



**Carpinteria High School**  
**AP Government and Politics**  
**10 Credits**  
**Year 2010 - 2011**  
**Prerequisite(s): None**

### Instructor Information

**Instructor:** Mr. Bisson  
**Website:** <http://mrbisson.com>

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**Class meetings:** Modified block schedule per school calendar  
**Office Hours:** Monday - Friday 06:30 – 07:45 & 15:00 – 16:00; or by appointment

### Course Description

This is a college preparatory course. This year-long AP course is the equivalent of a college political science class. This course requires its students to read extensively primary and secondary sources as well as to write critically. This is a college preparatory course. This year-long AP course is the equivalent of a college history class. This course requires its students to read extensively primary and secondary sources as well as to write critically. Students will become acquainted with a variety of theoretical perspectives and explanations for various behaviors and outcomes.

### Class Materials

#### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

J. Wilson & J. Dilulio, **American Government Institutions and Policies**, Houghton Mifflin, 2006, 10<sup>th</sup> edition

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTBOOK**

L. Monk, **The Words We Live By**, Stonesong Press, 2003

#### **OTHER MATERIALS**

The Declaration of Independence, The Articles of Confederation, The Constitution, Federalist Papers, Anti-Federalist Papers, articles from current newspapers, news recordings, film clips (The War Room; Journeys with George; Bush's Brain; Chisolm'72 – Unbought & Unbossed; Road to the Presidency; Nixon: the Man and the President; Ken Burn's America: the Congress; PBS: the Supreme Court; 2004 Presidential & Vice-Presidential Debates; etc), magazine excerpts, book excerpts

#### **SUGGESTED MATERIALS**

At some point prior to the end of February, it is suggested that students also acquire a good AP preparation guide such as:

**How to Prepare for the Advanced Placement Exam: AP U.S. Governments & Politics**, Barron's

**The Princeton Review Cracking the AP U.S. Government & Politics Exam**, Random House

**Kaplan: AP U.S. Governments & Politics**, Simon & Schuster

### Areas of Study

## **I. CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES (Chapters 1, 2,3, &22)**

The study of modern politics in the United States requires students to examine the kind of government established by the Constitution, paying particular attention to federalism and the separation of powers. Understanding these developments involves both knowledge of the historical situation at the time of the Constitutional Convention and an awareness of the ideological and philosophical traditions on which the framers drew. Familiarity with the Supreme Court's interpretation of key provisions of the Constitution will aid student understanding of theoretical and practical features of federalism and the separation of powers. Students study a variety of theoretical perspectives relating to the Constitution, such as democratic theory, theories of republican government, pluralism, and elitism.

Due Week 1: Summer project; Wilson p. A4 – A20 & Chapter 1 p.2 – 15; Monk p. 10; Declaration of Independence (Wilson p. A1 – A3); 3 Current Events; introduction to free-response essay writing

Due Week 2: Wilson Chapter 2 p. 16-47; Articles of Confederation (handout); Federalist Papers 1 (handout), 10

(Wilson A21-25), 51 (Wilson A26-29); Anti-Federalist Papers (handout); Monk p. 11-17, 112-125; 3 Current Events; practice free-response essay; Test Chapters 1 & 2  
Due Week 3: Wilson Chapter 3 p. 48-73; 3 Current Events; practice free-response essay; Test Chapter 3  
Due Week 4: Wilson Chapter 22 p. 576-588; 3 Current Events; Unit test (30 multiple choice & 1 free-response questions)

Percentage for AP Exam.....5-15% (4 weeks; Aug-Sept)

## **II. POLITICAL THEORY BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS (Chapters 4,7 & 8)**

Individual citizens hold a variety of beliefs about their government, its leaders, and the political system in general. Taken together, these beliefs form the foundation of U.S. political culture. Students study how these beliefs are formed, how they evolve and the processes by which they are transmitted. The ways in which these beliefs affect and inform political participation are also critical. Students will understand what leads citizens to differ from one another in their political beliefs and behaviors, why a person from one ethnic or racial group may have a different view of the American political process than someone from another group, and what the political ramifications of these differences are.

