Methodology:

Students can expect a variety of classroom activities from me. I want to do things in the classroom that the students will enjoy participating in while learning at the same time. I combine traditional and contemporary teaching methods which include debates, simulations, cartoon interpretations, and audio visual presentations. My goal is to provide something stimulating for every student at some point in time. This class in very interactive.

Grading Scale:

A    95-100%
A-   90-94%
B+   87-89%
B    83-86%
B-   80-82%
C+   77-79%
C    73-76%
C-   70-72%
D+   67-69%
D    63-66%
D-   60-62%
E    0-59%

I desire and anticipate success for every student in this classroom. I recognize the difficulty that some students have with traditional assessment (testing). I assess students in a variety of different ways including numerous written and oral assessments.

Attendance:

2 tardies equal one excused absence.
13 tardies could result in a lower grade.
The purpose of AP U.S. Government and Politics is to give students an analytical perspective on government and politics in the United States. This course includes both the study of general concepts used to interpret U.S. politics and the analysis of specific examples. It also requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute U.S. politics. Students examine a variety of theoretical perspectives and explanations for various behaviors and their outcomes. In addition to the text, each unit includes reading and interpreting relevant primary documents and national current events. Each unit culminates with a multiple choice section and at least one free response question. Both the multiple choice and the free response questions require students to analyze and interpret major topics from the unit.

Text Book:  

Supplemental Reading:  
*Point-Counterpoint*, Levine, 7th ed.  
*Classic Ideas and Current Issues in American Government*, DiIulio  

Charts and Graphs found in *American Government: Continuity and Change*, O'Connor and Sabato

Other Resources: *New York Times*, current periodicals, state newspapers and C-SPAN

Goals: Students successfully completing this course will:  
- Know important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics  
- Understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the components of political behavior, the principles used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures)  
- Are able to analyze and interpret data relevant to the U.S. government and politics

**Unit Outline**

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Unit 1 Foundations of Government:
Students examine how the U.S. originated; delving into the framers’ philosophical differences and how they resolved those differences, eventually arriving at how federalism, the separation of powers and the Bill of Rights evolved. Students identify how the constitution has addressed certain civil rights issues.
This unit includes:
1. The development of a republican government.
2. The process for establishing a decentralized process of governing.
3. An examination of the division of power between the state and federal government, analyzing the federal court decisions that established the constitution as the supreme law of the land.

Major Topics:
Introduction to the Political Theory
Articles of Confederation
Constitutional Convention
The Constitution
Federalist and Anti-Federalists
Federalist Papers
Amendments
Federalism
Court Cases Defining Federalism
Modern Federalism

Free Response:
1. Identify and explain how the framers were able to compromise on the following issues:
   • Slavery
   • Selection of the president

2. Explain how the Constitution has adopted to the following challenges:
   • Voting qualifications
   • Discrimination

Supplemental Resources:
Readings: *American Polity: “Democracy in America”*
“Federalist #51”

Charts: Race and Ethnicity, War in Iraq, Checks and Balances, Distribution of Power, Major Federalism Cases
Unit 2 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Students examine the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth Amendments and how they protect citizens. Students identify how civil rights may be expanded through the passage of new legislation or a constitutional amendment. Students analyze and discuss examples of civil rights legislation as well as restrictions that have been placed on civil rights through legislative action.
This unit includes:
Civil rights’ legislation
Definition of Civil Liberties
Constitutional amendments

Major Topics:
Amendment 1
Amendment 4
Amendment 5
Amendment 6
Rights of Accused
Privacy Issues
Civil Rights Act of 1964
Race and Ethnicity
Gender
Affirmative Action

Free Response:
1. Select one of the following Supreme Court decisions and use it to explain what it demonstrates about the relationship between the state and the individual in the United States:
   - Gideon v. Wainwright
   - Texas v. Johnson
   - Brown v. Board of Education

Supplemental Resources:
Readings: Point Counterpoint: “In Fighting a War on Terrorism”
“Is the United States Acting within Reasonable Limits to Maintain its Civil Liberties?”


