

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Rio Americano High School

Justin Mason, Ed.D

jumason@sanjuan.edu

AP U.S. Government and Politics serves as an in-depth university level course, which covers the United States and California State governments. The purpose of the course is to prepare students for their role as citizens in a constitutional republic, as well as to prepare students for the Advanced Placement Exam in the spring. The course examines the philosophic beginnings of democracy, the structure of the Constitution and institutions of government, political beliefs and behaviors, civil rights and civil liberties, and creation of public policy. A strong emphasis will be placed on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the community and in the United States.

Course Materials:

- Textbook
- U.S. Constitution and Amendments
- Federalist Papers
- Landmark decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court (selected cases)

Grading:

Grades are configured up a cumulative point basis. The total points earned will be measured as a percentage of the total points possible. Grades are determined by applying the earned percentage to the following scale:

A	93 – 100	C	73 – 77
A-	90 – 92	C-	70 – 72
B+	88 – 89	D+	68 – 69
B	83 – 87	D	63 – 67
B-	80 – 82	D-	60 – 62
C+	78 – 79	F	0 – 59

Points are based upon regularly scheduled homework, in-class essays, formal assessments (tests and quizzes), a research paper, group presentations, and class participation. **Roughly 40% of the grade is based upon participation.** Many assignments and discussions are based upon political topics and require students to express their opinions and to support their opinions. Daily participation points are determined by students: preparedness to contribute, building on course materials and others opinions, respectfully agreeing and disagreeing, and asking questions.

Make-Up / Extra Credit:

Make up work is only accepted for excused absences. Students will have the equal number of days to make up their work, as they were absent. There is no extra credit.

Classroom Policies

There is no food allowed in the classroom. Electronic devices (phones, ipod, etc.) are not allowed during class and their use will result in a detention and a loss of participation points.

COURSE OUTLINE

Foundations of Government

- Types / underpinnings of government
 - U.S. Constitution / Bill of Rights
 - U.S. Political Culture
- Reading 1: 1-12
Reading 2: 12-23

Federalism

- Centralist vs. Decentralist
 - Types and forms
 - Contemporary issues
- Reading 3: 54-67
Reading 3b: 68-77

Legislative Branch

- Structure & function
 - Lawmaking process
 - Federal Budget Process
- Reading 4: 273-287
Reading 5: 287-302

Executive Branch

- Structure & function
 - Role of the President
 - Electoral College
- Reading 6: 304-317
Reading 7: 317-331

Media and Policy

- Role & Function
 - Consolidation
 - Issues
- Reading 8: 249-263

Judicial Branch

- Structure & function
- Landmark decisions

- Civil Rights / Civil Liberties
- Reading 9: 362-374
Reading 10: 374-384

Federal Bureaucracy

- Structure & function
 - History
 - Policy making
- Reading 11: 339-349
Reading 12: 349-359

MID-TERM EXAM

Foreign Policy

- US foreign policy history
 - Diplomacy
- Reading 13: 511-524
Reading 14: 524-535

Political Parties

- Role and function
 - Elections
 - Third Parties
- Reading 15: 160-170

Special Interest Groups

- Role & function
 - Lobbying
 - Campaign finance
- Reading 16: 170-180
Reading 17: 130-141
Reading 18: 147-158

State & Local Government

- California Gov
- Initiative / Recall
- Contemporary Issues

FINAL EXAM