



**Course Description:**

AP United States Government and Politics is a one-semester, college level course offered to students who wish to be academically challenged and plan to take the AP exam in the spring. It is a survey course that provides an introduction into the operation of American national government. As such, we will examine:

- The American system of government and its origins
- Political opinions, interests, and behaviors
- Political organizations, to include parties, interest groups and mass media
- The institutions of government and their role in making and enforcing public policy
- Civil liberties and civil rights
- Primary source materials and contemporary news analyses

In exposing you to these areas, it is our goal to foster the development of the analytical perspectives for interpreting, understanding, and explaining the political processes and events in this country.

**Learning Outcomes:**

At the completion of AP United States Government and Politics, the student will be able to identify and explain the formation, function, players, organizations, and institutions that make up the American system of government based on the following themes:

- U.S. Constitution—the U.S. Constitution is a living document that revolves around interpretations of our democratic ideals.
- Civil Rights and Liberties—the government's responsibility is to protect civil rights and liberties for all citizens.
- Federalism—our government is more responsive to the people due to the division of power between the states and the federal government.
- Separation of Powers—distributing political authority among three branches of government protects against potential abuse of power through a system of checks and balances.
- Civic Responsibilities—A democratic government's ability to protect every one's rights requires the participation of citizens in the political process.
- The Media's Role—the media has a great amount of influence on American politics.

**Current Events:**

One of the most effective ways of learning about politics and reinforcing what you have learned is to pay attention to current political events. Therefore, it is expected that you are actively reading a major newspaper, a magazine such as Newsweek, a politically oriented journal such as Foreign Policy, or watching the news and other politically oriented programs. The more you pay attention to current events and how they relate to what you have learned, the more effective

you will be during class discussions.

**Content Standards:**

This college-level United States Government and Politics course is written to the content standards outlined by the College Board's [United States Government and Politics Course Requirements](#).

**Required Texts:**

Title: American Government: The Essentials  
Author(s): James Q. Wilson, John J. Dilulio, & Leslie Ed. Wilson  
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin  
Year published: 10<sup>th</sup> edition, September 2005  
ISBN 0618562451

Title: American Government  
Author(s): Peter Woll  
Publisher: Longman  
Year published: 15<sup>th</sup> edition, May 2003  
ISBN 0321129776

**Course Methodology:**

This is an inquiry-based course where you will discover and utilize knowledge about the American political system via the textbook, supplemental readings, primary sources, political websites, and synchronous and asynchronous discussions with other students and the instructor.

Acting as a facilitator, your instructor will guide you through the process however, as the learner you are responsible for actively acquiring and constructing information by completing all assigned readings and activities.

Both formal and informal assessment will be used in evaluating your performance throughout the course. Informal assessment will include an evaluation of the quality and timeliness of your participation in class activities. Formal assessment will involve multiple-choice quizzes, written essays, a midterm and a final exam.

Unit	Topics	Activities
1	Constitutional Underpinnings	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To preview the major questions asked throughout the course and introduce students to some key terms of American politics</li><li>To introduce students to the historical context which the U.S. Constitution was written</li></ul> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wilson text: Chapter 1 – The Study of American Government</li><li>Wilson text: Chapter 2 – The Constitution</li></ul>

