William Howard Taft High School

Advanced Placement Government & Politics (APGOPO)

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**Course Objective**:

*Advanced Placement Government & Politics (APGOPO)* provides the opportunity for advanced work and rigorous study of major themes, periods, people, and concepts found in United States government and politics. The course is college-level and requires students to take greater responsibility for their learning. In addition, the course is vertically aligned with next year’s Advanced Placement (AP) United States History class and future International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP) classes. Furthermore, students will learn a variety of reading strategies, critical thinking skills, begin preparation for the SAT, and practice expository writing to prepare them for: college, employment, and/or career, and to be active participants in a democratic republic. Lastly, students will be engaged in service learning projects to meet the Illinois Civics Requirement and take the Illinois Public Law exam.

*The classroom will be a safe place to explore new ideas and question those you do not understand. My goals are to make every student feel comfortable in this class to share their opinions, be respected by their classmates, and help you grow as a student and as an individual. In addition, I adhere to the IB Mission Statement and incorporate the IB Learner Profile in my classroom. Lastly, the AP exam is non-partisan, meaning it will not ask you to agree for or against a specific political party, ideology, and perspective. The exam will be testing your knowledge about U.S. Government and Politics and your political science skills. However, in class we will have RESPECTFUL discussions and dialogue about current events in politics.*

**Class Supplies**:

* (you will receive a textbook to take home)
* A single notebook (college or wide) used specifically for this class to keep you organized or college ruled paper
* 3 ring binder- any size to keep notebook or loose leaf paper organized, make sure has pockets
* Writing utensils-pen, pencil, highlighters
* Notecards
* 1.5 inch rings to hold notecards together, buy 25

**Classroom Expectations**:

I expect that YOU will:

* Come to class ON TIME
* Think critically
* Read the book, complete assignments, and study
* Be prepared for class with required supplies and homework everyday
* Respect me and your classmates
* Ask questions
* Participate

You can expect that I will:

* Respect you
* Educate you
* Return your work in a timely manner
* Follow Taft’s policies
* Update Gradebook with assignments and grades in a timely manner
* Put extra effort in assisting you learn and meet you potential

**Remember, reading is MUST and you will be expected to read everyday. Also, expect to spend 1-2 hours a day for this class**. I will teach you specific strategies on how to improve as a reader using the Reading Apprenticeship framework. If I give you a reading assignment, it is in your best interest to read the assignment in its entirety and use an effective note taking strategy. While reading, take your time and make note of anything you did not understand. To assist in mastering vocabulary for this class, you will create notecards. I will provide you with a reading calendar on my website. The reading calendar will serve as a way to keep you on track with the course. The reading calendar may not be aligned perfectly with the content we are covering in class for a variety reasons. For example, I will also be teaching you the skills of a political scientists which require time and practice.

**Primary and Secondary sources:**

Throughout the year we will be examining both primary and secondary sources to understand government and politics. Primary sources allow individuals the opportunity to have materials to study. Secondary sources are an individual’s interpretations and perspectives about primary sources. The work of previous individuals in history, political theorists, and political scientists is important in providing students of politics, a narrative or perspective on what happened in the past and a way to make predictions about the future. These interpretations can be challenged with reasonable arguments supported by evidence. We will be using both primary and secondary sources to study and write about government and politics.

Primary Source Analysis

You will learn OPCVL as your primary source analysis strategy.

Secondary Source Analysis

You will learn to pay specific attention to author, main ideas, details, and interpretation afford by the political scientist and the evidence and explanation they use to tell a particular accountant or narrative or claim or observation about government and politics.

**WRITING is also a must in this class.** You will write in cursive or print your written assignments because the written portion of the exam is completed in pen.

**Writing:**

As a result of this course you will be able to formulate and defend a thesis (argument) with relevant evidence and explanation in an essay format. We will practice writing throughout the year. There will be two types of writing you will learn and master in this class. First, you will learn how to write for the AP Government and Politics exam because I want you to pass the exam. Second, you will learn how to write for future history classes, the SAT, and college.

The following will be the APGOPO writing format:

* Use the question in the response
* Specific and concise answers
* Use evidence and examples
* Use signal words to denote explanation, reasoning, addition, compare/contrast, etc…,

The following is the essay format we will be using in class for expository writing:

Introductory Paragraph

* 2-3 sentences leading to your thesis
* thesis will be at the end of the paragraph and will include:

 -an argument that answers the prompt

Body paragraphs

* Depending on the question and time you will try to have at least three body paragraphs
* Point sentence-first sentence will tell the reader what your point is in the paragraph and it must relate to your thesis

Evidence/Examples-Be specific and relevant

* Explanation/Analysis-explain significance (so what?)
* Use transition/signal words to let the reader know the point you are trying to make. For example, with cause and effect you can use the signal words: therefore, as a result
* Repeat format as necessary
* Link sentence to your argument and next paragraph

Conclusion Paragraph

* 3-4 sentences
* MUST include the thesis (rephrased) in its entirety
* You will not state any new information or arguments

**Advanced Placement Government & Politics Exam-May 10th, 2017 8:00am☺**

The exam consists of:

Multiple Choice 60 questions 45 minutes

Free Response Questions 4 questions with sub-questions 1 hour and 40 minutes

The exam is only 2 hours 25 minutes.

