**Instructor:** Mr. Bob Poelking

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**AP Government and Politics**

**2025-26 Syllabus and Student Contract**

C**ourse Introduction**

AP Government and Politics is a class designed to familiarize you with a spectrum of knowledge about the American Political process from the historical whys of the Articles of Confederations to the modern hows of the Constitution, to Federalism. This class will require you to analyze documents ranging from the Constitution, to Supreme Court cases, to Civil Rights era speeches. You will be asked to write complex, well thought out, timed essays. You will engage in civil, reasoned debate with your peers. AP GoPo is an intensive class, there will be a … robust amount of notes/reading each week; it will not be superfluous. My goal for this class is to do two things: instill in you an appreciation and deep understanding of government and to teach you the content and skills to do well on the AP Test. I treat assignments in this class like a college class- I won’t grade many of them. The point of many readings, writings, videos, etc. that you will complete every week is to deepen your knowledge of the subject matter and ensure you have access to as much relevant information as possible. The vast majority of your grades will come from multi-part tests, the remainder will be from occasional projects and the odd assignment.

I encourage and hope that you all will do more in this class than skim the book for notes and stare at the clock. I hope you will THINK, QUESTION, AND DEBATE every situation, issue, and topic at hand. I cannot be expected to make this class work on my own, therefore you all must take part in this democracy (well, benevolent dictatorship, but let’s not get nit picky yet) that includes constant, open dialogue between me the teacher and you the student.

The test approaches, let’s get going.

**Requirements: What will it take for you to pass this class?**

1. Be Responsible
   1. Sit in your seat in class when the bell rings
   2. **Suggested Supplies:** Binder, notebook, writing implements, CHARGED computer
   3. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING MATERIALS AND HOMEWORK WHEN YOU ARE ABSENT!!!-Check online, ask a fellow student, ask me, look at the calendar.
   4. This is an AP class “I forgot” is a lame excuse and leaves you at a severe disadvantage, keep up on your work.
   5. E-mails previewing the week will go out Friday afternoon to school accounts
      1. Documents to be used in class will be available in digital format as well
2. Be Involved
   1. Participation and discussion are LARGE parts of this class, get into it.
   2. Do your homework/ be here for Tests and FRQs- **0s will be entered as placeholders until late work is turned in**
      1. Late work may be turned in until the end of the Unit/ negotiated time after return from illness (this does not apply to presentations you are present for)
      2. Late tests are to be taken within 3 days of your return to school
   3. TRY! CARE!
   4. Ask questions if you need help. Ask questions if things don’t make sense. Ask Questions.
   5. Voice your opinion in such a way that it progresses conversation and dialogue.
3. Be Respectful
   1. No profanity or disrespectful language.
   2. Voice your opinion in such a way that it is respectful of others’ ideas and progresses the dialogue. IN OTHER WORDS-THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK!
   3. You do not have the right to interfere in your classmates’ education.
   4. Do not use your electronic device unless directed by me. For real, I don’t want to take phones.
   5. Communicate with me if you are having issues with someone in the class, including me.
   6. Remember, opinions aren’t a contest- not everyone will agree with you and that’s cool.
      1. We don’t do conspiracies here unless it’s in context, trolling is a waste of everyone’s time.

4. Be a Graduate

1. Take pride in your work- this is an AP level course and I fully expect you to put in the requisite work to get a 3 or higher (pssst… aim for a 5)
2. Set a goal and go for it. Talk with me or your peers if you want help- we’re a community.
3. **Cheating:** Cheating will not be tolerated. Your parents will be contacted and a referral will be written if you are cheating. I’m here to help, all you’ve got to do is ask.
   1. Chat GPT doesn’t write like you do. Don’t use it. 1) there’s a pretty good chance I’ll notice 2) this sets you up for crippling failure on the AP test and neither of us want that.
4. Pass this class. This class is not out to get you, it’s here to help you better yourself and score college credit.
5. Utilize all supports provided by our school or community.
6. Corrections are allowed on tests and enable you to regain 50% of your lost points

-Corrections will *only* be accepted if you do the requisite note sheets before test day

5. Online

1. An assignment being due online doesn’t change the assigned due date
2. It’s pretty easy to spot when people do assignments together. Helping a classmate is fine, copying isn’t. If you’re iffy on where the line is, ask- don’t risk it.