		<p>Primary Source Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Hobbes, excerpts from Leviathan (1651)</li> <li>• John Locke, excerpts from Two Treatises on Government (1690)</li> <li>• Montesquieu, excerpts from The Spirit of the Laws (1748)</li> <li>• James Madison, Federalist # 10</li> <li>• James Madison, Federalist # 51</li> <li>• Alexander Hamilton, excerpts from Federalist # 84</li> <li>• Antifederalist, excerpts from Centinel I</li> <li>• Antifederalist, excerpts from Brutus I</li> <li>• Articles of Confederation</li> <li>• U.S. Constitution (see Wilson text)</li> <li>• The Bill of Rights (Amendments #'s 1-10) (see Wilson Text)</li> </ul> <p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutional Underpinnings</li> </ul> <p>Threaded Discussion Forum Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning styles assessment</li> <li>• Hobbes vs. Locke</li> <li>• Federalists vs. Antifederalist</li> </ul> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin Essay #1: Discuss the fundamental principles of thought that are elemental to the American doctrine of the separation of powers</li> </ul> <p>Synchronous Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles of Confederation vs. Constitution</li> </ul> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective quiz (30 multiple choice questions)</li> <li>• Time Essay</li> </ul>
2	Federalism	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce students to the many complexities of government in the U.S. arising from the adoption of the federal system and how the nature and effects of federalism have changed throughout history and continue to change today</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To introduce students to the inherited beliefs, attitudes and opinions that Americans have about how their government ought to operate</li> </ul> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wilson text: Chapter 3 – Federalism</li> <li>Wilson text: Chapter 4 – American Political Culture</li> <li>Woll text: Chapter 2, # 8 – Madison: Federalist # 39</li> <li>Woll text: Chapter 2, # 9 – Bryce: The Merits of the Federal System</li> <li>Woll text: Chapter 2, # 10 – McCulloch v. Maryland</li> <li>Woll text: Chapter 2, # 11 – Grodzins: The Federal System</li> </ul> <p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federalism in the U.S.</li> </ul> <p>Threaded Discussion Forum Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federalism</li> <li>Equality of opportunity vs. economic equality</li> </ul> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit Essay #1</li> </ul> <p>Synchronous Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal vs. unitary and confederal systems of government</li> </ul> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective quiz (30 multiple choice questions)</li> <li>Timed essay</li> </ul>
3		<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore what we mean by public opinion and to ask what sorts of effects public opinion has on our supposedly democratic form of government</li> <li>To review the much-discussed lack of voter turnout and other forms of political participation in the U.S.</li> </ul>

		<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 5 – Public Opinion</li> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 6 – Political Participation</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 4, # 34 – Berelson: Democratic Practice and Democratic Decay</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 4, # 35 – Key Jr.: The Responsible Electorate</li> </ul> <p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political Participation</li> </ul> <p>Online Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Opinion Polls</li> <li>• Voter Turnout</li> <li>• Register to Vote _</li> </ul> <p>Threaded Discussion Forum Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political Socialization</li> <li>• Political Participation</li> </ul> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise essay #1 based on your instructor’s feedback and resubmit</li> </ul> <p>Synchronous Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voting</li> </ul> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective quiz (30 multiple choice questions)</li> <li>• Timed essay</li> </ul>
4	The Two Party System	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explore the two-party system that has evolved in the U.S.</li> <li>• To examine some of the intricacies and myths surrounding American elections and campaigns</li> </ul> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 7 – Political Parties</li> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 8 – Elections and Campaigns</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 4, # 29 – Towards a more responsible Two-Party System</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 4, # 30 – Wattenberg: Perspectives on American Political Parties</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 4, # 33 – Ginsberg: Politics by Other Means</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 4, # 36 – Buckley v. Valeo</li> </ul> <p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Political Parties</li> </ul> <p>Online Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign Financing</li> <li>• PAC Contributions</li> </ul> <p>Threaded Discussion Forum Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Two-Party System</li> <li>• Necessity of Third Parties</li> </ul> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin Essay #2: Analyze the effects of federalism on contemporary policy-making in two of the following areas: economic policy, social welfare policy, or environmental policy.</li> </ul> <p>Synchronous Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign Finance Reform</li> </ul> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midterm Exam (60 multiple choice questions)</li> <li>• Timed essay questions (2)</li> </ul>
5	Interest Groups	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To survey the wide variety of interest groups, or lobbies that operate in the United States and to assess the impact they have on the political system of the country</li> <li>• To examine the historical evolution of relations between government and the media, to include how the media affects government and politics and how government seeks to affect the media</li> </ul> <p>Required Readings:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 9 – Interest Groups</li> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 10 – The Media</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 5, # 42 – Truman: The Governmental Process</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 5, # 43 – Lowi: The End of Liberalism: The Indictment</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 5, # 44 – Rozell: Interest Groups and the American Political System</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 5, # 45 – Sabato: The Misplaced Obsession with PACs</li> </ul> <p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest Groups</li> </ul> <p>Threaded Discussion Forum Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest Groups vs. Political Parties</li> <li>• Interest Groups and PACs</li> </ul> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit essay #2</li> </ul> <p>Synchronous Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Media</li> </ul> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective quiz (30 multiple choice questions)</li> <li>• Timed essay</li> </ul>
6	U.S. Congress	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To describe the framers' understanding of the role of Congress and to describe the roles and organization of Congress today, paying particular attention to the effects of organizational characteristics on the behavior of members of Congress and on the way that the House and the Senate perform their functions</li> </ul> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 11 – Congress</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 8, # 59 – Fiorina: The Rise of the Washington Establishment</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 8, # 60 – Dodd: Congress and the Quest for Power</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 8, # 65 – Mayhew: Congress:</li> </ul>

