

American Government: Course Syllabus

Course Description: American Government is a class designed to acquaint students with the origins, concepts, organizations, and policies of the United States government and political system. To increase comprehension, students will read and analyze relevant primary and secondary source documents and incorporate these ideas into the assigned material. Satisfactory completion of the course will prepare students to take the state mandated American Government End of Course Exam.

Texts: American Government by Openstax The digital text will be used to guide all classroom material and as a reference for main ideas, key terms, and primary source readings. Course material is found online at www.omeganotes.com

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution

Course Objectives: During this course, students will:

- Understand the basic concepts of democratic thought
- Analyze the formation, concepts, and components of the United States Constitution
- Investigate the idea of federalism and explain the role of states and the national government in America's political environment
- Explore America's political culture and examine the traits and beliefs of the American voter.
- Identify America's major political parties, the core beliefs, and the impact special interest groups can have on their actions
- Understand the electoral process in the United States
- Examine the components and functions of Missouri's state government
- Analyze the organization and purpose of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches of government
- Understand the role and structure of the federal bureaucracy
- Investigate the modern media and its impact on public opinion
- Examine the concepts of civil rights and civil liberties and their impact on American society

Units of Study / Chapter Reference:

Unit I: Foundations of Democratic Thought and the United States Constitution (Chapters 1-3)

Unit II: Federalism (Chapter 4)

Unit III: Political Culture and the American Voter (Chapter 6)

Unit IV: Political Parties and Special Interest Groups (Chapters 5, 9)

Unit V: The Electoral Process (Chapter 7)

Unit V: Public Opinion and the Media (Chapter 8)

Unit VI: Missouri Government (Chapters 24-25)

Unit VII: Legislative Branch (Chapters 10-12)

Unit VIII: The President and Executive Branch (Chapters 13-14)

Unit IX: The Federal Bureaucracy (Chapter 15)

Unit X: The National Judiciary (Chapter 18)

Unit XI: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (Chapters 19-21)

Unit XII: Public Policy (Chapters 16-17, 22-23)

Assignments: Students will be assigned a variety of classroom assignments throughout the course of the class. These will be completed either as individual or collaborative group assignments. Work turned in one day late will be subject to a 10% point deduction from assignments overall point value. Work turned in after five days late will be subject to a 50% point reduction. Exemptions from this policy will be given upon verified absences such as documented illness, family emergency, and school related events. Students with excused absences will be given one day for every day missed to make up missed work. Students who exceed the allotted number of excused absences must provide documentation (doctor's note, etc.) to avoid late work penalties. Assignments for this class will be posted on my School Wire page and can be shared with you through Google Drive. Daily assignments will account for 30% of your overall course grade

Projects: During the course of the school year, students will complete a number of projects as they pertain to specific ideas and principles. This will include current events, role playing, and oral / visual presentations. These will be completed as individual projects unless otherwise assigned. Projects will account for 30% of your overall course grade

Quizzes / Exams: Quizzes may be given at any time during a specific unit of study to measure student achievement on a particular concept or idea. These will be short and graded in class. Unit exams will be given at the end of each unit. These will cover only the ideas covered from that unit. **All students must take and pass the Unit II United States Constitution exam in order to graduate; this is a state law and no exceptions will be given.** Unit exams will account for 30% of your overall course grade, and the fall semester final and the spring End of Course exam will account for 10% of the overall grade. Students must take the End of Course exam at the end of the school year in order to graduate.

Notes: All classroom notes, study guides, and assigned readings will be posted on my School Wire page. **Students will be individually responsible for printing off unit notes and study guides.** This page can be accessed at through the university Web page.

Attendance / Tardies: Please refer to the student handbook regarding the attendance and tardy policy.

Food / Drinks: Drinks are permitted as long as they have a lid and don't become a problem. No food is allowed in the classroom.

Classroom Behavior: Any behavior that disrupts the classroom environment will not be tolerated (this includes the use of cell phones and other electronics). Students who violate this policy may be asked to leave the classroom.

Teacher Contact Info: Feel free to contact me with **any** questions or concerns that you may have regarding this class. It is important to remember two things: First, I can't help you with a problem if I don't know about it. Second, "bad planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part"

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