



# Chinese Christian Schools

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## AP Government

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### Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the US national government. It is taught with the conviction that students want to know not only who governs but also what difference it makes who governs. As citizens we all deal with the consequences of federal, state, and local laws and regulations. For example, the age we are allowed to drive, serve on a jury, and drink legally are all determined by some type of government. As a student in high school, your rights of privacy (freedom from searches, freedom of speech and expression, etc) are all subject to, and often determined by, the power of the government. Explaining both who governs and to what end cannot be done without investigating the politics of policymaking. You will examine the government institutions which make these type of policies and the impact they have on people throughout the US.

This course is designed to enable students to develop a critical perspective towards government and politics in the United States. The 2000 election should have served as a useful lesson for why being an involved citizen is so important in our political process. We will study that election in the larger context of American politics and the political system we live in every day.

Students will examine general political concepts as well as specific case studies. It is important that every student in this class try and stay abreast of recent political events in order to be able to intelligently and logically discuss current events in the context of what we are learning in class.

Students are all expected to take the AP exam in May, 2011.

### Course Objectives. Students will be able to demonstrate:

- A) Knowledge of the principles, institutions and processes of the national, state and local levels of government in the United States.
- B) The ability to engage in analysis, synthesis, and effective communication in writing and in oral presentations.
- C) Understanding the organization and power of the Congress, the Presidency, the Judiciary, and the Bureaucracy. This includes the formal and informal powers of these institutions as well as the ways in which they relate to each other.
- D) Familiarity with the complexities of the US Constitution and development of federalism.
- E) An awareness of his or her "role" as a citizen, and how and why his participation is important to the continued success of our governmental system.

- F) Knowledge of the historical evolution of the United States party system, the functions and structures of political parties, and the effects they have on the political process. Included in this area is an understanding of the various kinds of interest groups.
- G) Understanding of the court system and evolution of public policy concerning civil liberties and civil rights
- H) The ability to pass and excel on the AP exam given in May, 2011.

## **Methodology**

Assessments will include exams and quizzes based on student reading; essays that call for analysis and synthesis of course content, and simulations and projects that will give the students the opportunity to develop along the lines of the course objectives. Lectures will be given in order to develop the course curriculum and make clear any themes or objectives not understood by the students. Group discussions and presentations as well as Socratic discussions based on primary and secondary readings will be used in class.

## **Specific Assessments in Class: Homework, exams, quizzes, essays and current events:**

- Usually reading every night an average of 15-20 pages in the text, with occasional handouts and other supplemental reading. Students are encouraged to bring their textbook to class everyday. Students are also required to have a 3-ring binder that they must bring to class.
- Participation in class discussion is mandatory. Everyone should be able to contribute to class discussion at least once per class session.
- There will be pop quizzes that will include paragraph-style writing, multiple choice timed quizzes on reading homework, lecture, and homework assignments.
- 1-2 page typed essays will accompany almost every unit studied. These essays are formal, college-style essays that include a 5-paragraph style format with MLA-style citations required.
- Students will also be expected to frequently write free response questions, in-group work or on exams. All FRQ's will be based on the format presented by the AP Government exam.
- Students will examine numerous charts and graphs from the overheads and power points included with my text (Wilson), as well as handouts taken from Vital Statistics on American Politics.
- Exams will follow each unit. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice and essay questions. Exams will cover material from the textbook, homework, and class discussion.
- Knowledge of contemporary political events is essential for the analytical focus that must be exhibited in essays. It is highly recommended that students expose themselves to as many the

following sources as possible: major newspaper (i.e., *Washington Post National Weekly*, *New York Times* and *Christian Science Monitor*); major news magazines; television news programs (i.e. “ News Hour with Jim Lehrer,” “Nightline,” The Daily Show) C-SPAN; major network evening news programs; and public radio-NPR

### **Reading material includes:**

Text : Wilson and Dilulio, *American Government: Eleventh AP Edition*, Houghton Mifflin Company 2008 (ISBN – 13: 978-0-618-95540-4; ISBN – 10: 0-618-95540-2)

Text: Center for Civic Education, *We the People, the Citizen & the Constitution*, Center for Civic Education 2009 (ISBN: 978-089818232-3)

Supplemental: Peter Woll, *American Government: Readings and Cases*, Longman Copyright: 2008

*American Government 10/11, Annual Editions*  
McGraw Hill, 2010/2011

Various handouts. (News articles for each unit selected by the teacher.)

