

U.S. Govt' & Politics Packet

U.S. Government & Politics Prereq's:

- 1) 3.0 GPA in grades 9-11
- 2) Summer Assignments complete by first day of class (see course description #4 for detailed summer assignments). These completed assignments, due on the first day of school, will serve as your ticket into this course. You will be responsible for acquiring the required summer reading (online purchase recommended).
- 3) Sign & Return (page 10 of this packet)

U.S. Government & Politics

A Course Description & Syllabus

1. Introduction

This is a college course that is demanding, requiring you to put forth your best effort on a daily basis. Due to the challenging nature of this course, it is weighted more heavily than the regular government and economics course offered at the school. As per Faith Baptist's ESLRs, you will have ample opportunity to demonstrate that you are spiritually-minded, academically capable, physically sound, and socially developed individuals.

2. Overview

This course provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the operation of American national government. To accomplish this, students develop analytic perspectives for interpreting, understanding, and explaining political events in this country. The subjects that the course covers include constitutional arrangements, policymaking institutions such as the legislature, the executive, the bureaucracy, and the courts, public opinion and the media, political participation and voting behavior, political parties, interest groups, civil liberties and rights, and budget making.

3. Course Organization

To meet its objectives, the course is organized into six major parts. The topic outline below summarizes the major content areas covered by the U.S. Government & Politics Exam. The multiple-choice portion of the exam is devoted to each content area in the approximate percentages indicated. The free-response portion of the exam will test students in some combination of the six major categories outlined below. The outline is a guide and is by no means an exhaustive list of topics or the preferred order of topics.

A. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government (5-15%)

The study of modern politics in the United States requires students to examine the kind of government established by the Constitution, paying particular attention to federalism and the separation of powers. Understanding these developments involves both knowledge of the historical situation at the time of the Constitutional Convention and an awareness of the ideological and philosophical traditions on which the framers drew. Such understanding addresses specific concerns of the framers: e.g., Why did Madison fear factions? What were the reasons for the swift adoption of the Bill of Rights? Familiarity with the Supreme Court's interpretation of key provisions of the Constitution will aid student understanding of theoretical and practical features of federalism and the separation of powers. Students should be familiar with a variety of theoretical perspectives relating to the Constitution, such as democratic theory, theories of republican government, pluralism, and elitism.

1. Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution
2. Separation of powers
3. Federalism
4. Theories of democratic government

B. Political Beliefs and Behaviors (10-20%)

Individual citizens hold a variety of beliefs about their government, its leaders, and the U.S. political system in general; taken together, these beliefs form the foundation of U.S. political culture. It is important for students to understand how these beliefs are formed, how they evolve, and the processes by which they are transmitted. Students should know why U.S. citizens hold certain beliefs about politics, and how families, schools, and the media act to perpetuate or change these beliefs. Understanding the ways in which political culture affects and informs political participation is also critical. For example, students should know that individuals often engage in multiple forms of political participation, including voting, protest, and mass movements. Students should understand both why individuals engage in various forms of political participation and how that participation affects the political system.

Finally, it is essential that students understand what leads citizens to differ from one another in their political beliefs and behaviors, and the political consequences of these differences. To understand these differences,

students should focus on the different views that people hold of the political process, the demographic features of the American population, and the belief and behavior systems held by specific ethnic, minority, and other groups.

1. 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 in political life
5. Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors

C. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media (10-20%)

Students should understand the mechanisms that allow citizens to organize and communicate their interests and concerns. Among these are political parties, elections, political action committees (PACs), interest groups, and the mass media. Students should examine the historical evolution of the U.S. party system, the functions and structures of political parties, and the effects they have on the political process. Examination of issues of party reform and of campaign strategies and financing in the electronic age provides students with important perspectives. A study of elections, election laws, and election systems on the national and state levels will help students understand the nature of both party and individual voting behavior. Treatment of the development and the role of PACs in elections and the ideological and demographic differences between the two major parties, as well as third parties, form an important segment of this material.

Students must also consider the political roles played by a variety of lobbying and interest groups. Important features of this section of the course include an explanation for why some interests are represented by organized groups while others are not, and the consequences of these differences. Students study what interest groups do, how they do it, and how this affects both the political process and public policy. Why are certain segments of the population, such as farmers and the elderly, able to exert pressure on political institutions and actors in order to obtain favorable policies?

