**Advanced Placement U.S. Government & Politics**

**Syllabus**

**Mrs. Kline/ Room 801**

**850-916-4100**

**Course Description: A.P. U.S. Government & Politics** provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the framework & operation of American government and politics. Taught at the college level, this course has extensive reading and writing requirements. The following objectives will be covered during this semester:

1. Students will develop analytical perspectives for interpreting, understanding and explaining political events and public policy in this country.
2. Students will become familiar with the various institutions, interest groups, & ideologies that constitute U.S. politics.
3. Students will develop a clear understanding of the framework & amendments of the U.S. Constitution.
4. This course will examine in depth the legislative, judicial & executive branches of government.
5. Students will assess the influences of public opinion and the media on the electoral and legislative processes.
6. Students will gain a greater understanding of civil rights, civil liberties, and many of the most influential rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court.
7. Students will examine the history of American political parties and discuss the process of political campaigns and elections.
8. This class will discuss the course of American foreign policy.
9. This course will prepare students for the A.P. U.S. Government & Politics exam. Students who score a 3 or higher on the exam earn college credit at many colleges and universities.

**Textbooks:**

Schmidt, Steffan W. et al. *American Government and Politics Today.* 7th Edition.

Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2013.

Woll, Peter. *American Government: Readings and Cases.* 15th Edition. New York:

Pearson Longman, 2004.

**Grading:**

Grades will be assessed as follows:

Homework: 10%

Quizzes: 30%

Classroom Assignments & Activities: 20%

Tests, Projects, and Policy Paper: 40%

LATE WORK will be accepted one day after the due date with a 20% penalty. Anything turned in later than one day past the due date will receive a “0.”

\*The Political Campaign & Election Project is critical part of this course. Students will form political parties and collaborate to produce portfolios of their work. Portfolio assignments will be research based, and cover specific topics relevant to the chapter readings. These topics include: public opinion, the media, interest groups, political parties, campaign strategies, campaign finance, polling, presidential primaries, and the general election.

**Requirements & Expectations:**

Advanced Placement Courses are college level classes. The amount of material covered is dense and extensive, and there are simply not enough hours to go over everything in the classroom. Therefore, it is imperative that you complete all of the assigned readings by their due dates. I will lecture on the more difficult concepts, but if you are confused about anything, please do not hesitate to talk to me! If there is time at the end of the year, we will work specifically on test prep, but I highly recommend that students planning to take the AP exams invest in one of the many test prep books available and work on them throughout the year. In many cases, your chapter tests will include questions pulled directly from previous A.P. exams. By the exam date, you should be comfortable with the format. So please do not stress! It will not be an easy course, but it’s going to be FUN, and in the end, you are going to be more knowledgeable and civically engaged than most of the people you know!

**Materials for the Course:**

1. Textbooks (unless we have a classroom set.)
2. Paper, pens (black or blue & red)

3. Large spiral notebook

4. Pocket folder with brads

5. Flash drive

**Behavioral Expectations:**

1. **Be considerate!** This is a political science course, and in order for us to have effective political discourse, it is imperative that everyone use his or her manners. Civil debate is great for understanding political concepts, but inconsiderate comments are not only hurtful, they are counterproductive. Take the time to listen before you speak. Do not interrupt others while they are speaking, and raise your hand if you have pertinent comments to add or questions to ask during lectures. All G.B.H.S. rules of conduct apply in this classroom.
2. **Be on time!** Classes will begin promptly when the bell rings. Students will be referred to student services if they are late more than twice.
3. **Be prepared!** Bring your supplies to every class, and make sure that you are current on all your readings. We cannot discuss topics in class if you have not prepped beforehand.
4. **Cell phones must be locked up in the secure lockers during class time!** Students will be reminded every day before class begins to secure phones. Students who do not comply will be referred to student services.

**Textbook Costs:**

*American Government* $120.00

*American Government: Readings & Cases* $35.00