INTRODUCTION:
Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum is designed to give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. Students will study general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and examine specific examples. The AP Government course requires students to learn facts and concepts and understand typical political processes. The course will require students to master historical and analytic skills, including, chronological and spatial thinking, historical research and interpretation. Students will evaluate viewpoints presented through major print and electronic media, understand statistical data and analyze trends related to significant political events. Emphasis is placed on applying problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, interpreting graphs and tables, organizing information, evaluating information, and communicating orally and in writing. The course aims to help the student to participate effectively and democratically in the American political society.

TEACHING STRATEGIES
This is college level course and, as such, the teaching strategies used focus on making students responsible for some of their own learning. The course will cover a large amount of content. The study of American Government is based in history but is really a contemporary political science course. Therefore, it is essential that students remain aware of what is happening in the world. It is suggested that regular reading of newspapers and news magazines as well as the regular viewing of news broadcasts be maintained throughout the course. There will not be enough class time to cover all the required content so students must complete all homework, projects, readings, and any other out of class assignments in order to be successful.
Throughout the course we will concentrate on the following:

- Strategies for answering free-response questions
- Frequent practice answering timed free-response questions
- Analysis and comparison of primary source documents
- Strategies for analyzing and interpreting tables, charts, graphs, and cartoons
- Frequent practice answering multiple choice and free response questions based on tables, charts, graphs, and cartoons
- Key vocabulary terms
- Lecture/power point presentations
- Student-based projects
- The ability to make and defend arguments
- The ability to synthesize political science data

Text
Other Materials
Other readings will be required, both in and outside of class. These will include articles from current newspapers and periodicals as well as historical documents and writing. News footage and documentaries that may contribute to the current event aspect of the course will also be used.

Grading and Course Requirements
Grades are based primarily on test scores, much like a typical college course at the undergraduate level. Students will be asked and expected to complete a variety of assignments which may not directly impact their grade with points earned, but are very important to their overall understanding of the material. The grades for this course will be determined by multiple choice tests accounting for 45%, analytical free response essays accounting for 45%, and class assignments and projects for the remaining 10% of the total. Chapter tests will consist of one day of objective multiple choice questions and one day of free response questions, each structured in the style of the AP exam. The unit exams are a requirement of the AP Government and Politics course.
In-class and after school reviews are held prior to the AP Exam. In addition, many students participate in informal study group review sessions. Any student who elects to take the AP exam for the AP course in which she/he is enrolled shall be exempted from the course's final exam if the student's cumulative grade point average for the course is an 80% or better at the end of the 4th marking period.

UNIT I: CONSTITUTIONAL UNDERPINNINGS
Readings: American Government, Chapter 2 (The Constitution) and Chapter 3 (Federalism), additional reading as assigned
Objectives
Students will analyze the Constitutional underpinnings, the establishment of the Constitution with particular attention to federalism and separation of powers. Students will focus on the ideological and philosophical traditions on which the framers drew.
(Constitution) Understand the influence of federalism and separation of powers on our constitutional system. Explain the evolving nature of federalism and separation of powers within a judicial framework. Understand varying interpretations of the constitution and their philosophical basis. (Federalist Papers)
Themes
Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution; Separation of powers; Federalism; Theories of democratic government
Topics
The problem of liberty; The Constitutional Convention; The plans and compromise; Constitution and Democracy; The Constitution and Liberty; Motives of the Framers; Constitutional Reform; Governmental Structure; The Meaning of Federalism; Federal-State relations; Federal Aid and control; Congress and Federalism
UNIT II: CIVIL RIGHT AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Readings: *American Government*, Chapter 5 (Civil Liberties) and Chapter 6 (Civil Rights); additional reading as assigned

Objectives
Students will study the development and defense issues involving civil rights, civil liberties, and their impact on citizens. Understand the development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation. Knowledge of key decisions of the Supreme Court; Marbury v Madison, McCullough v. Maryland. Learn and understand the First Amendment Freedoms. (First Amendment Cyber-Tribune) Examine the substantive rights and liberties. Know the responsibilities of citizenship. Understand the impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties. Explore the rights of the accused. Research minority-group and women's rights. Examine controversies that have resulted over the changing interpretations of civil rights (Plessy v. Ferguson, Brown v. Board of Ed, Miranda v. Arizona, etc.). Understand Judicial Activism v. Judicial Restraint and Warren v. Rehnquist courts.

Themes
The development of civil liberties and civil rights by Judicial interpretation; Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties; The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties

Topics
Civil Liberties; Interpreting and Applying the First Amendment; What is Speech?; Church and State; Crime and Due Process; the Black Predicament; Campaign in the Courts; Campaign in Congress; Women and Equal Rights; Affirmative Action

UNIT III: POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS

Readings: *American Government*, Chapter 4 (American Political Culture) and Chapter 7 (Public Opinion); additional reading as assigned

Objectives
Students will understand how political beliefs and behaviors evolve and the processes by which they are transmitted. Understand differing political ideologies and beliefs. Determine why U.S. citizens hold certain beliefs about politics. Explore how families, schools, religion and the media act to perpetuate or change beliefs.