		<p>The Electoral Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 8, # 66 – Fenno Jr.: Home Style and Washington Career</li> </ul> <p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. Congress</li> </ul> <p>Online Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incumbency</li> <li>• Congressional Appointment</li> <li>• House of Representatives</li> <li>• Senate</li> </ul> <p>Threaded Discussion Forum Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incumbency Advantage</li> <li>• Congress vs. Constituents</li> </ul> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Essay #2</li> </ul> <p>Synchronous Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How a Bill Becomes a Law</li> </ul> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective quiz (30 multiple choice questions)</li> <li>• Timed essay</li> </ul>
7	The Federal Bureaucracy	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To examine the presidency in terms of executive power, the evolution of the presidency from 1789 to present, the various offices that make up the president, the relationship between the president and his/her cabinet members, presidential character, and the president's role in shaping domestic and foreign policy</li> <li>• To examine what is "big" about government, the bureaucracy; both the distinctiveness and the size of the federal government bureaucracy will be reviewed, along with various roles that have been assigned to it throughout its history, including the extent and character of its authority, how members are recruited, and other factors that help to explain the conduct of bureaucrats in office, along with ways in which Congress attempts to control the behavior of bureaucrats and the</li> </ul>

		<p>"pathologies" of various large bureaucracies</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 12 – The Presidency</li> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 13 – The Bureaucracy</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 6, # 47– Rossiter: The Presidency—Focus on Leadership</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 6, # 50 – Barber: The Presidential Character</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 7, # 56 – Woll: Constitutional Democracy and Bureaucratic Power</li> <li>• Woll text: Chapter 7, # 57 – Wilson: The Rise of the Bureaucratic State</li> </ul> <p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Federal Bureaucracy</li> </ul> <p>Online Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FirstGov</li> <li>• Executive Office of the President</li> </ul> <p>Threaded Discussion Forum Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Presidency</li> <li>• The Bureaucracy</li> </ul> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit essay #2</li> </ul> <p>Synchronous Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divided Government</li> </ul> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective quiz (30 multiple choice questions)</li> <li>• Timed essay</li> </ul>
8	The Judiciary, Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explain how the courts, particularly the Supreme Court, came to play a powerful role in forming public policy in this country and how that role has been played to very different effects at different stages of history</li> <li>• To examine the role of the Bill of Rights related to the concept of democratic rule of the majority</li> </ul>