The media has become a major force in U.S. politics. Students are expected to understand the role of the media in the political system. In addition, the impact of the media on public opinion, voter perceptions, campaign strategies, electoral outcomes, agenda development, and the images of officials and candidates should be explored and understood by students. Understanding the often symbiotic, and frequently conflictual, relationship between candidates, elected officials, and the media is also important.

1. Political parties and elections
 - a. Functions
 - b. Organization
 - c. Development
 - d. Effects on the political process
 - e. Electoral laws and systems
2. Interest groups, including political action committees (PACs)
 - a. The range of interests represented
 - b. The activities of interest groups
 - c. The effects of interest groups on the political process
 - d. The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the political process
3. The mass media
 - a. The functions and structures of the media
 - b. The impact of media on politics

D. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts (35-45%)

Students must become familiar with the organization and powers, both formal and informal, of the major political institutions in the United States- the Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the federal courts. The functions these institutions perform and do not perform, as well as the powers that they do and do not possess, are important. It is necessary for students to understand that power balances and relationships between these institutions may evolve gradually or change dramatically as a result of crises. Students are also expected to understand ties between the various branches of national government and political parties, interest groups, the

media, and state and local governments. For example, a study of the conflicting interests and powers of the President and Congress may help explain recent and repeated struggles to adopt a national budget.

1. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power
2. Relationships among these four institutions, and varying balances of power
3. Linkages between institutions and the following:
 - a. Public opinion and voters
 - b. Interest groups
 - c. Political parties
 - d. The media
 - e. Subnational governments

E. Public Policy (5-15%)

Public policy is the result of interactions and dynamics among actors, interests, institutions, and processes. The formation of policy agendas, the enactment of public policies by Congress and the President, and the implementation and interpretation of policies by the bureaucracy and the courts are all stages in the policy process with which students should be familiar. Students should also investigate policy networks, iron triangles, and other forms of policy sub-governments in the domestic and foreign policy areas. The study of these will give students a clear understanding of the impact of federalism, interest groups, parties, and elections on policy processes and policy making in the federal context.

1. Policy making in a federal system
2. The formation of policy agendas
3. The role of institutions in the enactment of policy
4. The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation
5. Linkages between policy processes and the following:
 - a. Political institutions and federalism
 - b. Political parties
 - c. Interest groups
 - d. Public opinion
 - e. Elections
 - f. Policy networks

F. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (5-15%)

An understanding of United States politics includes the study of the development of individual rights and liberties and their impact on citizens. Basic to this study is an analysis of the workings of the Supreme Court and an understanding of its most significant decisions. Students should examine judicial interpretations of various civil rights and liberties such as freedom of speech, assembly, and expression; the rights of the accused; and the rights of minority groups and women. For example, students should understand the legal, social, and political evolution following the Supreme Court's decisions regarding racial segregation. Finally, it is important that students be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Supreme Court decisions as tools of social change.

1. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation
2. Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties
3. The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties

NOTE: In your binder, separate your notes for these units by tab dividers so that you will be prepared for the AP test review.

4. Summer Assignments

The purpose of the summer assignments is to introduce you to the study of government and to get you thinking about the underlying beliefs which determine how a person views the proper roles and objectives of government. **You must turn in all of the following assignments in this section as a prerequisite for entry into this course:**

- A. Take a political self-evaluation quiz @ www.theadvocates.org/quiz ("World's Smallest Political Quiz"). Print results. Turn this in with the following assignments as prerequisites for entry into this course:
- B. Follow the news (Network news, PBS News Hour, weekly news magazines (the *Economist*, the *National Review*, or online @: the Drudge Report, the Huffington Post. Notice the title of the Course Government &

Politics. Students sometimes forget the political nature of this class. When you are reading, listening to, or watching the news, consider the following:

1. Does this political issue illustrate the struggle for power among the three branches of government?
2. Does this political issue illustrate the struggle for power between states and the federal government?
3. Does this issue illustrate something about American political culture?
4. Does this issue illustrate the difference between conservatives, liberals, populists, and libertarians?
5. Does this issue illustrate the process of structure of government in some way?
6. Does this issue illustrate the power of a particular interest group?
7. Does this issue illustrate a political trend—for example, the rise in primaries, the increased use of initiatives, etc.?
8. Does this issue illustrate the differences between Republicans and Democrats?

