



**AP U.S. Government & Politics Syllabus  
CHS Social Studies Department**

**Contact Information:** Parents may contact me by phone, email, or visiting the school.

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**CCSD Vision Statement:** The Chillicothe City School District will provide tomorrow's leaders with a high quality education by developing high expectations and positive personal relationships among students, staff, and community members.

**CCSD Mission Statement:** The Chillicothe City School District empowers students to learn, to lead, and to serve.

**Course Description and Prerequisite(s) from Course Handbook:**

**AP United States Government and Politics – 242**

**State Course #:** 159950

Prerequisites: No final course grade lower than a B in United States History or AP U.S. History as well as any Language Arts course. Students not meeting the “B” minimum prerequisite must have the instructor's approval. Once accepted into this AP course each student will sign a written contract signifying acceptance of course requirements and responsibilities.

Elective Course

Grade: 10-12

Weighted Grade

Credit: 1

Course Description:

This year-long advanced course will give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States: upon successful completion it serves as a replacement for United States Government (242/159950]. AP U.S. Government and Politics provides a college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. Students will study U.S. foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals to gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behaviors. They will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, they will complete a political science research or applied civics project.

Students are expected to take and pay for the AP exam. If the student fails to take the exam, a 4.5 point grading scale will be applied to the course. The course is designed to

prepare students to perform well on the examination. A student who earns a 3 or above on the exam will be granted college credit at most colleges and universities throughout the United States.

**Learning Targets:** Defined below for clarity are the Unit Titles, Big Ideas of every Unit taught during this course, and the Essential Questions to be answered to better understand the Big Ideas. A student's ability to grasp and answer the Essential Questions will define whether or not he or she adequately learns and can apply the skills found in Big Ideas. This will ultimately define whether or not a student scores well on assessments administered for this course.

- **1st Quarter**

- **Unit I Title: Foundations of American Democracy**

- **Big Idea #1:** I can explain how a balance between governmental power and individual rights has been a hallmark of American political development. (AP Topics 1.1 & 1.2)
      - *Essential Question #1:* What are the democratic ideals on which the U.S. government is based?
      - *Essential Question #2:* How are democratic ideals reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution?
      - *Essential Question #3:* What models of representative democracy are visible in the U.S. government structure?
    - **Big Idea #2:** I can explain how the Constitution emerged from the debate about the weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation as a blueprint for limited government. (AP Topics 1.3 & 1.4)
      - *Essential Question #1:* What was the Articles of Confederation and what weaknesses arose under it?
      - *Essential Question #2:* Who were the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists and what were the key stances of each?
      - *Essential Question #3:* How are the Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on government and democracy reflected in U.S. founding documents?
      - *Essential Question #4:* What was the relationship between the Articles of Confederation and the debate over granting power to the federal government?
    - **Big Idea #3:** I can explain the impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention. (AP Topic 1.5)
      - *Essential Question #1:* What specific compromises were made at the Constitutional Convention?
      - *Essential Question #2:* How is Article V of the Constitution a result of debate and compromise?
      - *Essential Question #3:* What current constitutional issues relate to the debate and compromise at the Constitutional Convention?

- **Unit II Title: Principles of American Government**
  - **Big Idea #1:** I can describe and cite examples of the principles of American Government. (AP Topic 1.6)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What are separation of powers and checks and balances?
    - *Essential Question #2:* What argument does Federalist 51 make regarding separation of powers and checks and balances?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How have checks and balances been used to prevent abuse of power?
  - **Big Idea #2:** I can describe how federalism reflects the dynamic distribution of power between the national and state governments. (AP Topics 1.7 & 1.9)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What is federalism and why is it an essential governmental principle?
    - *Essential Question #2:* How do the exclusive and concurrent powers of the national and state governments help explain the balance of power between the two levels?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How does federalism meet the needs of a changing society?
    - *Essential Question #4:* How does federalism impact the policy-making process?
  - **Big Idea #3:** I can explain how federalism has been interpreted differently over time. (AP Topic 1.8)
    - *Essential Question #1:* Which aspects of the Constitution are at the heart of the debate over federalism?
    - *Essential Question #2:* How did the Supreme Court decision in *McCulloch v. Maryland* impact federalism?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How did the Supreme Court decision in *U.S. v. Lopez* impact federalism?
  