		<p>with particular attention to the tension between majority rule and minority rights, the conflicts that may arise between those who claim First Amendment rights and those who are in favor of sedition laws that might restrict freedom of speech, the structure of the federal system and how it affects the application of the Bill of Rights, the Supreme Courts classification of “speech”, the Supreme Courts decision in Miranda vs. Arizona, and the resolution of civil liberties issues that involve politics as well as law</p> <p><b>Required Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 14 – The Judiciary</li> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 15 – Civil Liberties</li> <li>• Wilson text: Chapter 19 – Civil Rights</li> </ul> <p><b>Lecture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Federal Judiciary</li> </ul> <p><b>Online Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important landmark Supreme Court decision</li> </ul> <p><b>Threaded Discussion Forum Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Speech</li> <li>• Same Sex Marriages</li> </ul> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise essay #2 based on your instructor’s feedback and resubmit</li> </ul> <p><b>Synchronous Discussion Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affirmative Action</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Exam (60 multiple choice questions)</li> <li>• Timed essay questions (2)</li> </ul>
--	--	---

**Assessment:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Points (660 possible)</b>
-----------------	------------------------------

Essays 1 and 2	50 points each
Threaded Discussions (16)	10 points each
Timed Essays (10)	10 points each
Quizzes (6)	30 points each
Midterm (1)	60 points
Final Exam (1)	60 points
Synchronous Discussions (8)	Instructor determined

### Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Earned
A	90% - 100%
B	80% - 89%
C	70% - 79%
D	60% - 69%
F	59% and lower

### Student's Role and Responsibilities in this Course

#### Expectations:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner that reflects sound ethics, honor, and good citizenship. It is the student's responsibility to maintain academic honesty and integrity and to manifest their commitment to the goals of NUVHS through their conduct and behavior. Students are expected to abide by all NUVHS policies and regulations. Any form of academic dishonesty, or inappropriate conduct by students or applicants may result in penalties ranging from warning to dismissal, as deemed appropriate by NUVHS.

#### Communication:

Throughout this course students will need to be in close contact with their instructor and fellow students. Students are expected to communicate via email and electronic discussion boards. Therefore, students should plan on checking email at least three times a week and participate in the discussion boards during the weeks they are live.

Instructors strongly encourage and welcome open communication. Clear, consistent, and proactive communication will ensure a successful experience in this course. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor immediately if and when a personal situation occurs that affects your performance in this class. Being proactive with communication will result in a quick solution to any problems that may occur.

Technical Support is offered through Spectrum Pacific Learning Company (SPLC). Should a student need any technical assistance, he/she should email the Help Desk as soon as possible at [helpdesk@myonlinelogs.com](mailto:helpdesk@myonlinelogs.com) or call 1-877-533-4733. SPLC will help resolve technical problems and walk through the solution with students. If a problem persists for more than 48 hours, the student must also notify their teacher and NUVHS.

**Time Required For This Course:**

To complete this course in eight weeks, students should plan to allocate at least 12-15 hours a week on assigned readings, assignments, discussions (asynchronous and synchronous), quizzes, and exams. It is highly recommended that students organize themselves around the course schedule.

NUVHS wishes every student great success in their online class. Please contact us at 1.866.366.8847 if any questions arise.

---

**NUVHS  
Expected  
Schoolwide  
Learning  
Results  
(ESLRs)****NUVHS Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs):**

It is anticipated that NUVHS students will be:

**Engaged Learners**

1. Demonstrate self-directed learning skills such as time management, and personal responsibility through the completion of course requirements
2. Develop an understanding of their own preferred learning styles to enhance their overall academic potential
3. Incorporate effective and relevant internet and multimedia resources in their learning process to broaden their knowledge base

**Critical Thinkers**

1. Effectively analyze and articulate sound opinions on a variety of complex concepts
2. Illustrate a variety of problem-solving strategies that strengthen college preparation and workforce readiness
3. Formulate a framework for applying a variety of technology and internet-based research to enhance information literacy and collaborative thinking

**Effective Communicators**

1. Demonstrate awareness and sensitivity to tone and voice in multiple forms of communication
2. Express concepts and ideas in a variety of forms
3. Enhance communication skills through the use of media rich or other technology resources

**Global Citizens**

1. Appreciate the value of diversity
  2. Understand the range of local and international issues facing today's global community
  3. Demonstrate awareness of the importance of cultural sensitivity and social responsibility in the 21st century
-