C. Bastiat, Frederic, *The Law*. The Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn, Alabama, 2007, ISBN 978-1-933550-14-5 or a free online pdf version @ http://www.fee.org/pdf/books/The_Law.pdf

Assignment: Answer the following Study Questions for *The Law*

1. What three gifts of God precede legislation? How is property gained by use of our talents? Where does law fit in the scheme of things?
2. What is law? What is the source of the collective right to protection? What uses of force pervert the law from its true purpose: organized justice?
3. What is the price of the state's intervention into the private affairs of its citizens? What does Bastiat mean by "*state-created displacements*"? How has the law been used to destroy its own objective? Identify the two causes.
4. What is the origin of the desire to live and prosper at the expense of others? (See 5-20) [9-24] What is the origin of property? Plunder? What is the proper function of the law? What accounts for its almost universal perversion?
5. When plunder is organized by law, what is the natural reaction of the plundered classes? What is apt to happen when the tables are turned (topsy-turvy)? What are some consequences of this perversion? What happens when law and morality contradict each other? How is plunder legitimized? Bastiat here anticipates the concept of *rent-seeking*.
6. What happens to those who express doubts as to the morality of such institutions? Why does Bastiat believe that the result is to give "an exaggerated importance to political passions and conflicts? How do arguments over universal suffrage illustrate the problem?
7. Why is voting restricted? Why is incapacity a motive for exclusion? Regardless of one's preferences concerning the extent of suffrage, what would cause the excitement over suffrage to die down? Why, if law were confined to its proper functions, would everyone's interest in the law be the same?
8. When the law is used to redistribute property (plunder), why does every class grasp for power over it? Under what circumstances will political questions become "prejudicial, dominant, and all absorbing?" Which country was generally most successful in keeping the law in bounds around 1850?
9. What were the two issues in the United States around 1850 that always endangered the public peace? What are the two kinds of plunder? Why does the law sometimes defend plunder and participate in it? Why is the victim of plunder sometimes treated as a criminal? What public choice economists refer to as an *externalization of costs* means that some people are privileged to escape paying them by passing "the buck" or the bill along to others. One method of shifting the financial burden is for a state to grant the privilege of "limited liability" to a corporation, which effectively becomes an arm of the state. The potential nationalization of corporations is always, at the very least, implicit. Those who were suddenly brought to heel in 2009 (such as various financial institutions and auto manufacturers) should not have been surprised. What Roger Scruton calls the "personal state" is degenerating into what Hilaire Belloc called a "servile state" and Tocqueville called democratic despotism.
10. How is *legal plunder* to be identified? What is the remedy? How is legal plunder defended? How may it be built into a whole system? Identify some of ways of organizing it? How may socialism be opposed?
11. What are the choices? What is the proper function of law? When does the use of force destroy justice?
12. Having disposed of "human greed," Bastiat moves on to a more subtle hazard: "*false philanthropy*" [love of man]. What is the nature of plunder as an idea, a system, and an injustice independent of personal intentions?
13. Identify three varieties of this system. How did this popular aspiration to promote the general welfare through general plunder originate? Why is true law negative? Why is the positive use of law to regulate society dangerous?
14. How do politicians attempt to remedy the ills of society, which may in fact be due to earlier plundering? Why does Bastiat criticize the use of the treasury for charitable, educational, and religious purposes?

How does Bastiat respond to socialist objections to *individualism*? How do the socialists confuse the distinction between government and society?

