



Congratulations, you have been chosen as a student for AP U.S. Government for the 2010-2011 school year. The AP experience raises the standard for academic achievement here at Ridgeway High School. It ultimately sets the pace for a prosperous college experience. You have been deemed as a student of high standards, who is motivated and appreciates the open dialogue and exchange of ideas with the diverse members of A.P. U.S. Government community. I hope that you benefit from this challenging and rigorous educational experience that will help you gain credit or advanced placement towards the college of your choice.

The summer reading/field assignment is as follows:

The Animal Farm (George Orwell)



Please buy a copy of this book and thoroughly read the book throughout the summer. This political and social satire will give you a perception of government in the eyes of both humans and animals. Do not base your summer reading on times when you may have previously read the book; this may result in 4 bad grades starting the 2010-2011 school year. There will be a grade given for the following:

- 1.) Bring the book to class on the first day of school (Classwork/Homework grade)
- 2.) Quiz on characters (Quiz)
- 3.) Test on book after discussion in class (Test)
- 4.) 5-Poems which consist of 3 stanzas (with at least 4 lines per poem (Project)
 - a. - Please choose 5 creative titles for the following content of the poems. The poems do not have to rhyme more than they have to show your analytical reactions to the book.
 - i. The animals reactions in the book
 - ii. The human reactions in the book
 - iii. How the book compares to a democratic society
 - iv. How the book compares to a communist society
 - v. How the book compares to your own world

Tentative Syllabus Overview:

The following information offers a glimpse at the academic journey we will be taking this semester. At the beginning of each six weeks, you will receive a detailed syllabus that gives the specific information needed for that particular grading period. The year ahead will offer academic challenges, but the challenges are all to make you a stronger student.

Course Plan

This course is organized thematically, using the 5 units in the textbook provided for this course.

Six Weeks #1

- *Unit 1: Foundations of American Government*

Six Weeks #2

- *Mass Politics*

Six Weeks #3

- *Governing Institutions*

Six Weeks #4

- *Public Policy*

Six Weeks #5

- *State and Local Government*

Six Weeks #6

- *Review for AP Exam*

Teaching Strategies: The class is divided in a way to reach the audio, visual, and Kinesthetic learners. The teaching strategies range from the following: Indirect teaching, lecture, simulations, role-playing, student-led instruction, and Concept Attainment. Students are responsible for keeping up with events in the news, which provide concrete connections for each lesson.

Assignments

Tests: There will be at least one comprehensive test per six week in this course that will be in the format of parts of the A.P. Test with 60 multiple choice questions (including 4 essay questions to enhance your skills in the format of the test.

Quizzes: Throughout the course of the semester, there will be both announced and unannounced quizzes. Always be prepared!!! Quiz grades will also consist of DBQ's (Document Based Questions) which are responses to analytical free-response questions done on a weekly/biweekly basis.

Homework: The homework for this course will consist of summarizing two newspaper articles every week from either a local or national newspaper source.

Projects: Various types of projects will be assigned throughout the course of each six weeks. The projects will consist of a portfolio check, oral presentations, debates, and some group assignments. Written assignments can be presented as a screenplay, poem, short story, newspaper article, essay, news brief, diary, or any other form you can think of that will interest you in finishing the assignment. Students create presidential magazines, political habitations, and support politicians during elections by making mock campaigns.

Practice Free Response: Write answers to College Board analytical Free Response Questions (biweekly)

Examining Polls: Examine public opinion polls

Mock Trial: Examine the judicial system by way of participating in a trial

Using Graphs, Maps, and Charts:

Students are tested on their understanding of quantitative and qualitative information (maps and graphs) at regular intervals throughout the six weeks.

Vocabulary: (Quiz Grade)

Each chapter covers a specific set of vocabulary words for which you will be responsible on both your class assignments as well as on the A.P exam. Go to every chapter assessment and define the words labeled under key terms; this will count as an aspect of your quiz grade. You will take an announced or unannounced vocabulary quiz at various times throughout the six weeks, so please keep up with the schedule and be prepared.

RCA's (Random Cool Activities) (Quiz)

A random cool activity is another name for pop quizzes (Tricky, huh). I give these as an incentive for you to do the assigned readings, retain info from discussions. A great amount of your work will be in class discussion; therefore you have to come to class prepared. These questions will not be designed to trick you, but to see how well you have read and retained material inside and outside of class. RCA's will be recorded on a 20 point scale-but you will receive a 10 for just attending class and writing your name on a blank sheet of paper, even if you don't know the answer. There will be one RCA per week (that will add up to be at least a 50-provided you don't know any of the answers, but at the most a 100 for the six weeks). The info from the RCA's may come from class discussions, readings, guest speaker's presentations, or movies.

