



American Government
Course Syllabus 2021-2022
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Course Description

This course provides an opportunity for students to be introduced to the complex workings of our government, both at the local, state, and national levels. Students will gain an appreciation for the role the government plays in our lives and they will learn the importance of taking an active role within our government to ensure that democracy continues to exist within our country and around the world.

Course Outline

UNIT ONE - Types and Purposes of Government

This unit is designed for students to study the relevance and purposes of government in their lives as well as to study the different political organizations that exist around the world.

Topics

- Definition of Government and Anarchy
- Purposes of Government
- Types of Government
- Authoritative Governments vs. Democratic Governments
- Systems of Government
- Values and Principles of U.S. Democracy

UNIT TWO – Government and the Economy

This unit is designed for students to understand the role that economics plays and the impact that it has in their individual lives, in the business world, and in the country as a whole.

Topics

- Economics and Scarcity
- Trade-offs, Opportunity Costs, Economic Costs and Benefits
- Types of Economic Systems
- The Business Cycle
- Economic Indicators
- Fiscal and Monetary Policy
- Government Regulatory Agencies
- Entitlement Programs

UNIT THREE - The U.S. Constitution

This unit is designed for students to examine the U.S. Constitution and the framework of government it establishes.

Topics

- Articles of Confederation and the Constitutional Convention
- Structure and Function of the U.S. Constitution
- The Bill of Rights

UNIT FOUR - The Executive Branch

This unit is designed to introduce students to the executive branch at both the national and state levels.

Topics

- Qualifications and Qualities/Skills to be the U.S. President and Vice President
- The Presidential Campaign Season
- American Political Parties
- Constitutional Duties of the U.S. President and Vice President
- Roles of the U.S. President
- U.S. Cabinet, Executive Office of the President, and the White House Staff
- State Executive Branch

UNIT FIVE - The Legislative Branch

This unit is designed to introduce students to the legislative branch at both the national and state levels.

Topics

- Congressional Term and Session
- Membership and Leadership in the House and Senate
- Constitutional Powers of Congress
- Responsibilities of Congressional Members
- The Lawmaking Process
- Civil Rights Legislation
- The Maryland General Assembly

UNIT SIX - The Judicial Branch

This unit is designed to introduce students to the judicial branch at both the national and state levels.

Topics

- Federal Court System (structure, function, and jurisdiction)
- Maryland Court System (structure, function, and jurisdiction)
- Civil and Criminal Law and Proceedings
- Judicial Review
- Supreme Court Cases (individual rights and freedoms)

Textbook

Remy, Richard C. *United States Government: Democracy in Action*

Materials

- 3-Ring Binder – 1.5-inch minimum - This binder will only be used for American Government
- (6) Notebook dividers
- Loose leaf paper
- Pen/pencil – pens must be blue or black ink (graded assignments)

Grading Policy

Your quarter grade will be determined using the following weighted scale:

- 50% = Product (includes unit tests and projects)
- 30% = Process (includes quizzes and graded assignments)
- 20% = Practice (includes lesson closures and completion assignments)

Your final grade will be based on the average of the four quarter grades (20% each) and both the mid-year and final exam grades (10% each). I will update grades on HAC as scores are entered in the gradebook. If at any time you are concerned about your grade, please talk to me. We will discuss where improvements can be made.

Cheating, copying, and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. If I determine you cheated on a test, quiz, or assignment or if I can determine you plagiarized any portion of an assignment, then I will give you a “0” for it. If I can determine that you copied another student’s work, then I will give both you and the other student a “0”. **For each incident, your parents will be notified, and disciplinary action will occur.** For further clarification of the academic integrity policy, please refer to the fourth page of the syllabus and the student planner.

Quizzes, Tests, and Exams

There will be a series of quizzes and tests given throughout the year. All quizzes and tests will be announced in advance. You are expected to take them on the days they are scheduled. If you are absent from class the day of a quiz or test, then you will complete it the next time you are in class. We will review for all quizzes and tests the class period prior. If you are absent the day of a review, then you will take the quiz or test the class period after your return. If it is an extended absence, then we will arrange a make-up date after all absent work has been completed.

A mid-year exam and a final exam are required for this course. Each exam will count for 10% of your final course grade. The mid-year exam will cover all the information from 1st semester (units 1-3) and the final exam will be cumulative (units 1-6). We will review for each one.

Homework Assignments

All homework assignments will be checked and/or collected at the beginning of class. You are expected to have them completed at that time. All collected assignments are to be written in blue or black pen or in pencil. I will not accept collected assignments in any other color.

If you have a question about an assignment, please see me in the morning before school. If you have a problem with having an assignment completed on time, please see me prior to its due date. Based upon your explanation, I will decide if an extension will be granted without penalty.

You will have the opportunity to receive extra credit throughout each quarter. Take advantage of these opportunities. I will not give special extra credit assignments at the end of the quarter.

Absent Work Policy

All assignments should be submitted on time. Students will be given the number of class periods equal to the number of lawful class periods absent to turn in completed make up assignments without penalty. If a student is unlawfully absent, work will be accepted with a penalty of one letter grade.

