

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

Welcome! My name is Michelle Dudley, and I am your child's AP United States Government and Politics instructor. I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you, and to let you know what my procedures are when working with your child.

AP® United States Government and Politics is an extensive study of the formal and informal structures of government and the processes of the American political system, with an emphasis on policy-making and implementation. This is a year-long class designed to prepare students for the **College Board**® AP Exam in May. If your child does well on this exam, he or she may receive college credit for this course. (Please see attached course syllabus). Students who do well in AP classes are also given priority consideration for admissions to many universities. Because of this, I am especially dedicated to working with your child to ensure he or she successfully passes this course. I hope I can enlist your commitment as well.

Every student with no school-oriented financial obligations will have a textbook and reader assigned to him or her, and will also be expected to fulfill assignments generated on the text's web access page. This course will be taught as a college course, and as such, additional work outside of class is expected from time to time. There will also be projects assigned that will require time out of class to complete. Occasionally, clips from mature themed movies may be shown (for example, Fahrenheit 9/11 is rated R). If you do not want your child to view these movie clips, please indicate this accordingly on the attached Parental Consent form.

Approximately once a week (usually on Thursdays), a progress report will be given to the student with grades based on cumulative points. I provide this to update the student on his or her status in my class and they will get a progress report every week. If the student is not caught up, they have until that Wednesday to turn in any missing work. Work turned in after that date will not be accepted for a grade, and students have only one week to make-up a missed test. Northeast High School also utilizes **PCS Portal**, which allows parents to check on their child's grades and attendance daily via the Internet. If you are interested in using this option, please contact the guidance office. It is my belief that students should be provided with the best opportunity for success. **This is my commitment to you and to your child.** I am hoping for your cooperation in this endeavor. For that reason, I am asking that you sign the bottom of this letter and return it to me with your child. I am looking forward to a very successful school year.

After the first grading period, your child will have the option to choose to have his/her six-weeks grade based solely on tests, quizzes, writing assignments and projects, or to have it based on all those components as well as chapter worksheets. I believe that your child should be introduced to the style of learning utilized by most colleges and universities in which testing and research papers determine the grade for a course, but also realize that for other students, the structured traditional method is preferred. The first six-weeks will adapt them to the course and will allow them to determine which option they wish to choose. At the beginning of each subsequent six-weeks, they may choose either option (collegiate style/traditional style), with parental approval below. Each option is applicable for one six-weeks, and must be decided upon at the beginning of each new grading period.

If you need to contact me at anytime, please feel free to do so, either at school or at home.

My phone numbers are:

School # - 570-3138, ext. 1042

Home # - 894-8570

If you call at home to leave a message, please include a phone number and please indicate the latest time I may return your call.

My school e-mail address is: **dudleym@pcsb.org**

Sincerely,

Michelle T. Dudley

AP® United States Government and Politics Course Syllabus

AP® United States Government and Politics is an extensive study of the formal and informal structures of government and the processes of the American political system, with an emphasis on policy-making and implementation. This course is designed to prepare students for the AP Exam.

Text

Edwards, George C. III, Martin P. Wattenberg, and Robert L. Lineberry.
Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy, 14th ed. New York: Longman, 2009.

Supplemental Text

Woll, Peter. *American Government: Readings and Cases*, 17th ed. New York: Longman, 2008.
Lamb, Pamela K. *5 Steps to a 5: AP U.S. Government & Politics, 2010-2011ed.*, McGraw-Hill Education, 2010.

Other Materials

Assigned and used in class: articles from current newspapers; news magazines; news footage and documentaries; excerpts from the *Federalist Papers*; numerous websites.

Course Plan – 1st Semester

Unit I: Foundations of American Government - Content Goals

Students should understand the doctrines and historical background to the Constitution; key principles, such as federalism and separation of powers; the ideological and philosophical underpinnings of American government; and theories informing interpretations of the Constitution including democratic theory, republicanism, pluralism and elitism.

Unit II: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights - Content Goals

Students should understand the institutional guarantees to political and civil rights granted under the Constitution; the rights conferred by the American government system; key Supreme Court cases and arguments regarding constitutional protections; the impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on civil rights at the state level; and the impact of judicial decisions on American society.

Unit III: Political Parties and the Public - Content Goals

Students should understand the mechanisms of transmitting interests to government action, including interest groups, political action committees, and mass media; the role of media coverage and the press on elections and government actions the different historical and ideological beliefs of political parties; demographic groups in the U.S. and their political beliefs; and ways of understanding political beliefs and behavior.

Unit IV: Campaigning and Elections - Content Goals

Students should become familiar with the workings of the electoral process; the role of money and interest groups on campaigns; the laws governing elections; and the way individual campaigns operate on the local, state, and national level.

Course Plan – 2nd Semester

Unit V: Institutions of National Government: The Congress - Content Goals

Students should understand the workings of the legislative process; the functions and powers of Congress; the relationship to other branches of government under the Constitution; and the change and evolution of congressional powers as a result of specific events in American history.

Unit VI: Institutions of National Government: Presidency, Bureaucracy, and Federal Budget - Content Goals

Students should understand the functions and powers of the executive branch; its relationship to other branches of government under the Constitution; the change and evolution of the executive branch and the bureaucracy as a result of specific events in American history; the relationship between the national government and state and local government bureaucracies; and the role of the bureaucracy in formulating the federal budget.

Unit VII: Institutions of National Government: The Judiciary - Content Goals

Students should understand the workings of the judicial process; the functions and powers of the federal court system; the relationship of the Supreme Court to other branches of government under the Constitution; and the change and evolution of the judiciary as a result of specific events in American history.

Unit VIII: Public Policy – Content Goals

Students should understand the major policy areas and debates in American Government today. This unit covers several areas of public policy, including:

- Foreign and Defense Policy
- Health Care
- Economic Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Social Welfare Policy

Please detach this back sheet and return to Mrs. Dudley.

AP U.S. Government and Politics – Parental Consent

I. Signature verifying general understanding of procedures and consent.

Student Name _____

(Please Print)

_____ I have read the above letter and understand what is expected of my child and me.

_____ **I am uncomfortable with some of your procedures**, and because of this, I would like you to call me at: _____

Parent Signature _____

II. Media Consent.

_____ I give my child permission to watch mature-themed movie/news clips as pertinent to the course study.

_____ I do not wish for my child to view mature-themed movie/news clips unless specifically approved by me on a case by case basis prior to viewing.

Parent Signature _____

III. Grading Option.

_____ I give my child permission to determine which option(collegiate style/traditional style) he/she chooses to be graded on at the beginning of each new six-weeks grading period.

_____ I want my child's grade throughout this course to be determined utilizing only the traditional high school grading method.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____