15. Identify the assumptions of socialist writers. What makes it evident they wish to play God? Who in their view should rule? What view do they take of mankind?
 16. How is this attitude reflected by Bossuet? What did Fenelon, drawing on his classical studies, see as the proper role of the prince? Montesquieu? Rousseau? Raynal? Mably? Condillac? What accounts for this error of the socialist writers?
 17. What is the nature of the political struggle [Bastiat wrote immediately after the failed revolutions of 1848]? What is the nature of liberty? What is the fatal desire of the socialist writers? What is the evidence that they want *philanthropic tyranny* or dictatorship? These observations may be compared with Tocqueville's on democratic despotism.
 18. What sort of *despotism* do they seek to impose? How does Bastiat characterize the efforts of Louis Blanc? What is the triple hypothesis of these philanthropists? How do they attack liberty? How does Bastiat mock them in turn? Where does their right to advocate their ideas stop?
 19. Why does France lead the rest of Europe in *red tape* and *revolutions*? How does the one contribute to the other?
 20. Why must a science of economics be developed before a science of politics? What are the proper legislative functions? What is the necessary result of taking the high road to communism? Why are there too many "great" men in the world? What is the remedy?
- D. Skousen, W. Cleon, *5,000 Year Leap: The 28 Great Ideas That Are Changing the World*, The National Center for Constitutional Studies, Washington, D.C. 1996. ISBN #0-88080-004-6
Assignment: Required Reading – students will turn in 28 pages of “Cornell” notes on this book – one for each principle/great idea

5. Required Reading

Wilson & DiIulio, Jr., *American Government*, Houghton-Mifflin, 11th ed., ISBN# 9780618956128

Skousen, W. Cleon, *5,000 Year Leap: The 28 Great Ideas That Are Changing the World*, The National Center for Constitutional Studies, Washington, D.C. 1996. ISBN #0-88080-004-6

Bastiat, Frederic, *The Law*. The Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn, Alabama, 2007, ISBN 978-1-933550-14-5 or a free online pdf version @ http://www.fee.org/pdf/books/The_Law.pdf

6. Supplemental Reading

Frohnen, Bruce, *The American Republic: Primary Sources*, Liberty Fund Inc., Indianapolis, IN, 2002, ISBN # 9780865973336

7. Internet Sites

A. General Interest:

www.apcentral.collegeboard.com (Course specific information about AP)

www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy (Determine if college accepts APG for credit)

www.theadvocates.org/quiz (“World’s Smallest Political Quiz”)

www.cnn.com.allpolitics (Student’s can subscribe to free weekly e-mail summary of news stories)

www.cagle.com (Political cartoons that are lots of fun)

<http://phs.prs.k12.nj.us/~ewood/amergov/> (Ethel Wood’s AP exam review, complete with content / practice ??’s)

B. Unit One: Constitutional Underpinnings

www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed.htm (all Federalist Papers)

www.constitutioncenter.org/ (US Constitution: activities and analysis)

C. Unit Two: Political Beliefs/Political Behaviors

www.fundrace.org (Analysis of campaign contributions by zip code)

www.politicalcompass.org (Includes survey to determine if you are left/right, authoritarian / libertarian, and compares result with historical leaders)

www.opensecrets.org (Everything you wanted to know about campaign finance)

www.ammi.org/livingroomcandidate (Presidential TV commercials from 1952-present)

www.vote-smart.org (Issues, campaigns, voting records, campaign finance, etc.)

www.archives.gov/federal_register/electoral_college/ (Lots on electoral-college)
www.umich.edu/~nes/nesguide/nesguide.htm (Guide to public opinion & electoral behavior)
www.pollingreport.com/ (The latest in polling)
www.realclearpolitics.com (aggregate journalistic political site along with aggregate polling)
www.uselectionatlas.org (Unbelievably extensive analysis of elections in US history)

D. Unit Three: Political Parties/Interest Groups/Media

www.csuchico.edu/~kcfont/index.html (links to numerous interest group sites)
www.politics1.com/parties.htm (links to political party sites)

E. Unit Four: Institutions

www.congress.org (Lots on Congress)
www.whitehouse.gov (the current presidential administration and agenda)
www.dickinson.edu/departments/policy/billlaw1.html (Humorous look on how bill becomes law)
www.cagw.org (Anti-pork barrel; stands for citizens against government waste. Check out pork per capita by state & Pig Book Oinkers)
www.thomas.loc.gov (Current legislative information on Congress)

F. Unit Six: Civil Liberties/Civil Rights

www.oyez.org (Supreme Court cases arranged by topic - great short summaries.)
www.law.cornell.edu/focus/bulletins.html (Free subscription to email bulletins on Supreme Court decisions before they are reported in the press)