- **Unit III Title: Political Ideologies and Beliefs**
  - **Big Idea #1:** I can describe how demographics, political culture and social change impact political socialization and attitudes. (AP Topic 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What is the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government?
    - *Essential Question #2:* How do cultural factors such as family, media and globalization influence political attitudes and socialization?
    - *Essential Question #3:* What impact do generational and life cycles have on an individual's political attitudes?
    - *Essential Question #4:* How do major political events impact the political attitudes and socialization of individuals?

- **Big Idea #2:** I can I can describe how public opinion is measured. (AP Topics 4.5 & 4.6)
  - *Essential Question #1:* What are the elements of a scientific poll and what type of polls are used in politics?
  - *Essential Question #2:* What is public opinion and how does it impact elections?
  - *Essential Question #3:* How are the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data analyzed?
- **Big Idea #3:** I can describe how political ideologies shape policy debates and choices in American policies. (AP Topics 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 & 4.10)
  - *Essential Question #1:* What are the ideologies of the two major parties that shape policy debates?
  - *Essential Question #2:* How does political culture influence the formation and goals of public policy over time?
  - *Essential Question #3:* What different ideologies exist about the role of government regulation of the marketplace?
  - *Essential Question #4:* What are the different theories about handling monetary and fiscal policies?
  - *Essential Question #5:* How do differing ideologies vary on the role of the government in addressing social issues?
- **2nd Quarter**
  - **Unit IV: Political Participation/Linkage Institutions**
    - **Big Idea #1:** I can describe the voting rights protections in the US Constitution and in legislation. (AP Topics 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4)
      - *Essential Question #1:* What are the legal protections found in federal legislation?
      - *Essential Question #2:* What factors can be used to predict and influence voter turnout and choice in America?
      - *Essential Question #3:* What are various “linkage” institutions that allow individuals to communicate with policy-makers?
      - *Essential Questions #4:* What is the impact of political parties on the electorate and on government? How and why do political parties change and adapt?
    - **Big Idea #2:** I can explain political parties, interest groups and other various actors influence public policy and outcomes. (AP Topics 5.5, 5.6, 5.7)
      - *Essential Question #1:* How do structural barriers impact third-party and independent candidate success?
      - *Essential Question #2:* What are the benefits and potential problems associated with interest groups on elections and policy-making? How do interest groups differ in power and influence?

- *Essential Question #3:* What are the various political “actors” that influence public policy? How do they provide opportunities for increased participation and engagement?
  - **Big Idea #3:** I can explain how different processes work in both presidential and congressional elections, and in modern campaigns. I can also explain federal policies on campaign and elections. (AP Topics 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What are the processes that impact a US presidential election?
    - *Essential Question #2:* What are the processes that impact US congressional elections?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How do campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process? What are the benefits and drawbacks of a modern campaign?
    - *Essential Question #4:* What specific legislation and case law pertains to campaign finance as it pertains to political competition and free speech?
  - **Big Idea #4:** I can explain how various forms of media provide citizens with political information, influence political participation and link citizen to government. (AP Topics 5.12, 5.13)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What is the media’s role as a linkage institution?
    - *Essential Question #2:* How have advancements in technology profoundly influenced how citizens acquire political information and engage in the political process?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How does the diverse choices of media potentially lead to media bias and partisanship of the news? How does media impact the level of political knowledge among the citizenry?
- **Unit V Title: Congress**
  - **Big Idea #1:** I can explain how the republican ideal in the U.S. is manifested in the structure and operation of the legislative branch. (AP Topic 2.1)
    - *Essential Question #1:* How does the structure of Congress represent the republican ideal?
    - *Essential Question #2:* What differences exist between the House and Senate in terms of representation and term length?
    - *Essential Question #3:* What enumerated and implied powers is Congress given in the Constitution?
  - **Big Idea #2:** I can explain how the structure, powers and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policy-making process. (AP Topic 2.2)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What is the purpose and impact of Congressional Committees?