- Supplies:**
- Textbook
  - Spiral notebook (college ruled)
  - folder or 3 ringed binder
  - pens and pencils
  - green pen
  - expo markers (red, black, and blue)
  - 3x5 cards

### **Grading Policy**

This course grade will be determined by total point performance achieved by the student on class projects, test, quizzes, handouts, oral participation, debates, and essays. The percentage for determining a student’s grade are as follows:

• <u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>
97-100%	A+	77-79%	C+
93-96%	A	73-76%	C
90-92%	A-	70-72%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
83-86%	B	63-66%	D
80-82%	B-	60-62%	D-
		50-59%	F

Semester Breakdown:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter: 42.5%
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: 42.5%
- Semester Final: 15%

Quarter Grade Breakdown: Total Points Earned in Each of the following Categories

- Class participation/attendance
- Homework/class work/essays
- Exams/Quizzes

- All essays written outside of class will be scored according to the College Board’s general rubric (when it applies), as well as a score that will count for their class grade.
- Class participation/citizen grade is determined by participation in class, attendance, and being prepared with class materials.
- **Each Unit has discussion questions. The students need to be prepared for discussion daily for their participation grade.**

**Rules for Written Work**

1. Use standard school heading on **8 ½ x 11-inch** paper. **Leave margins on both sides of the paper.** Assignment title should always be written in the center of the paper under the standard heading. A standard school heading includes your name, class, due date, and type of assignment (test, quiz, timed write, rough draft, final draft):

Name	Due Date
World History	Assignment
Title	
2. All rough and final drafts of writing assignments must be:
  - Typewritten
  - Times New Roman #12 font
  - 1 ¼ -inch margins
  - Double –spaced
3. To award credit for your work, I must be able to read your writing. Assignments with illegible writing will be returned to you to resubmit and will be counted as **late work**.
4. All essays, research papers (both rough and final drafts) **must** be submitted to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). Essays, research papers not submitted will receive **50% credit maximum**.

**Late and Missing Work**

- The student is responsible to inquire about work and due dates missed during his or her absence.
- There is no penalty for late work due to an excused absence, providing it is made up within two days after returning to school.

- Unexcused late work will be accepted any time before the quarter cut-off (which will be announced by the teacher prior to the quarter's end), but that assignment will not receive a grade higher than a "C".
- All missing work will receive a 25% "F" at the end of the quarter.
- If you experience computer or printer problems, you are still responsible to turn your assignment in on the day it is due. If you need to use the school's computer, you must plan ahead. Do not come to class and then ask to print your paper.
- I allow one "oops" per semester, but it must be accompanied by a note from your parent or guardian.

## **GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**Days: Instructional days and do not include days allotted for unit exams.**

### **Unit 1: Introduction (4 days) and Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government (9 days) (Text: Chapters 1, 22)**

- A. Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution
- B. Separation of powers
- C. Federalism
- D. Theories of democratic government

### *READINGS*

Federalist Papers: 10, 51, 78

U.S. Constitution

### **Lecture: Introductions to American Government & Politics**

- Discussion Questions: overview of politics and systems of government
- European thought and its influence: Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu
- Articles of Confederation: Pro and Con
- Federalist and Anti-Federalists: A comparison

### **Activities:**

- Outside Essay: Constitution (based on Constitutional principles/common philosophical and or political values and important compromises reached at the Constitutional Convention in order to secure ratification) due end of week two.
- Debate: The Constitution is a relevant document to be revered and treated with respect.
- Constitutional Questions Handout in preparation for the Power Grab Game
- The Amendment Process Amending the Constitution; Lesson 8 (AP Center for Learning)
- Basic Principles Handout
- Discussion Questions

**Unit 2: Federalism (8 days) (Text: Chapter 3)**

- A. Who governs?
- B. To what ends?
- C. Why Federalism matters.

