



South Windsor High School  
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**2023 - 2024 COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

<b>Course Name:</b>	AP United States Government and Politics
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Teacher Name(s)	Email	Phone
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**Course Overview:** This AP course is a thorough study of the United States government – its functions, its limitations and advantages, and its future as a government. Philosophical influences, historical experiences, and contemporary ramifications, studied through primary sources, will provide students with an in-depth understanding of our American political philosophy, our role in the world, and our own domestic issues. Independent research, formal term papers and involvement in a national competition on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are course requirements. Extensive summer reading and writing are required.

**Vision of the Successful Student And Core Competencies:** A.P. U.S. Government and Politics is a year-long course designed for students who want the challenge of a college level course. The class is designed around independent research, enriching readings, rigorous writing activities, in-class discussions and debates, and frequent examinations based on the A.P. model of multiple choice and free-response questions. The course requires summer reading and associated work. To that end, the successful student will:

- Understand the historical, philosophical, and ideological background to democracy as it developed in Greece, Rome, and in colonial America. Students will analyze primary documents of the classical period, the Enlightenment, and the new America republic. Students will study democratic theory, classical republicanism, pluralism, and elitism. Purpose, functions, and foundations of government will be addressed.
- Understand the origins and functions of the U.S. Constitution. Students will analyze modern examples of Federalism, and interpret the structure and power of the Constitution. Students will study federalism, checks and balances, the Bill of Rights, and the separation of powers. Further analysis of the amendment process, the sections of the Constitution and founder’s design, and well as the historical changes to the “Living Document” will be addressed.
- Understand the way citizens hold political beliefs about their government and political leaders. Students will analyze the process of political acculturation, of political participation, and of political philosophy. Demographics, political cleavage, and party affiliation will be addressed.
- Understand the evolution of political parties, elections, and interest groups in the United States. Students will examine PACs, the increasing role of money in politics, and the way news is reported to the public. Lobbying, the idea of media bias and understanding the outcome of elections will also be addressed.
- Understand the core political institutions of the national government: the Congress, the presidency (with accompanying bureaucracy), and the federal courts. Students will investigate the relationship

between the branches, the powers they each wield, and their relationship to political parties, interest groups, and the media (their last unit). Specific areas of focus are based upon topical issues: the war in Iraq, the economy, healthcare, the scope of executive power, and the composition of the Supreme Court are examples of current issues addressed.

- Analyze the actors, interests, and processes of policy agendas. Further students will investigate iron triangles, networks, and other sub-governmental organizations in both the domestic and foreign spheres. The hope is that public policy will bring together all of the other units in a meaningful way to inform students of the interplay between branches, interest groups, parties, and individuals in the policy making process. Some areas of study include social policy, economic policy, foreign policy, military policy and environmental policy.
- Understand the development of individual rights and liberties and their continued impact on citizens of the United States. Students will understand the differences between Civil Rights and Liberties interpreted through Supreme Court cases and legal, social, and political action. Precedents, landmark decisions, and the power of the court's actions will be investigated.

Throughout the course students will demonstrate effective literacy skills in reading and writing.

### Materials and Resources to Support Student Learning:

**Textbook:** Wilson, James Q, John J. Dilulio, Meenekshi Bose, and Matthew Levendusky. *American Government: Institutions and Policies.* , 2019. Print.

Students will utilize a number of texts and supplemental readings to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the course. The reading is extensive and correlates to the challenge of the course. In addition, a number of visual graphics, video clips, debates and application activities will enhance students' understandings. There are a number of internet resources available and students are encouraged to purchase an AP review guide such as one published by the Princeton Review or Barron's.

### Evidence of Student Learning:

<b>Assessments</b>	<b>80%</b>	<p>Might include activities that allow students to demonstrate mastery and application of taught concepts and skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance tasks</li> <li>• Quizzes or tests</li> <li>• FRQs</li> <li>• Debates, presentations or speeches</li> <li>• Student products including: websites, podcasts, slideshows, etc.</li> <li>• Essays or other writing tasks</li> <li>• Research tasks</li> <li>• Source analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Learner Tasks</b>	<b>20%</b>	<p>Might include opportunities to practice skills and demonstrate growth such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections and learning logs</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Class notebooks</li> <li>• Feedback to peers</li> <li>• Other class specific practices/tasks</li> </ul>

### **Academic Integrity and Retake Policy**

- Due to the nature of the course, AP Government's Retake, Redo policy is different
- Students will have an opportunity to make test corrections by default, following the unit assessment.
- Students can review answers with their teachers by appointment after school
- Please refer to the Bobcat handbook for the academic integrity code.