- *Essential Question #2:* What differences exist between the House and Senate in terms of debate?
- *Essential Question #3:* What is the role of the Speaker of the House, President Pro Tempore and party leadership in Congress?
- *Essential Question #4:* How do terms of pork-barrel legislation and logrolling affect lawmaking in Congress?
- *Essential Question #5:* What considerations must Congress make about our nation's budget?
- **Big Idea #3:** I can explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship and divided government. (AP Topic 2.3)
  - *Essential Question #1:* How do ideological divisions lead to congressional gridlock and partisan voting?
  - *Essential Question #2:* What is the difference between “trustee,” “delegate,” and “politico” role concepts?
  - *Essential Question #3:* How have Gerrymandering, redistricting and unequal representation negatively impacted Congress?
  - *Essential Question #4:* How did the Supreme Court address concerns about unequal representation in Baker v. Carr and Shaw v. Reno?

- **MID-TERM EXAM**

- **3rd Quarter**

- **Unit VI Title: Presidency**

- **Big Idea #1:** I can explain the roles and powers of the president. (AP Topic 2.4)
  - *Essential Question #1:* What are the roles of the president in implementing policy agenda?
  - *Essential Question #2:* What are the formal powers of the president?
  - *Essential Question #3:* What are the informal and implied powers of the president?
- **Big Idea #2:** I can explain how the President's agenda can create tension and confrontation with Congress. (AP Topic 2.5)
  - *Essential Question #1:* How do presidential appointments lead to conflict with the Senate?
  - *Essential Question #2:* Why do judicial appointments lead to conflict with the Senate?
  - *Essential Question #3:* Why do policy initiatives and executive orders often lead to conflict with congressional agenda?
- **Big Idea #3:** I can explain how the presidency has been enhanced beyond its expressed constitutional powers. (AP Topics 2.6 & 2.7)

- *Essential Question #1:* What are the justifications for a single executive as set out in Federalist 70?
  - *Essential Question #2:* How do the 22nd Amendment and War Powers Act demonstrate changing presidential roles?
  - *Essential Question #3:* How have different presidents interpreted their role in office and usage of powers? How does this debate continue today?
  - *Essential Question #4:* How has communication technology changed the president's relationship with the American people?
- **Unit VII Title: The Judiciary and Federal Courts**
- **Big Idea #1:** I can describe the role and extension of power to the Judicial Branch. (AP Topic 2.8)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What are the structure, role and powers of the Judicial Branch?
    - *Essential Question #2:* What is the importance of judicial review as defined by Marbury v. Madison?
    - *Essential Question #3:* What was the importance of Federalist 78 in the creation of Article III?
  - **Big Idea #2:** I can debate the legitimacy of the Supreme Court's power. (AP Topics 2.9 & 2.10)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What role do precedents and stare decisis play in judicial decision making?
    - *Essential Question #2:* What leads to the Supreme Court establishing new or rejecting existing precedents?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How do Congress and the President address controversial or unpopular court decisions?
    - *Essential Question #4:* What are judicial activism and judicial restraint? Why are they debated?
  - **Big Idea #3:** I can explain the ways the Judicial Branch can be checked. (AP Topic 2.11)
    - *Essential Question #1:* How can Congress check the Supreme Court through legislation and confirmations?
    - *Essential Question #2:* How can Constitutional Amendments limit the power of the Supreme Court?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How can the president and states limit the power of the Supreme Court?
- **Unit VIII Title: The Bureaucracy**
- **Big Idea #1:** I can explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government. (AP Topic 2.12)
    - *Essential Question #1:* How is the federal bureaucracy organized? What constitutes the structure of the bureaucracy? Give examples of bureaucratic departments and/or agencies.