Due Week 5: Wilson Chapter 4 p. 76-96; 3 Current Events; Test Chapter 4

Due Week 6: Wilson Chapter 7 p. 154-167; 3 Current Events

Due Week 7: Wilson Chapter 7 p. 167-176; public opinion poll; Wilson Chapter 8 p. 177-183; 3 Current Events

Due Week 8: Wilson Chapter 8 p. 184-196; 3 Current Events; Unit test (30 multiple choice & 1 free-response questions)

Percentage for AP Exam.....10-20% (4 weeks; Sept-Oct)

## **III. POLITICAL PARTIES, INTEREST GROUPS, AND THE MASS MEDIA (Chapters 9, 10, 11 & 12)**

Students understand the mechanisms that allow citizens to organize and communicate their interest and concerns. Among these are political parties, elections, political action committees (PACs), interest groups, and the mass media. Students examine the historical evolution of the U.S. party system, the functions and structures of political parties, and the effects they have on the political process. Examination of issues of party reform and of campaign strategies and financing in the electronic age provides students with important perspectives. A study of elections, election laws, and election systems on the national and state levels will help students understand the nature of both party and individual voting behavior. Treatment of the development and the role of PACs in elections, and ideological and demographic differences between the two major parties, as well as third parties, form an important segment of this material.

Students also consider the political roles played by a variety of lobbying and interest groups. Important features of this section include an explanation for why some interests are represented by organized groups while others are not, and the consequences of these differences. They study what interest groups do, how they do it, and how this affects both the political process and public policy.

The media have become a major force in U.S. politics. Students examine the role of the media in the political system. In addition, the impact of the media on public opinion, voter perceptions, campaign strategies, electoral outcomes, agenda development, and the images of officials and candidates are explored by students. Understanding the often symbiotic, and frequently in conflict, relationship between candidates, elected officials, and the media is also important. Students evaluate public opinion polls and conduct a poll of a current issue.

Due Week 9: Wilson Chapter 9 p. 197-229; political party presentation; 3 Current Events

Due Week 10: Wilson Chapter 10 p. 230-263; 3 Current Events; Test Chapters 9 & 10

Due Week 11: Wilson Chapter 11 p. 264-290; 3 Current Events

Due Week 12: Wilson Chapter 12 p. 291-314; 3 Current Events; Unit test (30 mc & 2 fr)

Percentage for AP Exam.....10-20% (4 weeks; Oct-Nov)

## **IV. INSTITUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT (Chapters 13, 14, 15, & 16)**

Students become familiar with the organization and powers, both formal and informal, of the major political institutions in the United States – the Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the federal courts. The functions these institutions perform and do not perform, as well as the powers that they do and do not possess, are covered. Students examine power balances and relationships between these institutions. Students are expected to understand ties between the various branches of national government and political parties, interest groups, the media, and

state and local governments. A study of the conflicting interests and powers of the President and Congress help explain recent and repeated struggles to adopt a national budget.

Due Week 13: Wilson Chapter 13 p. 316-366; 3 Current Events

Due Week 14: Monk p. 18-61, 234-235; 3 Current Events

Due Week 15: Wilson Chapter 14 p. 367-408; 3 Current Events; Mid-Term (60 multiple choice & 4 free-response questions)

Due Week 16: Monk p. 62-88, 201-204, 242-245, 249-252; 3 Current Events

Due Week 17: Wilson Chapter 15 p. 409-422; 3 Current Events

Due Week 18: Wilson Chapter 15 p. 422-436; 3 Current Events; Test Chapter 15

Due Week 19: Wilson Chapter 16 p. 437-445; 3 Current Events

Due Week 20: Monk p. 89-111; 3 Current Events

Due Week 21: Wilson Chapter 16 p. 446-466; court case presentations; 3 Current Events; Unit test (45 multiple choice & 2 free-response questions)

Percentage for AP Exam.....35-45% (9 weeks; Nov-Feb)

## **V. CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES (Chapters 5 & 6)**

An understanding of U.S. politics involves the study of the development of individual rights and liberties and their impact on citizens. Basic to this study is an analysis of the workings of the Supreme Court and an understanding of its most significant decisions [CR 8]. Students examine judicial interpretations of various civil rights and liberties such as freedom of speech, assembly, and expression; the rights of the accused; and the rights of minority groups and women. Students will understand the legal, social, and political evolution following the Supreme Court's decisions regarding racial segregation. Finally, it is students will assess the strengths and weaknesses of Supreme Court decisions as tools of social change.

Due Week 27: Wilson Chapter 5 p. 97-123; 3 Current Events

Due Week 28: Monk p. 126-198, 205-232, 238-241; 3 Current Events

Due Week 29: Wilson Chapter 6 p. 124 – 152; 3 Current Events; Unit test (45 multiple choice & 2 free-response questions)

Percentage for AP Exam.....5-15% (3 weeks; Feb-Mar)

## **VI. PUBLIC POLICY (Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20, & 21)**

Public policy is the result of interactions and dynamics among actors, interest groups, institutions, and processes. The formation of policy agendas, the enactment of public policies by Congress and the President, and the implementation and interpretation of policies by the bureaucracy and the courts are all stages in the policy process with which students become familiar. Students also investigate policy networks, iron triangles, and other forms of policy sub-governments in the domestic and foreign policy areas. The study of these will give students a clear understanding of the impact of federalism, interest groups, parties, economics, economic policy, and elections on policy processes and policy making in the federal context.

Due Week 22: Wilson Chapter 17 p. 468-490; 3 Current Events

Due Week 23: Wilson Chapter 18 p. 491-510; 3 Current Events; Test Chapters 17 & 18

Due Week 24: Wilson Chapter 19 p. 511-528; 3 Current Events

Due Week 25: Wilson Chapter 20 p. 529-558; 3 Current Events; Test Chapters 19 & 20

Due Week 26: Wilson Chapter 21 p. 559- 574; political participation project / observations; 3 Current Events; Unit test (45 multiple choice & 2 free-response questions)

Percentage for AP Exam.....5-15% (5 weeks; Mar-Apr)

## **VII. REVIEW .....(1 week; April-May)**

## **VIII. LIFE AFTER AP: Research project / presentation**

Each year students engage in a final research project through which they have the opportunity to delve deeper into an aspect of the class for greater insight into politics and government. These projects vary in that at times they are assigned, sometimes chosen; sometimes individual, sometimes group. The constant is that they are worth 20% of the second semester grade.

Percentage for AP Exam.....0% (5 weeks; May-June)

## **TESTS and QUIZZES**

Self corrected multiple choice quizzes over previous assigned reading will be administered daily. Teacher corrected chapter quizzes and unit tests will be administered at regular intervals. These will consist of both multiple choice questions and analytical and interpretive free-response (essay) questions. Chapter tests may be multiple choice, free-response, or a combination of the two types of questions.

## **CURRENT EVENTS JOURNAL**

Students are expected keep abreast of what is taking place politically in the United States. We will be discussing these topics frequently in class. It is also required that students maintain a separate spiral notebook as a current events journal. Students will make a minimum of two entries in this journal each week. Each entry should be approximately one page in length and must contain the following information: 1) the date the entry was written, 2) complete source citation in MLA format (URLs must be complete), 3) a description of the current event, 4) your analysis of the political impact of the event, 5) how the event relates to what we know or are learning about government and politics in this class. Students are expected to use major news sources and to use a wide variety of sources. Articles should either be from different dates or be comparisons of reporting of the same event on the same date from different sources. Journals will be collected per the reading and homework calendar. As with the reading journal, no late work will be accepted.

## **GRADING POLICY:**

You will be participating in a number of activities this year including textbook readings, outside readings, book reports, writing, and lots of discussion. Some activities will be graded, others will not. But participation in all activities is required to get an A in this class.

Assignments will be graded with the standard traditional system.

1. Tests, quizzes and finals – 40%
2. Two mini-projects – 10%
3. Current events – 15%
4. Homework, class participation, attendance, materials – 15%
5. Summer Project – 20 %

## **THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT TEST:**

The AP test dates are set by The College Board. The Government and Politics test is on May 03, 2010. The test will be proctored by another person.