**Grading**:

 The standard grading scale at Taft High School is as follows:

100-90=A 89-80=B 79-70=C 69-60=D 59-0=F

Your grade will be made up of the following:

Learning tasks/Assignments-30%

Quizzes-30%

Exams-40%

There are two categories of assignments: formative and summative. The summative assignment is a task that will assess specific knowledge and skills. The formative assignments will be assessing that particular knowledge and skills in preparation for the summative assignment. I will be giving you feedback on the formative assignments so that you are prepared for the summative assignment. For example, the summative assignment for this course is the AP Exam. The formative assignments will be everything we do in the class leading up to the AP Exam.

**Learning Tasks/Assignments(formatives)-**this includes activities that are designed to give you the opportunity to practice a new skill or content and for me or your peers to give you feedback. Learning tasks are key to mastering the content and skills. Learning tasks are practice before the game. Michael Jordan was the best player because he practiced at his highest potential. **Assignments**-this can include participation, class work, and homework. You will be informed when you are being grade for participation. Participation will include whole and small group discussion. Class work will include assignments which you will demonstrate your mastery of content and skills. Homework will be assigned as formatives so that you can receive feedback to assist you in learning. Homework is due at the beginning of the class period on the day that it is due. Homework will include reading, worksheets, short responses, essays, research projects, and other projects. If you did not do the homework because you “didn’t understand it,” be prepared to stay after school to get help if you want credit. If you were absent, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to call someone in the class or email me or see me after school in room **207** to find out what you missed. Any work missed (including work from multiple days of absence) is due on the day you return to school. YOU MUST submit a late assignment report will be completed and signed by your parent/guardian. NO LATE WORK will be accepted without this report. The form will be located online. \*mitigating factors will disqualify lose of points

**Quizzes(formatives)-** Quizzes are designed to assess a small segment of content knowledge and assess skills (Were you paying attention? Do you understand the main ideas? Are you doing the assigned coursework? Do I need to re-teach a concept/skill?). Quizzes will be multiple choice, short response questions. Most quizzes will be announced and but a few may will be unannounced to ensure that you are reading and so that I can determine your knowledge and skills.

**Exams(summative)-**Exams will be given to assess larger portions of content knowledge. They will cover more than one chapter of the textbook and may be a combination of multiple choice and/or short answer questions All exams will be announced ahead of time. Research and service learning projects will be included in this category.

Exams and quizzes will be adjusted for equity and access through various ways.

If you have any concern about your grade feel free to see me after school or schedule an appointment. You may also email me with any questions. I will respond in a timely manner.

PROMOTION POLICY (04-0128-P01)

Students’ success in earning credits toward promotion shall be determined by attendance in class as well as by performance on academic assignments. Therefore, students who have unexcused absences in 20% or more of the classes in a particular course during the period for which a unit of credit is earned shall not pass the course and shall receive no credit towards promotion.

 **Cheating and Plagiarism** is not tolerated. They will result in a zero grade for the assignment and/or result in disciplinary action. If you don’t understand an assignment come to me instead of copying from a classmate. When a test is handed out I expect there to be no talking until all of the tests are in and keep your eyes on your own paper.

**Extra Credit** – No extra credit. I do encourage students to rewrite assignments and formatives. I will add points onto your original score if you show improvement.

I understand that “stuff happens”. If you have a special issue that you think I need to know about, please bring it to my attention as soon as you can so I can make the appropriate modifications/accommodations.

**Graduation Requirements**

**US Constitution & Public Law Exam**-\*You need to pass the Public Law Exam in order to graduate high school. Most sophomores take the Public Law Exam. However, you will be in Advanced Placement United States History next year and as a result take it freshmen year.

**Illinois Civics Requirement-**You will complete a series or multiple, service learning projects throughout the year. Service learning projects will be used to learn content and skills. For example, we will identify issues in your school, community, city, etc.., that you feel need to be addressed. There will be a number of different projects over the course of the year. Most students will complete this in junior or senior year, however, you will be IB Diploma classes.

**CONTACT FORM**

**AP Government & Politics**

**(Return this form only)**

**Dear Parent/Guardian**,

Your child’s first assignment will be to print the syllabus and have you sign this form (100pts). Please print your name and provide me with a working phone number(s) and an email. In addition, I request a signature to verify that you have seen/read the syllabus with your child. Please be aware that I will update Grade book in a timely manner and some assignments may not be entered immediately. For example, projects and writing assignments take longer to grade. In addition, I do accept late work. However, your child will be required to complete a late assignment report and you will need to sign the report (on the class website). I look forward to working with you this year. If you have any questions/comments please email me at lplewa@cps.edu. Also you can visit my class website at: <http://mrplewa.weebly.com>

On the website I will post assignments, announcements, various documents, check for student understanding, and much more.

Thank you.

Mr. Plewa

Print Student Name:

Student Signature:

Print Parent/Guardian Name:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Phone number(s) (best number(s) to reach you at):

Parent/Guardian Email: