

“One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors”
-Plato

AP American Government

Mr Staiano

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AP American Government is a rigorous, college-level course and is treated as such in both the method in which it is taught and in the expectations of the students. Students must have received either an 'A' or a 'B' in AP US History or have permission from the instructor in order to be enrolled in the course.

Students must be committed to learning the material of the course and to maintaining a high-level academic environment inside the classroom as opposed to any promise of a weighted grade or college credit that may result from the class.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement American Government exam. This course is not a comprehensive examination of the government of the United States. Rather, this course will introduce students to the study of political science, American political ideology, the development of our political system, our democratic institutions, and civil rights and civil liberties. The following five major topics will be covered: (1) The constitutional underpinnings of American government, (2) the processes of political socialization, (3) the institutions of government and public policy development, (4) civil rights and civil liberties, and (5) public policy.

The primary text for this course is Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy; 12th Edition by Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry (Pearson, 2006). Supplementary materials include Perspectives on American Politics; 4th Edition by Lasser (Houghton Mifflin, 2004) and other readings made available by the instructor.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. SUMMER ASSIGNMENT: There is a summer assignment due on the first day of the fall semester. Failure to turn in this assignment will result in the student being dropped from the course.

B. ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION: It is extremely important that all students arrive to each class session with all necessary materials, on time, and prepared for the lesson. Because so much information will be covered this semester, poor attendance will affect your ability to perform well in this class and will negatively affect your grade. Participation in class discussions and group activities is mandatory. You are responsible for getting notes you miss due to absences.

C. HOMEWORK AND QUIZZES: Homework will consist mainly of reading assignments. Nearly every class will begin with a short quiz on the previous night's reading or on the previous day's lesson. It is important that you keep up with the reading assignments and arrive to class on time. There are no make-up quizzes. Due dates are the responsibility of the student; no late work will be accepted.

D. UNIT EXAMS: Each unit will conclude with an exam. There will be four unit exams. Each unit exam consists of a multiple-choice portion and a free-response portion. Because of the length and nature of the unit exams, each exam will cover two consecutive class periods. . If you miss an exam, you have until the next exam to make it up or receive a zero. Exams are to be made up during support or by arrangement with the instructor.

E. PROJECTS: There may be various projects assigned throughout the semester.

F. STAIANOLAND: The instructor maintains a website where due dates, assignments, and other important information can be found. As well, students can access their current grades as well as link to Staianopalooza. Students are encouraged to regularly visit <http://www.staianoland.com>.

G. STAIANOPALOOZA: The class maintains an online learning community where course notes and exam questions may be posted and where student discussions may take place. The site is a valuable tool for students wishing to excel in the course. Students are encouraged to regularly visit <http://staianopalooza.ning.com>

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III. GRADING POLICY:

The assignment of grades will be based on the following scale:

89-100% = A

79-89% = B

69-79% = C

59-69% = D

0-58% = F

IV. EXTRA CREDIT:

There *may* be opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester.

V. CLASSROOM RULES:

In addition to the rules and regulations of AHS and LVUSD,

1. The student will arrive to class on time and will be seated by the time the bell rings. There are no excused tardies.

2. The student will arrive to class prepared with textbook, pen or pencil, notebook, homework, and other necessary materials every day.

3. The student will respect the rights and properties of others. "Others" include teachers, students, and any classroom observers, guests, or visitors. "Rights and Properties" include personal belongings and personal space, as well the freedoms to speak, think, and learn in a comfortable environment. Infringements on the rights or properties of others will result in verbal warnings, calls home, and/or disciplinary referrals, depending on the infringements.

4. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of due dates for assignments and exams. No late work will be accepted.

5. Missed exams are to be made up during support periods. Failure to make up an exam by the next unit exam will result in a zero for that exam.

6. Cell phones, ipods, etc. are absolutely not allowed in class.

VI. CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM:

Cheating shows a lack of respect for yourself as well as your classmates and your teacher. Take pride in your work. Do not claim the hard work and well-thought ideas of others for your own. There will be a zero tolerance policy for cheating; those who are caught cheating or plagiarizing the work of others will not receive credit for the assignment or exam, and a call home will be made. The policies of Agoura High School will be strictly enforced. If you keep up with the reading assignments, participate in class discussions, and complete the assigned work honestly, there will not be any need to cheat. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, cheating on tests, copying homework, plagiarizing research papers, etc.

VII. AP EXAM:

While it is not mandatory that you take the AP exam in May, it should be understood that passing the exam is one of the goals of this course. As such, there will be practice exams, review sessions, and strategy discussions all geared to help you prepare for the exam. Students in this course have had much success on the AP exam, with a passing rate well above 90%. This course will more than prepare you for success on the AP exam provided you stay focused and committed to learning.

VIII. SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. This includes jokes, innuendos, etc. Sexual harassment is against the law and any perceived instances will be reported to the administration of AHS.