Themes
Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders; Processes by which citizens learn about politics; the nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion; The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life; Factors which influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors

Topics
Political Culture; Comparing American with other Nations; Sources of Political Culture; Mistrust of Government; Political Efficacy; political Tolerance; Public Opinion; Political Socialization: The Family; Cleavages in Public Opinion; Political Ideology; Political Elites, Opinion and Public Policy
UNIT IV: POLITICAL PARTIES, INTEREST GROUPS, AND MASS MEDIA

Readings: *American Government*, Chapter 11 (Interest Groups) and Chapter 12 (The Media); additional reading as assigned

Objectives
Students will analyze interest groups with regard to the mechanisms that allow citizens to organize and communicate their interests and concerns. Students will focus is on the historical evolution of the media and interest groups and the effects they have on the political process. Explain the activities of interest groups and their effects on the political process. Investigate the role of the media as a major force in U.S. politics.

Themes
Political parties and elections: Functions, Organization, Development, Effects on the political process, Electoral laws and systems; Interest groups, including political action committees (PACs), The range of interests represented, The activities of interest groups, the effects of interest groups on the political process, the unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process; The mass media; The functions and structures of the media; The impacts of media on politics

Topics
Interest groups; Kinds and Organization; Interest groups and social movements; Funds for Interest Groups; Problem of Bias; Activities of Interest Groups; Regulating Interest Groups; the Media; Journalism in American Political History; the Structure of the Media; Rules governing the Media; Media Bias; Government and the News

UNIT V: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Readings: *American Government*, Chapter 8 (Political Participation), Chapter 9 (Political Parties) and Chapter 10 (Elections and Campaigns); additional reading as assigned

Objectives
Students will analyze political parties with regard to the mechanisms that allow citizens to organize and communicate their interests and concerns. Students will focus is on the historical evolution of the US party system, the functions and structure of political parties, and the effects they have on the political process. Explore the historical evolution of the U.S. party system. Compare the functions and structures of political parties, and their effects on the political process.

Themes
Political parties and elections: Functions, Organization, Development, Effects on the political process, Electoral laws and systems; Interest groups, including political action committees (PACs), The range of interests represented, The activities of interest groups, the effects of interest groups on the political process, The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process; The mass media; The functions and structures of the media; The impacts of media on politics
UNIT VI: INSTITUTIONS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

***NOTE – This unit represents about 40% of AP Test questions and will be broken into 4 sub-units for more thorough coverage.

Readings: American Government, Chapter 13 (Congress), Chapter 14 (The Presidency), Chapter 15 (The Bureaucracy) and Chapter 16 (The Judiciary); additional reading as assigned

Objectives
Students will become familiar with the Institutions of National Government, the organization and powers of the Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the federal courts. Understand both the formal and informal power arrangements of these institutions. Explain the formal and informal links between these institutions. Explain the selection and confirmation of federal judges. Understand the election and nomination process.

Themes
The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power; Relationships among these four institutions and varying balances of power; Linkages between institutions and the following: Public opinion and voters, Interest groups, Political parties, The media, Subnational governments

Topics
Congress versus Parliament; The Evolution of Congress; Who is Congress?; member representation; Ideology and Civility in Congress; Congressional Organization: Parties and Caucuses; Congressional Committees; Congressional staffing and Specialized offices, How a Bill Becomes a Law; Power and Perks; Presidents and Prime Ministers; Evolution of the Presidency; powers of the Presidency; Office of the Presidency; Presidential Character; The Power to Persuade, Executive Privilege; Presidential Programs; The Transition; The Bureaucracy; Growth of the Bureaucracy; Federal Bureaucracy; Congressional Oversight; Reforming the Bureaucracy; The Judiciary; Development of the Federal Court System; The Structure of the Federal Courts; Jurisdiction of the Federal Courts; The Supreme Court; Powers of the Federal Courts; Checks on Judicial power
UNIT VII: PUBLIC POLICY

Readings: American Government, Chapter 17 (The Policy-Making Process), Chapter 18 (Economic Policy), Chapter 19 (Social Welfare), Chapter 20 (Foreign and Military Policy), and Chapter 21 (Environmental Policy); additional reading as assigned

Objectives
Students will focus on understanding the Policy-Making Process, multiple processes by which policy is made in a federal context, as well as the kinds of policies that result. Understand the formation of policy agendas. Understand the multiple processes by which policy is made in a federal context. Explain the role of categorical and block grants in the federal system. Investigate the role of institutions in the enactment of policy. Explore agenda setting. Explain linkages between policy processes and the various institutions involved in policy making.

Theme
The formation of policy agendas; The role of institutions in the enactment of policy; The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation; Linkages between policy processes and the following: Political institutions and federalism, Political parties, Interest groups, Public opinion, Elections, Policy networks

Topics
The Policy making Process; Decision making; Majoritarian Politics; Interest Group Politics; Client Politics; Entrepreneurial Politics; Business Regulations; Perceptions, Beliefs, Interests, and Values; Economic Policy; Politics of Taxing and Spending; Economic Theories and Political Need; Machinery of Economic Policy Making; Spending Money; The Budget; Social Welfare; Welfare Politics; Foreign and military Policy; Constitution and Legal Context; The Machinery of Foreign Policy; Foreign policy and Public Opinion; Foreign Policy Elites; Use of Military Force; Defense Budget; Structure of defense Decision-Making; Environmental Policy; Global Warming; Acid Rain; Agricultural Pesticides; Environmental Uncertainties

UNIT VIII: AP REVIEW AND SELECTED TOPICS

Final dates to be determined

In-class exercise: AP released exam multiple choice with immediate discussion and feedback regarding “why this answer?” This will establish a diagnostic baseline for ongoing AP exam review.
60 Question released M/C
4 Free Response Questions