

American Government Course Outline

Ms. Griffiths

I. General Information

American Government /12 grade

Course length: one semester

Credits: 5 units

Text: *Magruder's American Government*, McLenaghan

Course required for graduation

ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

Principles of American Democracy : Standards for grade 12	state standards	quarter
Students will study the effects of ancient Greece, Rome, and leading European political thinkers such as Locke, Hobbes etc. on the development of American government. Students will discuss the pros and cons of federal, confederate and unitary systems. Students will compare the ways in which power is distributed, shared and limited in various systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems	12.1:#1 12.9 #2,3	1 st and 3 rd
Students will evaluate past events to examine the roots of American democracy (colonial period to the U.S. Constitution) by using primary source documents i.e.: <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> , <i>The Federalist Papers</i> , and the <i>Articles of Confederation</i> .	12.1#3 Analysis, chronology and point of view	1 st and 3 rd
Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the 3 branches of government established by the Constitution. Including an in-depth study of the Bill of Rights and other amendments, and how the Constitution reflects a balance between the republican philosophies and right of the individual. Students will evaluate the principals of the Constitution-including checks and balances, separation of powers, minority vs. minority rights, equality of rights and the rule of law.	12.1 #3 12.4 #1,2,3,4,5,6 12.5 #1,3 12.7 #4	1 st and 3 rd
Students analyze and compare powers and procedures of national and state governments and how conflicts between them are resolved. Students will identify major responsibilities and sources of revenue for state governments and discuss reserved and concurrent powers of government.	12.7 #1,2,3	1 st and 3 rd
Students will study the role of Federalism (the system of separated and shared powers). Powers studied will include the delegated powers of the federal government : including enumerated, implied and inherent as well as reserved powers of the states.	12.1 #5	1 st and 3 rd

Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationship among them and how they are secured. This includes a discussion of basic civil rights and liberties	12.2 # 1,5,6	2 nd and 4 th
Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments•changing interpretation of the Bill of Rights over time •study the Warren and Rehnquist courts •case study of, <i>Plessy, Brown, Bakke, Miranda, Mapp</i> , VMI and Citadel cases, <i>Roe, Webster</i> , and more.	12.5 # 1,2,3,4	2 nd and 4 th
Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national and state offices. Coverage will include political parties, propaganda, media, polls and trends in voter turnout and participation in the political process.	12.6 #1,2,3,4,6	2 nd and 4 th
Through a study of the media students will learn the meaning and importance of a free press and how the public officials use the media to communicate with the people and shape public opinion.	12,8 # 1,2	2 nd and 4 th
Students discover the importance of maintaining a balance between: Majority rule and individual rights, civil disobedience and the rule of law, freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial, and the relationship between religion and government.	12.10	2 nd and 4 th

- II. **Course Objectives and Requirements:** Students will learn to develop study skills in the areas of reading, writing, listening, classifying, comparing, surveying, recalling, organizing, speaking and leadership as they relate to course content. We will work on nurturing critical thinking skills as related to identification, analysis, interpretation and application of information.

All students must be on time and ready to work each day. All assignments must be completed by their due date or the student will receive no credit. (Excused absences are an exception) All work **MUST BE COMPLETED IN BLUE OR BLACK INK OR TYPEWRITTEN** in order to receive credit. Please refer to and follow your senior standards sheet. **There will be a mandatory semester project required in order to pass the course.** Topic choice is at teacher discretion.

Students must keep a separate notebook (three ring) for their course work. The notebook should be divided into four sections: text homework, worksheets/handouts, exams, and notes. Notebooks may be collected at random during the semester and everyone must turn in a completed notebook on the day of the final. Failure to keep a notebook will seriously lower your final grade in the course and greatly hinder your ability to study.

- III. **Assessment:** Grades will be based on a point/percent basis for all assignments. Some assignments will receive more than one grade. (unit tests for example) . The final exam and the required project will each be worth 20% of the semester grade. All grades will be averaged at the end of the quarter by taking the total number of points earned and dividing them by the number of assignments given. The final exam and project will be added to your quarter points for your semester total.
- IV. **Attendance:** The school policies for attendance and tardies will be followed. Please see Student Handbook for specifics.

V. **Student Activities:** During the semester students must participate in discussions, small and large group projects and complete numerous reading and writing assignments. Participation will be graded.

VI. General Comments: Responsibility is the key word to surviving one of my classes. Be responsible for your assignments and your actions and we should survive the semester without any problems. Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated and could result in removal from class! Once we are over the basic introduction to the course this class is run largely on a discussion format and everyone is entitled to speak their mind and share their opinions. If you are unable to keep an open mind and be polite to your peers alternative work will be assigned and you will be placed on a behavioral contract.

If you are confused or need additional help PLEASE ASK. I am available after school and during lunch most days. Please arrange an appointment whenever possible so we do not miss each other. Please remember the day before an exam is NOT the time to come and tell me you do not understand anything in the chapter. Make sure you are current with reading and homework assignments.

Please return this signed course description tomorrow. At that time you will receive another to keep as the first page of your notebook. Please read before signing to avoid confusion later.

_____ class
period: _____

parent/guardian signature student signature

Please print student's name: _____

date: _____