- *Essential Question #2:* What are the various tasks performed by departments, agencies, commissions, and government corporations?
    - *Essential Question #3:* What reforms have impacted the effectiveness of the bureaucracy, and in what ways?
  - **Big Idea #2:** I can explain how the federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rule-making and implementation, and carries out the responsibilities of the federal government. (AP Topic 2.13 & 2.14)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What discretionary and rule-making authority to implement policy is given to bureaucratic agencies? Give a specific example to illustrate this authority.
    - *Essential Question #2:* How does Congress use its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch? List and explain specific methods.
    - *Essential Question #3:* How does the president ensure that agencies and departments carry out their responsibilities? What challenges does a president face with respect to this?
  - **Big Idea #3:** I can explain the extent to which governmental branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable. (AP Topic 2.15)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What formal and informal powers of the president are used to maintain bureaucratic accountability?
    - *Essential Question #2:* What formal and informal powers of Congress are used to maintain bureaucratic accountability?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How do the courts ensure bureaucratic accountability?
- **4th Quarter**
    - **Unit IX Title: Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties**
      - **Big Idea #1:** explain how the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights balances the power of the government with individual rights. (AP Topics 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 & 3.4)
        - *Essential Question #1:* What rights and civil liberties are protected by the Bill of Rights?
        - *Essential Question #2:* How have the free exercise clause and Establishment Clause been interpreted over time?
        - *Essential Question #3:* How has freedom of speech been interpreted in terms of balancing order and individual freedom?
        - *Essential Question #4:* How has freedom of the press and prior restraint been handled by the Court.
      - **Big Idea #2:** I can explain how Supreme Court decisions regarding the Bill of Rights reflects a commitment to individual liberty. (AP Topics 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7)
        - *Essential Question #1:* How have Court rulings on the Second Amendment reflected individual liberty?



- *Essential Question #2:* How have Court rulings on the 4th Amendment balanced individual liberty with maintaining public order and safety?
  - *Essential Question #3:* How have Court rulings impacted state death penalty statutes?
  - *Essential Question #4:* What is selective incorporation and how has it been used?
- **Big Idea #3:** I can explain how states are limited by the due process clause from infringing upon individual rights. (AP Topic 3.8 & 3.9)
  - *Essential Question #1:* What is the Miranda rule and how is it applied in the U.S.?
  - *Essential Question #2:* What are Rights of the Accused and how have they been applied in the U.S.?
  - *Essential Question #3:* How did the Court's ruling in Gideon v. Wainwright help define the Sixth Amendment?
  - *Essential Question #4:* What is the exclusionary rule and how does it protect citizens?
  - *Essential Question #5:* What are the origins of the right to privacy and how was it applied in Roe v. Wade?
- **Unit X: Social Movements and Civil Rights**
  - **Big Idea #1:** I can describe the impact of the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause. (AP Topic 3.10 & 3.11)
    - *Essential Question #1:* What is the definition of civil rights and are they impacted by the equal protection clause?
    - *Essential Question #2:* How has the equal protection clause supported and motivated social movements?
    - *Essential Question #3:* How did the government respond to social movements with the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act?
    - *Essential Question #4:* How is Title IX an example of the government's response to a social movement?
  - **Big Idea #2:** I can explain how the Supreme Court has both allowed the restriction of and protected the civil rights of citizens. (AP Topic 3.12 & 3.13)
    - *Essential Question #1:* How were civil rights restricted under the "separate, but equal" doctrine?
    - *Essential Question #2:* What was the impact of Brown v. Board of Education?
    - *Essential Question #3:* What Court rulings have been made regarding majority-minority districting?
    - *Essential Question #4:* What is affirmative action and how was it been debated by the Supreme Court?
- **Unit XI: Comprehensive Review and Testing Strategies**