Late Work Policy

All assignments should be submitted on time in order to earn full credit. Any assignment, (product, process, or practice) will be allowed to be turned in late for one letter grade deduction from the grade a student earns on the assignment. In order to earn credit for late assignments, students must submit assignments by the end of the day on Wednesday (except for the last week of the quarter) following the designated HAC update. Students are only able to submit assignments that have an established due date within the grading window before the designated HAC update. Assignments that are turned in for late credit will be identified by a footnote in HAC to include a statement about the deduction of a letter grade due to the lateness of the assignment.

Grading Window	Designated HAC Update	Late Work Due Date
September 8- September 24	September 24	September 29
September 27- October 13	October 13	October 20
October 14- October 29	October 29	November 5 (Friday)
November 8- November 19	November 19	November 24
November 22- December 10	December 10	December 15
December 13- January 13	January 13	January 21 (Friday)
January 24- February 11	February 11	February 16
February 14- February 25	February 25	March 2
February 28- March 11	March 11	March 16
March 14- March 25	March 25	March 31 (Thursday)
April 1- April 22	April 22	April 27
April 25- May 6	May 6	May 11
May 11- May 20	May 20	May 25

Academic Integrity

Cheating, copying, and plagiarism are all forms of academic dishonesty. Cheating is any form of obtaining information unfairly and without authorization for a test, quiz or other graded assignment. Copying is the use of another's work with the understanding of a teacher that it is one's own. Unless a teacher has expressly stated in the assignment instructions that the task is one that is collaborative, it should be assumed that the assessment is an individual endeavor. Cheating, whether verbal, written, or computer generated, can involve, but is not limited to:

- Copying on tests and copying of homework
- Plagiarism of published works (including Internet resources)
- Multiple submission of work previously turned in for a grade by another student.
- Giving answers to a test or homework
- Discussion of test materials with others
- Using electronic devices to communicate any contents of homework, tests or quizzes
- Using electronic devices without teacher permission to acquire information during class hours

Tardiness

You are expected to be in the classroom by the time the bell rings to begin class. If you arrive to class once it has begun, you will be marked tardy. The first offense results in a warning. The second offense results in a conference with me after class. The third and fourth offenses result in after school detention. Further offenses result in referrals to the office. If you have an excused note for your lateness, please give it to me upon entering the room so that you will not be marked tardy. If you need to go to the restroom, to your locker, or to the water fountain, please do so before the bell rings but notify me before leaving the classroom so I do not mark you tardy if you arrive back to the classroom after the late bell. **An unexcused lateness to school results in an unexcused lateness to class.**

Absences

If you know about an absence from class in advance (ex: extracurricular activities, doctor appointments), you must see me about the assignments you will miss and turn in any homework that is due. You will be expected to turn in all make up work when you return to class.

If the absence is unexpected (ex: sickness), you will have the number of days absent to make up any missed work (full credit with an excused absence code and a letter grade penalty with an unexcused absence code). Regardless of the reason for the absence, all assignments given prior to it will be due the day you return to class, and this includes taking any tests that were announced prior to the absence.

When you return to class after an absence, you will receive an absence sheet detailing the work you missed. It will list the class activities, the homework assignments, and any assignments turned in for a grade. Attached to the sheet will be any handouts and returned assignments that were distributed in class.

Leaving Early

If you must leave class early, please notify me at the beginning of class. I will tell you what work you will miss. When the time comes for you to leave, please do so quietly. You are responsible for all missed class work and for all assigned homework.

Student Responsibility

It is your responsibility to be fully prepared for class when it begins. This includes having all necessary items for class (notebook, paper, pen/pencil, homework, etc.). I will not allow you to go to your locker during class to retrieve forgotten materials. In addition, I will only allow you to go to the bathroom or water fountain during individual work time and only if your work is completed and you have a hall pass.

Discipline

While you are in the classroom, you are to show respect to both your fellow students and to me. When you want to speak in class, please raise your hand. You are asked to remain quiet when another student or I is speaking. Keep all inappropriate comments to yourself. In addition, you are to respect my property and the property of your fellow students.

Disruptive behavior in class will not be tolerated. If your behavior becomes a problem, you will have two chances to fix the problem before you are sent to the office. This is the "three strikes and you are out" rule. The first strike will consist of a warning from me. The second strike will consist of serving after school detention. The third strike will result in being sent to the office for further disciplinary action. You will be immediately sent to the office for all serious behavior offenses (fighting, disrespect, theft, etc.).

Cell Phone Policy

- Students will place their cellphones in the teacher designated area as they enter the classroom. The phones will remain in the teacher designated area unless the teacher explicitly tells the students to take out their phones for instructional use.
- Cellphones will remain in the teacher designated area during bathroom visits, assemblies and trips to the nurse/counseling office/main office.
- Cellphones will be retrieved from the teacher designated area at the end of class at the direction of the teacher.
- School-appropriate cellphone use is permitted during class changes and lunch. Students are not permitted to make phone calls during school hours.
- If the cell phone policy is violated, it is a referable offense.