Street Knowledge Summary Journal: (Homework Grade)

In an attempt to learn more about current events, each week a student is to summarize one intriguing, educational political articles from the Commercial Appeal (local) and one from the New York Times or the Washington Post (national) that will be collected in your portfolio (total of 10 articles for the six weeks). Summaries should be one page, **typed** and should show your comprehension, grasp, interpretation, and/or synthesis about the news clip. **The news clippings should be a print out from the internet....no news clippings (not your hand writing, but the actual date from the paper or the website).** (A format of the summary will be provided)

Projects: (Project Grade)

- ✓ 3 per semester
- ✓ Portfolio (your portfolio should be your study guide in preparation for the A.P exam)
- Portfolios are to be maintained each six-weeks and will be checked at the end of each six-weeks and the end of the semester (keep all of your work)
- Divider headings should be as follows: **Daily Agenda** (Bellwork, Objectives, Schedule, Thought for the week), **Class Notes** (handouts), **Chapter Outlines** (chapter reviews), **Vocabulary, Journals, Technology Study, Field Experience, Graded Tests/Quizzes**
- Make sure you date everything and please stay organized throughout the entire six weeks (Don' try and organize your folder at the end of the six weeks)
- ✓ Movie/Book Review
 - Students will be given a movie and book list every six weeks that will be reflective of the topics that we are covering during that period. Each student is to choose one movie or book to rent and review in its entirety.
 - Paper (different lengths and styles); 1 research paper

Journals: (Classwork Grade)

Writing journals in a U.S Government class is a method of promoting literacy and analytical thinking. In addition, it will give you the practices for the four, twenty-five minute discussion questions on your A.P exam. Journals are due at the end of each six weeks. By the end of the six weeks, each student should have the total number of journal entries required for their level. Journal topics will be given to you throughout the six weeks during the intricate, yet amusing session called **DBQ (Discussion Based Questions)** where I will give you 25 minutes each to write two different topics and we will discuss the topics on the next day in class (must provide short outline for each). It is your responsibility to keep up with these journals for the six-weeks portfolio check.

Chapter Outlines/MindMaps (Classwork)

There are a total of 21 chapters in our textbook. You will create an outline for each chapter that will be due every week. I will tell you in advance, what outline(s) should be given per week. There will be an opportunity to work on these outlines in class, but please use your time wisely this year. The following is a tentative schedule of outlines:

- 5 Chapter outlines are due for the 1st six weeks
- 6 Chapter outlines for the 2nd six weeks
- 6 Chapter outlines are due for 3rd six weeks
- 4 Chapter outlines are due for 4th six weeks
- 1 Chapter is due for the 5th six weeks

Handouts: (Classwork)

Throughout the course of the semester, you may get some handouts that will be counted as classwork grades.

Test: Each six weeks you will have at least one test comprised of 60 multiple choice questions, with the time limit of 45 minutes (a reflection of the A.P exam). In the 5th six weeks, I will give you more study material and you will take some actual released exams in the preparation for the test.

Field Experience hours: (Test) (2 hours of field experience are required for this course each six weeks) you may spend time at the Civil Rights Museum, courts, watch a political movie, historic park, trolley, riverboat, juvenile court system, (if you come up with a place...be sure to get it approved by me first). Provide a one page, typed, document illustrating the completion of this assignment.

Technology Study: (Test) Identify and review a minimum of 5 websites related to your particular content area every six weeks. Summarize the content of each site using at least 10 sentences (two paragraphs)...must be typed, and describe how it may help you in preparing for your exam.

Class Participation: I expect for all students to come to class everyday prepared to learn. Participation includes active listening and engaging in and facilitating discussion. Ground rules: I do not expect inspired things to come out of your mouth everyday. Sometimes a simple observation and even a basic question is enough to get a discussion started. I also don't want anyone to monopolize the conversation out of fear of not participating enough. Discussions involve listening too, so.....

- Always try to listen carefully to the comments of others.
- Try to be a facilitator—ask others what they think or to explain their views before you talk about your own.
- Ask questions when you don't understand someone's comments or perspective; keep going until you explain their view back to them in your own words.
- Use "I" statements, such as "I think..." rather than stating your personal opinion as general fact. The same goes for statements like "Everybody knows..." or "It's just common sense."
- If you challenge someone's statements, do so with courtesy, good logic, and evidence.
- Never ridicule others' beliefs, even if you strongly disagree.
- Be prepared to disagree strongly, yet keep the discussion going. You can often learn the most from people with whom you disagree.

Random Book/Bellwork Checks (Class Participation Grade)

There will be random book and bellwork checks. If you are always organized and prepared for my class, this will be a "100". If not, it will always be a "0."

*Questions for thought (Quiz Grade): Each six-weeks you will be given questions for thought to prepare you for document based questions...please work on these questions as soon as you get them because you will never know when I am going to use them. Due at the end of the six-weeks

**Study Guides: (Classwork) You will receive study guides to enhance your knowledge on various topics