- AP CollegeBoard Exam Preparation
- **Unit XII: Post AP CollegeBoard Test - Project-Based Instruction**
  - You are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP U.S. Government and Politics course framework that culminates in a presentation of findings.
    - The project will be based on a student choice from a teacher-approved list of research project ideas. I will provide you with the opportunity to engage in a sustained, real-world activity that will deepen your understanding of course content and help you develop better disciplinary practices.
    - Project Guidelines: A relevant project applies course concepts to real-world political issues, processes, institutions, and policy making.
    - For example, students might investigate a question by collecting and analyzing data; participate in a relevant service learning or civic event; or develop a sustained, applied investigation about local issues. Students would then communicate their findings or experiences in a way that conveys or demonstrates their understanding of course content.
    - I will assess student performance on the project.
    - The following are important considerations. The project will:
      - Require students to connect course concepts to real-world issues.
      - Require students to demonstrate disciplinary practices.
      - Require students to share/communicate their findings in an authentic way (e.g., presentation, article, speech, brochure, multimedia, podcast)
      - The project may: Be undertaken by individuals or in small groups as determined by the instructor.
- **END OF COURSE EXAM**

**Course Materials:**

- Google Chromebook
- 3-ring binder (2-inch)

**Textbook:**

- United States Government & Politics, David Wolfford, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2019

**Supplemental Textbook(s):**

- Suggested: 5 Steps to a 5: AP U.S. Government & Politics 2019  
Available on Amazon: (ISBN: 978-1260123357)

**Electronic Resources:**

- School-Issued Chromebook, Google Classroom, Other resources shared in class.

**Course Expectations:**

- AP Government students will be expected to engage both the course material and real-world political happenings at a high level in order to apply their knowledge in a meaningful way. Students will be presented with and expected to analyze Supreme Court decisions, foundational documents and other college-level readings to better understand not only the content, but more importantly, the impact of citizens on our government and the government on our citizens. In order to be successful, students must have willingness to engage the material outside the classroom, participate fully during in-class activities and strive for excellent attendance and organization. While political discussions are bound to and should happen, absolute respect for the opinion of others will be demanded by the instructor at all times. Academic integrity, as outlined in our school's handbook is non-negotiable.

**Grading:**

Unit Exams	50%
Assessments (Including: Quizzes, Essays, Labs, and Projects)	30%
Class work/Homework	20%

- Each nine week's grade comprises 20% of a student's final grade.
- The Mid-Term Exam and End of Course Exam each comprise 10% of a student's final grade.

**Grading Scale:**

The grading scale for Chillicothe High School can be found in the student handbook or online at <http://www.chillicothe.k12.oh.us/1/Content2/studenthandbook>.

**Late Work:** Late work will be subject to the Board-adopted policy on assignments that are submitted late (to be reviewed in class).

- Regardless of the absence type (excused, unexcused, OSS, etc.), students are expected to make up work and be held accountable for learning all material they missed.
- Any student who is absent from school will receive one (1) additional day for every day he/she missed to make up his/her work for full credit (100%).
- Any student who exceeds the allotted time to turn in an assignment for full credit may still submit work late for partial credit.
  - Any student who turns in work up to 1 week late must at least be given the opportunity to earn 75% on that assignment.
  - Any student who turns in work between 1 and 2 weeks late must at least be given the opportunity to earn 60% on that assignment.
- The end of the 9 weeks is the cut off point for teachers to accept late work from students for full or partial credit unless the teacher decides to give the student an incomplete for the 9 weeks due to extenuating circumstances.

**Performance Based Section: Writing**  
**Assignments/Exams/Presentations/Technology**

One or more of the End of Unit Exams may be Performance Based. According to the Ohio Department of Education, “Performance Based Assessments (PBA) provides authentic ways for students to demonstrate and apply their understanding of the content and skills within the standards. The performance based assessments will provide formative and summative information to inform instructional decision-making and help students move forward on their trajectory of learning.” Some examples of Performance Based Assessments include but are not limited to portfolios, experiments, group projects, demonstrations, essays, and presentations.

**CHS AP U.S. Government Course Syllabus**

After you have reviewed the preceding packet of information with your parent(s) or guardian(s), please sign this sheet and return it to me so that I can verify you understand what I expect out of each and every one of my students.

Student Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_