The AP United States Government and Politics test takes about 2 hours and a half. The test consists of two sections, which have equal weight. The first part of the exam is a multiple choice section (60 questions). The second, is an essay section. In the essay section, students answer four mandatory questions. Each free question is worth 25 % of the section.

Grades for the tests are sent to you, your chosen college, and your high school sometime in mid-July. Receiving college credit for your performance on the test is determined by two factors: your individual score and your institution's policies in terms of awarding AP credit. Be sure to find this out as soon as possible.

The test is graded on a 5 point scale (percentages vary from year to year), which is as follows:

5	73% - 100%	Extremely well Qualified
4	61% - 72%	Well Qualified
3	45% - 60%	Qualified
2	29% - 44%	Possibly Qualified
1	0% - 28%	No recommendations

The AP Exam does not substitute for the class final. You will take a separate AP final.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS**

Make use of all resources available to you. Check the class website frequently for updates. Read the “tips” and “test taking” pages carefully. Take Cornell notes and review them nightly.

This is a college level class, not a college prep class. You are expected to complete all assigned readings regardless of whether or not we cover the material overtly in class. Since I do not know exactly what will be on the test and, thus, cannot teach to it, the more outside study you complete over the course of the year, the better your probability of scoring well on the exam.

Be certain that you follow the reading and homework calendar carefully. All work is expected on or before the due date. Late work is not accepted except in the case of an excused full day absence. In all other cases including fieldtrips, athletic events, early dismissal, etc., work is expected to be turned in either to me or put in my box in the office prior to the beginning of class.

Nothing detracts from written work as much as a misspelled, misspeled, miss-spelled, misspelled word. The question, “Does spelling count?” is similar to “Do I *always* have to drive on the right side of the road?” “No” is an acceptable answer to both questions, but only for a short time. When professors read essays and papers in college one spelling error brings a smile – bad proofreading. Two errors cause a frown, three absolute disgust, and the conclusion that this student is not college material.

The school’s cheating policy will be strictly enforced. Additionally, students caught cheating will be transferred out of this class and into the regular American Democracy / Economics class.

Politics and issues are constantly changing. Keep up date through the regular reading of newspapers and other periodicals (you will find several on my links page), and regularly watch news programs like “Crossfire” (CNN), the “The News Hour with Lehrer” (PBS), “Nightline” (ABC), “This Week” (ABC), “Meet the Press” (NBC), “Face the Nation” (NBC), Fox News Sunday (FOX), “The O’Reilly Factor”(FOX), etc.

**Attendance** – Attendance to class sessions is mandatory. **Missing or arriving late to class will impact the student’s grade.** Missed work and points cannot be made up except for excused absences. In any case, participation points cannot be made up. It is the student’s responsibility to check with the teacher concerning missed work and to turn it in a timely manner (generally work missed from a one day absence is due the day of the student’s return, with regards to block schedule, whether we have class or not). Students arriving late to class will lose participation points from the day’s grade and their homework will be considered late. Examination questions are derived from course readings, class discussions, and films shown in class. **If you miss class you miss testable material.** Habitual tardiness will result in lower grade and/or detention.

**Readings, Assignments and Classroom Participation** – You will be required to read daily for this course as well as keeping abreast of current political events. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities. Students who fail to participate, have their heads on their desk, attempt to sleep, etc. will lose participation points and/or be sent to the office. This course requires you to develop a time management plan and self-discipline to follow it.

**Advanced Placement  
American Government and Politics  
2010 - 2011**

**If you, the student, understand this syllabus and agree to abide by these guidelines, please sign below:**

**(Print Name)** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Period)** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Sign)** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Date)** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you as parent, have read and understand these guidelines, please sign below:**

**(Print Name)** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Sign)** \_\_\_\_\_

**In an effort to create more efficient communication between Teacher and Parent, please provide a daytime telephone number and an email address where you can be reached:**

**Telephone#** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's E-Mail (please print clearly)** \_\_\_\_\_

Grades are updated on Saturdays and are available on the class website (<http://mrbisson.com>). Your student will be assigned a password within a week which you will need to access the grades page. Grades can also be emailed to you when updated. If you wish to have a grade report emailed to you when updated, please send me an email from the account to which you wish the report sent.