Unit 3 Public Opinion, Media, Political Parties
Students explore the development of political culture, examining how beliefs and behaviors are established by the social demographics of society. Students define political participation and how it is expanded beyond simple voting patterns. Students analyze why citizens participate, and in what context, and how their political differences are formed.
This unit includes:
1. The identification of beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders.
2. Processes by which citizens learn about politics.
3. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion.
4. The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate politically.
5. Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors.
6. Interest group development outlining the range of their effects on the political process, and the unique role of PACS.
7. The functions and structures of mass media as it impacts politics.

**Major Topics:**
- Public Opinion
- Political Ideology
- Media
- Media and Politics
- Political Parties

**Free Response:**
1. Public opinion and polling affect politicians, politics and policy. Identify and explain one example of a possible effect of public opinion on politicians, politics and policy.

2. Explain the process of political socialization and cite five major influences on one’s political socialization.

**Supplemental Resources:**
- *American Polity:* “Reinventing Democrats”

- Charts: Political Socialization and Other Factors Influence Opinion, American Party History at a Glance, Press Conferences

**Unit 4 Campaigns and Elections**
Becoming participating citizens is at the foundation of students understanding the party process. Students analyze how effective suffrage is a fundamental principle of a democracy and how the political party provides the access. Students trace the development of parties, the campaign road to Election Day and the overwhelming financial structures that have infiltrated the political process are examined. Students scrutinize the two-party system and the significance of the development of the third party.

This unit includes:
1. The functions, development and organization of political parties.
2. The electoral process.
3. Campaign financing.
4. Parties’ impact on the political process.
5. Rationale behind voting behavior.

Supplemental Resources:
Point-Counterpoint: “Do Big Corporations Control America?”
American Polity: “Why Americans Still Don’t Vote?”

Charts: Electoral College Results, Why People Don’t Vote?, Expenditures by PACs in 2004, 2004 Election Results

Major Topics:
Campaigning
Campaign Finance
Election Process
Presidential Elections
Presidential Elections (1960-1980)
Voting Behavior

Free Response:
1. Although most states use some form of primary election system to select party candidates, the major political parties were initially opposed to the adoption of this process. Why would this be the case? In addition, specifically indicate why the Democratic Party of California opposed the State’s blanket primary system.

2. Explain why a presidential candidate for the nomination of the Democratic or Republican Party has to take more extreme policy positions (Democrat more liberal and Republican more conservative) to get the party’s nomination than he would take in the general election campaign.

Unit 5 Congress
Students examine how Article 1 of the Constitution delegates formal and informal legislative powers to the halls of Congress. Students identify how this institution balances its power with the executive and judicial branches of government, an intricate balance that evolves and changes over time. Students examine how the issue of a divided government promotes a process that often can lead from legislative gridlock to true non-partisanship in dealing with numerous policy issues, including how to establish a national budget.

This unit includes:
1. The powers delegated to Congress.
2. The make-up of the current House and Senate.
3. An analysis of how Congress and the President undertake the arduous task of
developing an annual budget.

Major Topics:
Introduction to Congress
Powers of Congress
Duties of Congress
Congressional Elections
Political Parties
Legislative Process
How a Bill Becomes a Law
Mock Congress
Politics of Legislation
Congressional Reforms
Current Congress
Current Legislative Outlook

Free Response:
1. Legislative strategies are often used to kill or delay a passage of a bill through Congress. Identify three legislative strategies and explain how each can kill or delay the passage of a bill through Congress.

Supplemental Resources:
Classic Ideas and Current Issues in American Government: "Policy Making in Congress"

Tables: Table 7.1, 7.2, Organization, Committees, Day in the Life of Congress, How Bill becomes a Law

Unit 6 Presidency, Bureaucracy, and Federal Budget
Students examine how the first Constitution neglected this branch, but the second Constitution zeroed in on establishing a leader who would have to work with Congress in perpetuating a democratic society. Students learn that the President is given few distinctive formal powers but, over time, has established effective informal powers in managing what has become a huge bureaucracy. As the country has grown, presidential powers have evolved.
This unit includes:
1. Formal and informal executive powers.
2. How the federal bureaucracy functions.
3. How the executive branch fits into the budget development process.
4. How the executive branch balances its power with the judicial branch.
5. Leadership qualities of a president.