8. Grading Policy

Grades for the course are based on a variety of exercises and assignments throughout the semester. The relative weights (approximate percentages) of these components are:

- Homework/Quizzes 30%
- Projects 10%
- Class Participation 5%
- Examinations 55%

The components of the final grade are as follows:

1. The Homework/Written Assignments are distributed, and upon completion, discussed during class. The purpose of these assignments is to make sure students understand the concepts and materials presented in class and in the assigned reading.
2. Quizzes are given daily after each reading assignment. These involve either brief essay questions and/or objective questions derived from the readings. These quizzes ask students to provide clear evidence of their factual understanding and their grasp of concepts in the course. There will be a vocabulary quiz scheduled toward the beginning of each unit.
3. Written Work is composed of a variety of brief assignments: in-class writing and thought “notes.” The purpose of these writing assignments is for students to develop writing and thinking skills with small, micro-theme kinds of efforts.
4. There will be one project during the semester. It will be collaborative and will require each group to write politically-inspired lyrics to an existing song and create a music video.
5. Class Participation requires attendance throughout the semester. Class participation involves students being asked questions during classes and having their responses to those questions graded. Students are expected to be prepared before class every day by completing the readings and other assignments in advance of class meetings.
6. Each unit exam will consist of a multiple choice section (50%), and a free response section (50%).

9. Classroom Management

1. Please take your seat upon entering the classroom. Each day will begin in prayer and attendance taken.
2. Each one of you is expected to take an active part in class on a daily basis. When you enter our classroom, be prepared to think, ask questions, and make comments.
3. Raise your hand to speak, and speak when called upon.
4. If you have difficulties with this class, feel free to drop by for extra help; and if special problems or circumstances arise, see me as soon as possible so that we can work things out prior to the class hour or assignment that is due.

10. Homework

1. Expect nightly reading assignments. TAKE THESE SERIOUSLY! You will be “in the dark” during class lectures and discussions if you do a poor job of reading or (Gasp!!) do not do the reading at all! You will have particular difficulty on the daily quiz that is based on the previous night’s reading. You may use your handwritten “enrichment notes” for the quiz. If you miss a reading quiz due to excused absence, you are to turn in a Cornell notes / outline of the reading assignment upon which the reading assignment was based.
2. No late/makeup homework will be accepted by unless your green card is checked “excused absence.” If your absence is excused, you will have the number of days to make up your work that your excused absence on your green card dictates.

11. Cheating: This is defined as gaining an unfair advantage, or trying to do so. Consequences: A 0% on the assignment, 25 demerits, possible transfer to another class, and the loss of my respect.

12. My Conference Period / Office Hours: 10:00-10:00 AM; 4:00-4:00-4:30 PM

13. Sample Questions from previous AP Gov exam:

- a. Multiple Choice Sample: Which of the following is argued by James Madison in The Federalist paper number 10?
 1. A system of republican representation helps to limit the excesses of factionalism.
 2. Small republics are better able to ensure individual liberty than are large republics
 3. The presence of a few large factions helps to protect the rights of minorities.
 4. Participatory democracy is the surest way to prevent tyranny.
 5. The elimination of the causes of factionalism is the best protection against tyranny.
- b. A Sample Free Response Question: Presidents are generally thought to have advantages over Congress in conducting foreign policy because of the formal and informal powers of the presidency.
 1. Identify two formal constitutional powers of the President in making foreign policy.
 2. Identify two formal constitutional powers of Congress in making foreign policy.
 3. Identify two informal powers of the President that contribute to the president’s advantage over congress in conducting foreign policy.
 4. Explain how each of the informal powers identified in (3) contributes to the president’s advantage over Congress in conducting foreign policy.

