

**MR. WAGENBERG**

## **AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS 2014-2015**

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the political structure of the United States, the context of its origins, its development, and its current state. It will also provide students with analytical skills and factual knowledge to deal critically with the problems present in the governance of the United States.

The successful student will have solid reading and writing skills, and a willingness to devote considerable time to homework and study. Emphasis is placed on critical and evaluative thinking skills, essay writing, and coherent and articulate expression of ideas. Students will learn to assess materials – their relevance to a given problem, their reliability and their importance – and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented.

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND HOMEWORK**

This course will be very demanding on students' time, requiring considerable homework. To be successful, you will have to do a considerable amount of reading and writing each and every week in order to be adequately prepared for the class sessions. In-class work will be devoted to ensuring your understanding of what you have read as well as developing the requisite analytic and expressive skills you will need. In class assignments will include, but not be limited to, supplementary readings, oral presentations, group discussions, quizzes, and objective and essay tests. But the bottom line is simply: **to get the most out of the classroom instruction, you need to keep up with the reading.** It has been noted that a major difference between traditional high school and college classes is that college professors expect students to complete reading assignments regardless of whether or not they will be discussed in class. In contrast, too many high school students have been trained to expect that everything important will be dealt with in class. These students develop a "class reliant" style that limits their learning. Therefore, it is advisable for you to complete the assigned readings, regardless of whether or not they are "covered" in class.

Homework is mainly reading (and responses to reading) and generally NOT daily written work or take-home worksheets. Homework assignments will vary from week to week. **Students are responsible for keeping up with the daily events in the nation and the world.** Students will need to skim the front page of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* or similar daily paper; listen to NPR or another radio news program; watch a TV news station such as CNN; or access a reliable online source.

**Assignments will consist of a variety of endeavors**, including: analysis of numerical data, such as polls, election results, and budgets; analyses of authors' theses in secondary sources and readings from various sources, including *Lanahan's Readings*; analyses of Supreme Court decisions, and tracing the evolution of the legal positions over time; comparison and analysis of current editorial and op-ed pieces from major news journals such as the *New York Times*, and preparing questions for leading class discussions.

**It is the student's responsibility to keep up** with all homework and reading assignments, as no late work is accepted (with the exception of excused absences — see below). The pace is very demanding. Every effort will be made to insure that all assignments and materials are posted on the pages online. Until last year, my website, [www.mrwagenberg.net](http://www.mrwagenberg.net) was used. In September 2013 we began using Schoology.com. As of this writing —June 2014— it appears likely that we will switch to a new platform as the district changes its website software. Information will be posted on [www.mrwagenberg.net](http://www.mrwagenberg.net) as it develops.

In any event, there will be a class site that will be used to provide information and materials during the year. It is a means of communication, providing materials, and a medium for discussion; in the past it has been utilized for assignments during the course of the year. Access to the group will be by approved subscription only. Only class members will be accepted, and all messages are public (within the group)

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKE-UP WORK & TESTS**

All assignments **MUST** be completed on time and turned in on the date listed. If this is a problem, it is YOUR responsibility to see me immediately. If you are absent, you may turn in an essay or paper the day you return *provided* you have submitted it on time to Turnitin.com.

Other assignments must be handed in the first day you return (or send it via a friend, relative, carrier pigeon, the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne, etc.) If you are absent for class, but in school earlier or later in the day it is due, *any work due MUST BE TURNED IN THAT DAY. Any late work may receive a grade reduction.*

**TESTS ARE TO BE MADE UP ON THE DAY YOU RETURN AFTER A ONE-DAY ABSENCE.** Being ill or away BEFORE the test DOES NOT excuse you from taking the test when scheduled. Only *verifiable* reasons for missing an exam will be accepted (i.e., field trip, all-day illness phoned in by parent, etc.) Under those circumstances a make-up test will be allowed. Make-up essay tests will NOT be from the same prompt as the one given on the testing day. Extenuating circumstances will be handled on an individual basis.

## ASSESSMENTS

Assessments may take the shape of a traditional “test”, a written assignment, an oral presentation, or some other project-based assessment. Tests will generally occur at the end of each section of the course. I will try to give at least one week’s notice before a major test, while a quiz may come at any time. Students can expect to be tested on their understanding of quantitative and visually presented information (maps and graphs) at regular intervals in the assessments. Students will be writing responses to analytical free-response questions approximately every other week by midyear.

## PARTICIPATION

It is very important that students participate in all activities in a positive, constructive manner. Much of the class work will involve the Socratic teaching style — where the discussion leader will ask questions regarding reading assignments, events of the day, or material previously presented to the class. Students should be prepared to act as discussion leader at least once. The best way to earn the highest participation grade is to come prepared with your material, and work to the best of your ability, each day.

## TURNITIN.COM

When stipulated, assignments written out of class will be submitted to Turnitin.com. No credit will be given to any assignment, or portion of an assignment, that has not been submitted to Turnitin.com when required.