Major Topics:
Presidential Powers
Organization of the Presidency
Responsibilities of the President
Formal Powers of the President
Informal Powers of the President
Federal Budget
Budget Activity
Organization of the Bureaucracy
Implementation/Regulation

Free Response:
1. Explain how the President attempts to influence agencies to pursue policy goals.
2. Explain why some political scientists refer to the bureaucracy as the fourth branch of government.

Supplemental Resources:
Readings: American Polity: “Reinventing Government”

Tables: Table 8.1, Presidential Vetoes, United States Cabinet, The Executive Branch

Unit 7 Supreme Court
Students examine how Article 3 of the Constitution established the judicial branch. Students analyze rulings of one Supreme Court case and a number of inferior court cases to identify how their decisions promoted civil rights and civil liberties within a diverse community. Students identify how this branch balances out the democratic principles established by the framers who felt it important to create a mechanism that stabilized the powers of the executive and legislative branches.

This unit includes:
1. The formal and informal powers of the judicial branch.
2. The relationships between the judicial branch and the other two branches of government, describing the varying balances of power.
3. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation.
4. Substantive rights and liberties.
5. The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties.

Major Topics
Introduction Powers of the Judiciary
Structure of the Courts
Judicial Selection/ Decision-Making
History of the Court
The Roberts Court

Free Response:
1. Identify and explain how the Warren court used judicial activism in TWO of the following cases:
   - Engel v. Vitale
   - Griswold v. Connecticut
   - Miranda v. Arizona

2. Explain how recent court decisions have modified both cases you identified in item 1.

3. The Constitution creates a Supreme Court for the United States. By hearing disputes, the Supreme Court influences public policy. Several factors may influence the justices in the decision-making process.
   a. Identify and discuss two influences on the judicial decision making process in the Supreme Court.
   b. Give an example of how the influences you identified have influenced the judicial decision making process.

Supplemental Resources:
American Government: “Constitutional Background: Judicial, Independence and Judicial Review”

Tables: Incorporation of the Bill of Rights, Table 10.1, Dual Structure of the American court system, Federal court system, Supreme Court system-2004, How a Case Goes to the United States Supreme Court, Table 10.7 (Amicus Curiae Brief)

Unit 8 Policy: Domestic, Foreign, Economic, and Military
Students explore how public policy, both domestic and foreign, is what the government accomplishes through its political maneuverings. It’s the result of the interactions and dynamics among the actors, interest groups, and institutions. Students realize how federalism, interest groups, political parties and elections play a role in policy making at the federal level.
This unit includes:
1. Policy networks, iron triangles and other forms of sub-governments in the formation of domestic and foreign policy.
2. The role of federal institutions in making policy
3. The link between federal institutions + the citizen in policy information.
4. The role of the citizen in the policy process
5. Policy development in the areas of economics, environment, health care, social welfare and national defense.

Major Topics
Foreign and Defense Policy
Health Care
Economic Policy Environmental Policy
Social Welfare Policy

Free Response:
1. Selecting a policy area below, explain the policy formulation stage in terms of likely opponents and proponents. Identify the organized and visible interests that would be present in this stage and outline their likely positions for a policy proposal.
   - Student Loan Programs
   - Dairy Price Supports
   - Low and Moderate Income Housing Programs

2. Identify two private actors that play significant roles in the formulation of both domestic and foreign policy. Compare and contrast the differences and similarities in the roles these actors play in these two policy arenas.

Supplemental Resources:
Classic Ideas and Current Issues in American Government: “Does the President have the Legal Authority to Engage in Military Action against the Nation’s Enemies without the Specific Authorization of Congress?”

Charts: Stages of Public Policy Process, Fed Controls the American Economy

Assessments
AP multiple choice sample tests
Editorial Cartoon Interpretations
Socratic Method Scored Public Discussions
Essay Papers – Long and Short

Examples of writing assignments
1. Writing pre-test: what do you think is the most pressing issue in our society today? This assignment is only meant to evaluate students’ writing ability, not their content knowledge.
2. On Demand (timed) Writing: Using the following court cases as examples, explain the evolution of federalism in the United States. Be sure to explain the facts of each case as they apply to federalism.

   McCullough v. Maryland
   Gibbons v. Ogden
   Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas
   Printz v. United States/Mack v. United States