**If you cannot meet classroom expectations or follow directions, you will first receive a warning. Continued poor choices will result in a written referral that will be sent to your principal. I want every student to reach their maximum potential in this class and I will not tolerate poor behavior that infringes on other people’s right to learn.**

**Absences:**

1. Students have 3 days to make up work from an excused absence
2. Students may not make up work with an unexcused absence.
3. Make-up work is the responsibility of the student. Whenever possible arrangements for make-up work should be made with the teacher prior to the absence.

**Tardies:**

After 3 tardies (per semester), you will receive lunch detention with me. After 4 tardies I will automatically write a referral. It does not matter why you were tardy! For further tardy policy information please refer to the student handbook.

**Late Work:** I try to be flexible with late work, but the bigger the assignment, the more rigid I get; that is to say, missing something small isn’t the end of the world, but flaking out on a presentation or semester-ending product could result in a 20% deduction per day. Turn your stuff in, you’ll have time to work on it. Precluding extenuating circumstances, I enforce hard deadlines at the end of each quarter- if I don’t have it, it’s a zero. If I don’t have your work when I grade an assignment, I put a 0 in the gradebook until I am holding your late assignment- it can really mess with your grade and trigger alerts on PowerSchool and that’s the point.

**Hall passes:**

You’re upperclassmen, I’ll trust you to take the pass if you need it. If there isn’t a pass, wait.

**Food & Drink:**

Food and drink are allowed in the classroom unless it becomes a distraction or messy.

**Grading Criteria.**

You will be graded on the following categories (Grades will be 50/50%)

* Tests/Quizzes - will be based off the format of the AP Test with attendant timing
  + Make ups for credit will be allowed IF all work/notes for the corresponding Unit has been turned in
  + We’ll take 3 each Semester (1,2,3 and 4,5, Cumulative)
* Writing Assignments - includes timed writes, practice FRQs, essays.
* Daily work and Participation - this is working in class, group work, effort, and discussion involvement
* Projects- large projects may be broken into pieces (e.g. research, outline, presentation, etc.

**Topics and Units;** So just what will we be studying?

**Semester 1:**

1. Foundations of American Democracy (~4 weeks) 15-22% of the AP Test

2. Interactions among branches of Government (~5-6 weeks) 25-36% of the AP Test

3. Civil Liberties (~5-6 weeks) 13-18% of the AP Test

**Semester 2:**

1. American Political Ideologies and Beliefs (~4 weeks) 13-18% of the AP Test
2. Political Participation (~4 weeks) 20-27% of the AP Test
3. Review and Test Prep (Test is **at 12 P.M.)**
4. Mock Congress

**FILMS**

Please note that pg-13 or R-rated/ TV MA-rated films and are used for educational purposes. By signing below, you authorize your child to watch rated R films in class. I will use discretion on the content, and fast forward through scenes I feel are inappropriate. Please note if you would like them removed for an alternative assignment.

A sample of the films that may or may not be shown throughout the year include,

*The Great Divide, Navalny, PBS Frontlines that do not yet exist*

**\* By signing below, the student and parent / guardian acknowledge and agree to the above expectations and requirements.**

**Please return bottom portion of this paper with your permission for your son/daughter to watch R rated films and your contact information.**

Student Name (PRINTED): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (SIGNED): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Name (PRINTED): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Name (SIGNED): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature to allow R movies:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature to **NOT** allow R movies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I look forward to working with your son/daughter and would like to communicate with you throughout the year. Please provide the best way to get in contact with you, whether it is your work phone, cell phone, or e-mail.

Best way to contact me (the parent) is:E-mail\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*\* If you have any questions or concerns with the Syllabus, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

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