***IMPORTANT NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:*** *Cheating is the way of the coward. Cheating is disrespectful to your teacher, your parents, and fellow students. The freedom of a clean conscience is far better than receiving a grade you do not deserve. If you have been cheating in your high school career thus far, I invite you to take my class as an opportunity to begin again your academic career with integrity. I promise that you will not regret it (not to mention that otherwise, you may very well be discovered). Should you ignore this advice and be caught cheating, you will receive a zero on the assignment and your parents/guardians will be notified.*

## FINAL THOUGHTS

***This is a college-level course, and will require college-level commitment.*** Focus on the course material, not the grade. The only guarantee that comes with this course is that it will be the most rigorous American Political Science course that Brien McMahan students will have the opportunity to take.

Reading is a necessity in the study of any of the Social Sciences. Reading should be done for the day assigned to complement the activities in class. Do not expect to gain a firm foundation reading the material the night before the test. One cannot rush through readings at the last minute and expect to grasp the more subtle aspects of the authors' arguments, and that is where some of the most important material is likely to reside. Therefore, have the readings from the text done by the date assigned. I urge you to take notes as you read. Your textbook is a well written secondary source that will help “fill in the gaps.”

Ultimately, each student must put forth a college-level effort to earn high grades in this class. Nothing will be given to a student simply because of his/her enrollment in an AP course. Perhaps the greatest benefit in taking this course is that, being a high school student, one will still receive training and practice in the skills required for future academic success: time management and communication, both written and oral. You will also have available individualized instruction and assistance that one might need to succeed at such a demanding level, something most colleges can't offer. My goal is to provide each student with the best education that one could hope for, and in the process, give each student the confidence that will be needed to perform well in their future academic endeavors.

### **General Course of Study**

I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government.....	5-15%
II. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts.....	35-45%
III. Political Beliefs and Behaviors. ....	10-20%
IV. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media.....	10-20%
V. Public Policy.....	5-15%
VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.....	5-15%

Text: Government in America, by Edwards, Wattenberg, & Lineberry, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, Longman,, 2011

Supplemental Text: The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity, by Serow & Ladd, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2011

### **Other Materials**

Assigned and used in class: articles from current newspapers, such as the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*; news magazine excerpts from *Time*, *Newsweek*, or the *Economist*; news footage and documentaries; C-SPAN's coverage and current events materials; essays and articles from scholarly journals; numerous Web sites.

Schedule of Units

Week <i>(approx.)</i>	Unit/Topics	Readings <i>(Tentative)</i>
1	Introduction	Text: Ch. 1 Lanahan # 4, 6
2-5	Political Beliefs and Behaviors Beliefs and Opinions Campaigns Elections	Text: Chs. 6, 9, 10 Lanahan # 57, 60, 69  <i>Asher, Polling and Democracy</i>
6-9	Linkage Institutions - Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media Mass Media and Politics Political Parties Interest Groups	Text: Chs. 7, 8, 11 Lanahan # 61,62, 63,71,74,76, 80 Media Research Council, <i>The Liberal Media Exposed</i> ; Asher, <i>What Liberal Media?</i>
10-12	Constitutional Underpinnings of US Government  Federalism Constitutional organization (delegated, reserved, concurrent powers)  Fiscal federalism	Text: Ch. 2 Articles of Confederation Lanahan # 10, 15 (Federalist 10, 51) <i>Pennsylvania Dissent; Anti-Federalist 84</i>  Text: Ch 3 <i>McCulloch v. Maryland; Gibbons v. Ogden; Anti-Federalist 17</i> Lanahan, #19
13-16	Institutions - Branches of Government Congress Powers and Functions of Congress Legislators - Roles and Restraints	Text: Chs. 12-16 Lanahan, #23, 24, 28, 31 <i>Brownstein, The Four Quadrants of Congress</i>
	<i>Midterms</i>	
17-19  19-21  22-24	Presidency Powers and Functions of the President Relationship with Congress  Bureaucracy  Judiciary	Lanahan # 32, 36, 38 <i>Neustadt, Presidential Power</i>  Lanahan # 39, 41 <i>Wilson, Bureaucracy</i> Lanahan # 43 ( <i>Federalist 78</i> ),44,47 <i>Marbury v. Madison</i>
25-27	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	Text: Chs. 4, 5 <i>Anti-Federalist 84, Abrams v. U.S., Plessy v. Ferguson, Brown v. Board, Griswold v. Connecticut</i> Lanahan # 48, 49 ( <i>Miranda v. AZ</i> ), 56
28-29	Public Policy Economic Social Environment and Energy Foreign Policy and Defense	Text: Chs. 17-20 Lanahan # 85, 87, 92 <i>Davidson &amp; Olszek, Domestic Policy Making</i>
	<i>Spring Break</i>	
30-31	Review for Exam	

**NOTE:**

*Although it may appear that topics will be covered in sequence, students should be aware that given the nature of the subject, class work and discussion will often necessarily involve several topics listed above.*