**Activities:**

- Group work on eras of Federalism: philosophical aspect of each era, major court cases and or important congressional or presidential actions that exemplify this era.
- Outside Essay topic: Position paper on Federalism: Have the conservatives (mostly Republicans) “abandoned their faith in federalism”? Due week three.
- Discussion on Gay Marriage in relation to Federalism
- Discussion on Medical Marijuana/Federalism
- Discussion on Federalist #10
- Group Work on Federalist #51
- Test Review; jeopardy

**Unit 3: Political Culture (2 days) (Text: Chapter 4); Media (2 days) (Text: Chapter 12); Polling (2 days) (Text: pages 224, 155)**

- A. Political Culture
  - a. Compare liberals and conservatives of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries
  - b. What roles schools play in socialization of American culture/values
- B. The mass media, including the functions and structures of the media and the impact of the media on politics
- C. Polling
  - a. Importance of Polling; Accuracy
  - b. Polling Methods and Questions by the Youth Leadership Initiative

**Unit 4: Elections (5 days) (Text: Chapter 10); Parties (5 days) (Text: Chapter 9); Interest Groups (1 day) (Text: Chapter 11)**

- A. Political parties and elections (including their functions, organization, historical development, and effects on the political process)
- B. Interest Groups (including PAC's)
  - a. The range of interests that are or are not represented
  - b. The activities of interest groups
  - c. The effects of interest groups on the political process

**Unit 5: Congress (7 days) (Text: Chapter 13)**

- A. Lecture/Intro on Congress; The evolution and composition of Congress
  - a. Running for office
  - b. Success of incumbents
  - c. Congressional redistricting/reapportionment/Gerrymandering
  - d. Power and ethics in Congress
  - e. Important statutes

**Activities:**

- Short Video on “How a bill becomes Law”
- Congress Project: Writing one bill for Mock Congress & Mock Congress (2 days) includes committee work; debates (floor debate).
- How a bill becomes a law (in theory) worksheet
- How a Bill becomes a law (in reality) worksheet
- Lesson “Who is Your Congressman”?
- Difference between the House and the Senate
- Congress Assignment (fill in, multiple choice); Comprehensive review of the 3 branches.
- Mock senate activity
- Political Politics (decisions)

**Unit 6: President (9 days) (Text: Chapter 14)****A. Lecture/ Intro Presidency**

- a. Paradox of Presidency; Bush Administration
- b. Use of media and White House
- c. Overview of foreign policy and president

**Activities:**

- Discussion questions based on all the readings
- Essay: Presidential Expansion of powers of the Executive Office through the use of formal and informal powers. Due at beginning of week 10
- Chart of Presidential Powers (duties, description of presidential powers, current examples)
- “The Power of the Pen”(The not so secret weapon of Congress: the executive order)
- Video: Bushes 2<sup>nd</sup> term
- Video: Bush’s foreign policy followed by discussion
- Activity: Foreign policy simulation (crisis management: Iran)
- Presidential Jeopardy

**Unit 7: Bureaucracy (3 days) (Text: Chapter 15); Budget (3 days) (Chapter 18)****A. Lecture Intro to Bureaucracy**

- a. Overview
- b. Types and functions
- c. How the branches control bureaucracy

**Activities:**

- “How does the government affect you?” article and group work
- Bureaucratic Pathology Lesson: Reading and chart, followed by discussion

**B. Lecture/Intro to the Federal budget**

- a. Policy making in a federal system: subsidies and entitlements

**Activities:**

- Analyzing the federal budget with the use of overhead charts: sources of Federal revenue, expenditures, and spending.
- Government regulation discussion

