senior European Commission officials

 write responses to term-identification portion of the AP Comparative exam

 demonstrate--through discussion, writing, and tests--a strong grasp of the institutions, dynamics, and challenges of the content presented explain the current challenges reformists in Iran face, and the forces that support them

 debate the issue of free trade in Nigeria, from an ethnic perspective

 demonstrate--through discussion, writing, and tests--a strong grasp of the

 institutions, dynamics, and challenges of the content presented

 understand the format of both AP exams and analyze practice exams for errors

 apply specialized vocabulary to country contexts; compare and contrast country

 contexts for various features and issues

**4th Quarter**

As this is an externally assessed course, the fourth quarter is devoted to review, mock exams, and sitting the official AP exams for US and Comparative Government & Politics. After the exam, we then spend two weeks on a special project, currently a set of debates.

**Assessments**

**1st Quarter**

Three unit tests

Review of political blog

Three free-response essays

**2nd Quarter**

Two unit tests

Two issue debates

Three free-response essays

**3rd Quarter**

Two unit tests

Research project for group interviews

Two issue debates

Three free-response essays

**4th Quarter**

Practice exams

Practice free-response questions

Mock AP Comparative Exam

AP Exams: US and Comparative

Video project

**Core Topics**

(United States)

Dilemmas of democracy; Political theory

Constitution and federalism

Political socialization and participation

The media

Political parties and interest groups

Campaigns and elections

Institutions: Congress, Presidency, Courts

Civil liberties; civil rights

Public policy: economic, domestic, foreign

(Comparative)

Country studies: Russia, China, Mexico, United Kindom

The European Union

Issues: Globalization, DemocratizationCountry Studies: Iran and Nigeria

Themes: Power & participation, institutions, policy and change

**Specific Content**

**US Government**

I. Political Theory

 A. Purposes of Government

 B. Freedom, Order, Equality

 C. Dilemmas of Government

 D. Ideology

 E. Meanings of Democracy

 F. Models of Democracy

 G. Global Trends

II. Foundations of US Government

 A. Sources of the Constitution

 B. Conflict and Compromise

 C. Federalist Papers

 D. Amendments

 E. Conceptions of Federalism

 F. Dynamics of Federalism

 G. Policymaking under Federalism

III. People and Government

 A. Public Opinion and Democracy

 B. Socialization and Cleavages

 C. Values and Ideology

 D. Development of Mass Media

 E. Media and Government

 F. Participation: Conventional and Unconventional

 G. Voting and Patterns

 H. History of Political Parties

 I. Two-Party System

 J. Nominations, Elections, and Campaigns

 K. Interest Groups

IV. Institutions

 A. Congress

 1. Elections and Incumbency

 2. Agenda, Committees, and Leadership

 3. Interaction with the rest of government

 B. Presidency

 1. Expansion of Presidential Power

 2. Presidential Leadership

 C. Bureaucracy

 1. Development of the Bureaucracy

 2. Administrative Policymaking

 D. The Courts

 1. Judicial Supremacy

 2. Supreme Court

 3. Recruitment

V. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

 A. Bill of Rights: Freedoms

 B. Applying the Bill of Rights to the States

 C. Ninth Amendment

 D. Civil War Amendments

 E. Civil Rights Movement

 F. Rights for Other Minorities

 G. Gender and Rights

 H. Affirmative Action

VI. Policymaking

A. Purposes and Processes of Policymaking

 B. Fragmentation and Coordination

 C. Economic Policy: Monetary v. Fiscal

 D. Laissez Faire v. Keynes

 E. Tax Reform and Spending

 F. Development of the Welfare State

 G. Public Assistance, Health Care, and Education

 H. Constitutional Underpinnings of Foreign Policy

 I. Process of Foreign Policymaking

 J. History of Foreign Policy

 K. Global Policy Issues

**Comparative Government**

1. Introduction to Government and Politics

ò What is comparative government?

ò The role of constitutions

ò Basic terminology

2. Russia

ò Historical Background

ò Old USSR v. New Russia

ò Asymmetrical federalism

ò 1993 constitution

ò Institutions of Government

ò Oligarchs

ò Patrimonialism

ò Electoral System and Party System

ò Current Challenges

3. China

ò Historical background

ò Mao ZedongÆs revision of socialist thought

ò Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

ò Institutions of government

ò Constitution of 1982 and citizen-state relations

ò Elections

ò The Media

ò Current Challenges

4. Mexico

ò Historical Background

ò Procedural v. substantive democracy

ò Institutions of government

ò Corporatism

ò Political parties

ò NAFTA

ò Recent Political Change

ò Current Challenges

5. United Kingdom û The host country

ò Historical Background

ò The Westminster model of parliamentary government

ò Institutions of government

ò Political parties

ò Constitutional Reform

ò The UK and the EU

ò Current Challenges

6. The European Union û

ò Historical background

ò Institutions of the European Union

ò Supra-nationalism v. inter-governmentalism

ò Economic and political integration

ò European Monetary Union

7. Developing countries

ò Common economic characteristics of LDCÆs

ò Obstacles to economic development

ò Sustainable development

ò Foreign aid v. Free trade

8. Iran

ò Historical background

ò Islam and Theocracy

ò Institutions of government

ò Elections

ò Political parties

ò Reform v. Conservatism

ò Current Challenges

9. Nigeria

ò Historical background

ò Multi-ethnic state

ò Political culture

ò Constitution

ò Institutions of government

ò Elections

ò Political parties

ò Current Challenges

10. Themes (interspersed in instruction, then reviewed)

ò Power; Sovereignty & Legitimacy

ò Political Institutions and Dynamics

ò Citizen-State Relations

ò Public Policy

ò Political Change; Democratisation

ò Globalisation: Changes in Sovereignty, in Worldview

11. Preparation for AP Exam

**Resources**

Main Text: K. Janda et al. The Challenge of Democracy, 9th ed. Houghton-Miflin, 2002

Main Text: McCormick, J. Comparative Politics in Transition, 5th ed. Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.

Supplements:

The Economist; The Guardian; International Herald Tribune. (One or two articles from news sources on a daily basis, showing concepts at work in country contexts)

Foreign Affairs; Foreign Policy. (Two to four in-depth articles during semester; esp. analysis of domestic policy and impact of country-specific systems) CIA World Factbook (www.cia.org)

Politics Review, Philip Allan Updates (a periodical for British students of US gov't; about six articles, primarily on institutions)

Hart, J. "Protest is Dead. Long Live Protest." Utne. May/Jun 2007, pg. 46, 3pp.

Glenn, D. "The Marshall Plan." Columbia Journalism Review. Sep/Oct 2007, pg. 46, 6pp. (on professional political blogs)

Internet resources, as referenced by Janda text (one or two per week)

Constitution of the United States

Federalist Paper No. 10, James Madison

Kesselman, M. Readings in Comparative Politics: Political Challenges and Changing Agendas. Wadsworth, 2009.

AP Briefing Papers, AP Central (online): Democratization, Globalization, Iran.

Brown, B. Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings. Harcourt Brace, 2003. (Several essays on themes, taken up and presented by students prior to seminar discussions.)

Students are also expected to read a well-respected newspaper.