

MONTE VISTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
SOSC 4450, AP United States Government & Politics
Course Syllabus

Course Description:

This advanced placement course studies a complete picture of the United States government, with writing requiring understanding and analysis of abstract concepts and principles. This course requires the student to develop familiarity with various governmental groups, institutions, beliefs, and ideologies that constitute U.S politics. Students will become acquainted with a variety of theoretical perspectives and explanations for various behaviors and outcomes. Current political and legal issues will be used to illustrate major points and refine the student's understanding. Extensive reading and writing along with a willingness to devote a great deal of time to homework and small group study is expected.

Curricular Mapping:

This course teaches general concepts used to interpret politics in the U.S. Students will analyze specific case studies in different institutions of the federal government. As the course advances, an emphasis is placed more and more on critical and analytical thinking and writing. Students will be expected to stay abreast of current domestic and foreign policy issues in preparation for the AP exam. This will also enable them to contribute positively to our nation's political process as informed citizens. This fast paced course can earn the student college credit.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

- Explain important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to US 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.)
- Analyze and interpret basic data relevant to US government and politics (including data presented in charts, tables, and other formats.)
- Critically analyze relevant theories and concepts, apply them appropriately, and develop their connections across the curriculum.
- *Successfully complete the AP US Government and Politics exam.*

Text:

Your necessary digital texts for this class will be part of a "Required Course Materials Fee" thru the EdTech bookstore. This is a bundle purchase of digital texts for your full schedule of classes and will be available for purchase after 7/18/16. For further instructions please visit the [16-17 School Year](#) icon on the MVCS homepage. Please note: some courses may require additional purchases outside of the course materials fee.

Prerequisites:

[View The AP United States Government & Politics Advice Video Over The Summer](#)

Course Outline:

Most of the following sections will be covered but not all. We will selectively choose some units over others based on time and class interest.

- I. Constitutional underpinnings of the U.S. Government
 - a. Federalism
 - b. Separation of Powers
 - c. Considerations that influenced the adoption of the Constitution
- II. Political beliefs and behaviors of individuals.
 - a. Beliefs citizens hold about their government and leaders
 - b. Processes by which citizens learn their personal politics
 - c. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion
- III. Political parties and elections
 - a. Political parties and elections
 - b. Interest groups
 - c. Mass media
- IV. The Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the federal courts: Institutions and policy process:
 - 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 governments, and public opinion
 - d. Policy processes and outputs
 - e. Policy-making in a federal system
- V. Civil liberties and civil rights
 - a. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation, including for example:
 - b. The first Amendment
 - c. The rights of the accused
 - d. Minority-group and women's rights

Grading & Class Policies:

<u>Grade Book Categories</u>		<u>Semester Weighted Grading Configuration</u>	
Attendance & Participation	10%	Quarter	40%
Homework & Projects	40%	Quarter	40%
Tests & Quizzes	50%	Final Exam	20%

Class Policies:

All students have the right to benefit from the educational experiences of the school. The easiest way to guarantee this takes place in the classroom is for students to follow the logic of the “Golden Rule.” Simply put the logic of the Golden Rule states that if everyone treated everyone else the way they would want to be treated then the world would be a much better place. For more specific nuances please view the Monte Vista student handbook.

High School Standard Grading Policy:

Refer to the parent- student handbook for anything not addressed directly below.

- Homework & Projects – 40%
 - Much of the work for this course will have time set aside for it in class. That being said in an AP course it is impossible to accomplish all work in class and you should expect to be reading at least half an hours worth of material every night.
 - *On-Task Behavior- When time is given in-class to work on assignments, the student is expected to be on-task. When students are off-task (e.g. playing games, messaging, working on other courses, etc.), the instructor has the discretion to deduct points from the assignment’s total point value, up to 50%.*
 - There will be weekly expected reading from the textbook and other provided sources; successful students will budget their time accordingly and prepared to do a small to medium amount of reading every night.
 - There will also be some projects scattered throughout the units that will take a little longer to complete but you will also receive some time to work on them in class.
 - *This is a college-preparatory environment. Students are expected to turn-in work on-time, and will be held accountable when it is not. Assignments submitted beyond the posted deadline will be accepted for up-to half-credit until the end of the current unit. Any extension of a posted deadline must be granted by the instructor in written format prior to the posted deadline. No exceptions.*
- Tests and Quizzes – 50%
 - You should expect approximately one quiz per week. All quizzes are open notes, come directly from the reading, and some are taken with a partner.
 - Tests will require you to be familiar with the material we have studied from and each test will be cumulative from the entire unit.. Tests will come in multiple choice and FRQ formats.
 - All quizzes and tests will mimic aspects of the actual AP exam to prepare you for said exam.
 - *For quizzes or tests missed because of emergency, sickness, or other personal misfortune. If a student misses a quiz or unit exam they will not be allowed to make up that exam or quiz without a written explanation from their parent or guardian about why they missed that quiz or exam.*
 - *For quizzes or tests missed because of extra curricular or school activities. A calendar will be provided to all students at the beginning of the year that lists all quiz and exam dates and it is the student's responsibility to preemptively make up*

quizzes or tests that they will miss for school activities or extracurricular commitments.

- o Rationale- The course moves at an extremely rigorous pace and assessments must be completed on time in order to protect the sanctity and integrity of the course.
- Attendance – 10%
 - o *Democracy belongs to those that show up! “Sin-your-itis” needs to be avoided! In order to flourish in this course you must be present. You will have 10 points to keep at the beginning of each quarter. A perfect attendance record will receive a 10/10. Each absence or tardy will result in a ½ point loss. Unexcused absences will merit a 1 point loss. Points may be made up at the discretion of the teacher in the event of extenuating circumstances outside of the control of the student.*

School Policies and Expected Student Learning Results (ESLRs):

Students are subject to all academic policies of the school as found in the Parent-Student Handbook. Furthermore, it is each student’s responsibility to read and follow all academic policies of Monte Vista Christian School. In addition to addressing each ESLR every year, we target a specific ESLR each academic year for particular focus.

Miscellaneous:

1. You can access your grades on Focus. (Parents – the grade you see in Focus during first two weeks of any quarter might not be indicative of your student’s final grade.)
2. ALL work submitted to the instructor is graded with assessment and speed in mind. If you have a zero for an assignment a week after its due date it is because the teacher thinks you have not turned in your assignment.
3. Your iPad will need to be present in class every day and should be charged sufficiently to make it through class. The iPad can be used for note taking and will be often utilized for various in class work.