- Discussion on the US economy and its effect globally

**Unit 8: Judiciary (5 days) (Text: Chapter 16)**

- A. Lecture/Intro to Judiciary:
- a. The American legal system
  - b. Supreme Court
  - c. Judicial philosophy and selection
  - d. Landmark decisions

**Activities:**

- Each student will pick a case: case background, facts, constitutional issues, holding and impact on citizens, presentations to class
- Handout: How well do you know the Supreme Court
- Lesson “Who Said This, and Why?: Judicial Activism

**Unit 9: Civil Liberties (5 days) (Text: Chapter 15); Civil Rights (5 days) (Text: Chapter 16)**

- A. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation, including, for example:
- a. First Amendment freedoms
  - b. The rights of the accused
  - c. Minority rights and women’s rights

**Unit 10: Review: The Congress, The Presidency, The Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts: Institutions and Policy Processes.**

- A. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of powers
- B. Relationships among these four institutions
- C. Links between these institutions and political parties, interest groups, the media, sub-national government, and public opinion

**Class Discipline**

*“And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto man” (Col. 3:23)*

**Mental Attitude**

1. I shall **show respect** to *every* individual in the classroom – including your teacher.
2. I shall be prepared for class, and will work diligently and enthusiastically to accomplish my goals for this class.
3. I expect to succeed and honor God by maximizing my opportunity to learn and grow in this class (Mathew 25:14-30 *The Parable of the Talents*).
4. No whining.

## Promptness and Preparation for Class

When the bell rings, you are expected:

1. to be **quietly** sitting in your assigned seats ready to begin or already working on bell work. Students who arrive late without a tardy pass or who are not in their seats will be marked tardy. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class and disrespectful to the other students and to me.
2. to be **ready** work with whatever materials are needed – pens, pencils, binder, homework assignments, notes, text book, **Bible**, catechism, 3x5 note cards, etc. Except in an emergency, please do not ask to go to your locker to retrieve these items.
3. to place **homework assignments** in the “Homework” folder at the front of the classroom prior to taking your seat. **Essays, research papers and/or their drafts** are to be placed in the “Essay” folder at the front of the class prior to taking your seat. You will know what is due by looking at the schedule on the whiteboard.
4. to **read the whiteboard** daily for assignments, due dates, changes in the schedule, and any other miscellaneous information. Copy the schedule from the whiteboard immediately after taking your seat.

## Unethical behavior

1. **Cheating** in any form will absolutely **not** be tolerated. Copying other students’ work (i.e. homework, essays, test answers) is cheating. Sharing is not caring. Students who cheat will receive an automatic zero percent F and a disciplinary referral.
2. **Plagiarism** (using the words of another without attribution) will absolutely **not** be tolerated. Any plagiarized work may receive an automatic zero percent F and a disciplinary referral.

## Disrespectful Behavior

1. Keep your hands to yourself.
2. No leaving of one’s desk without teacher’s permission
3. No **sleeping** in class. If you feel yourself nodding off, please quietly go the back of the class. Stretch, have a drink or get something to eat. (Note: You are still responsible to take notes.) Quietly return to your seat when you are sufficiently refreshed.
4. No **talking** unless permitted by the teacher.

5. **Consequences** for habitual disrespectful behaviors:
- A. First violation: Name on chalkboard (Subsequent violations → checkmark(s) behind one's name)
  - B. First check: Notice of Concern sent home & 15 minutes of written work.
  - C. Second check: Call home & 30 minutes of written work.
  - D. Third check: Disciplinary referral to administration with parent's comments.
  - E. Fourth check: **Teacher calls administration to the classroom:**  
(or severe violation such as fighting or swearing) (Administration may: Assign demerits, In-school suspension; Suspension; Dismissal)

**I have read, understood, and will abide by all of the provisions of the entire AP Government syllabus.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's name & period

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DISCLAIMER**

The instructor reserves the sole and complete right to modify this syllabus at any time and in anyway he sees fit.