14. Some Parting Words:

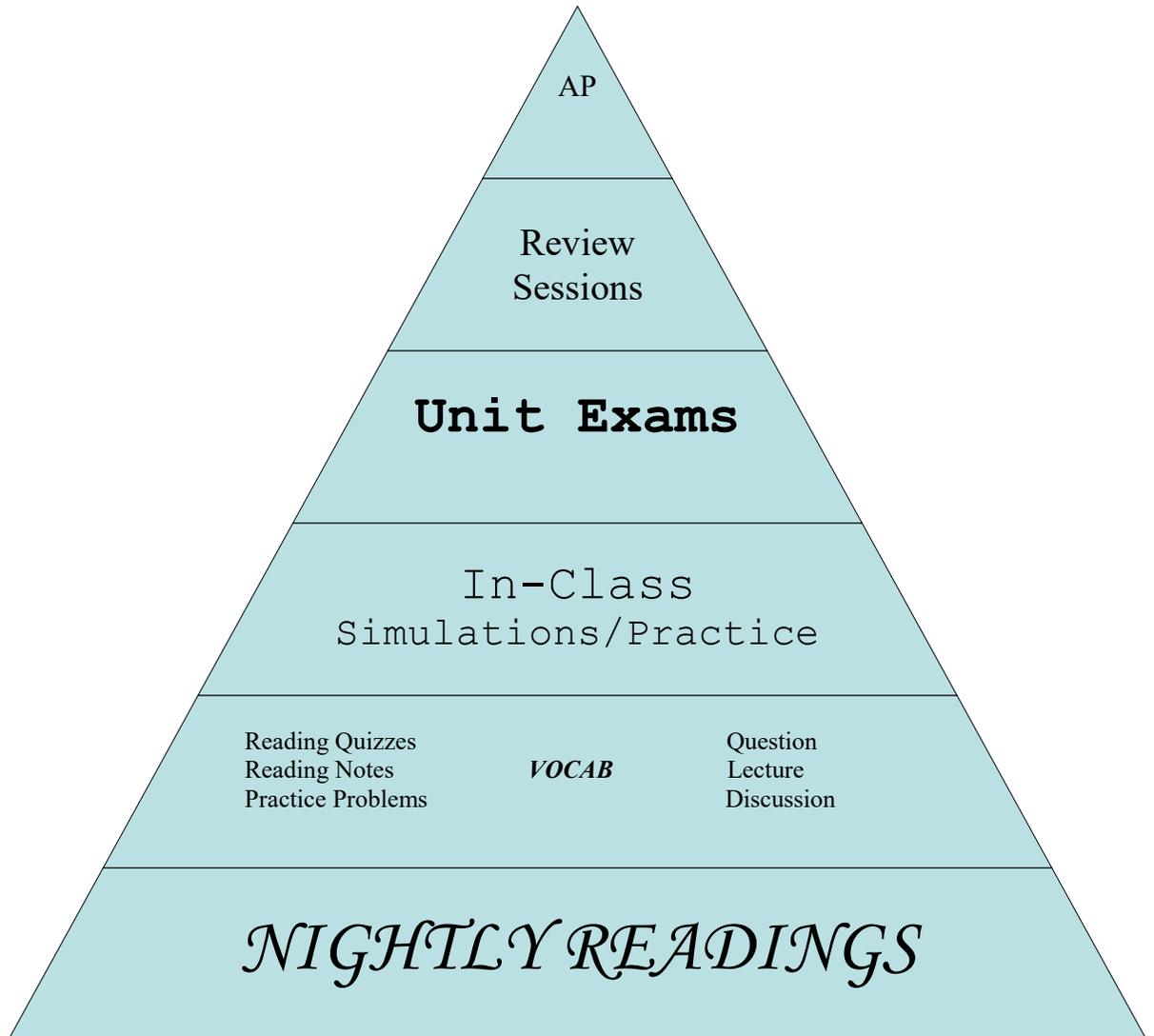
“The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of opinion, is that it is robbing the human race... if the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth.” -John Stuart Mill, *Essay on Liberty*, 1859. What implications do you suppose this famous quotation has for classroom discussion and demeanor?

If you have any questions during the school year, please feel free to contact me at any time.

- Email – cmissejjer@gmail.com
- Office – (818) 340-6131

I have been looking forward to teaching this course once again. I hope that it will be as meaningful for you to take as it has been fun for me to teach.

The U.S. Government & Politics Pyramid of Success



RETURN THIS SHEET SIGNED

I verify, on my word of honor, that I have completely read the course description and that I fully comprehend that there will be a large amount of work required for this class, and that enrolling in this class signifies that I have every intention of completing all of the requirements of this course.

Student's Signature

Student's Name (Printed)