

US Government & Civics Syllabus



Course: United States Government and Civics

Instructor: Jennifer Hofmann

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Textbook: Magruder's American Government

Materials: Magruder's American Government Textbook & Study guide/Students will need paper for notetaking/assignments, a binder or folder, and a writing utensil daily.

Introduction: This semester long course will examine the democratic foundations, structures, and institutions of American government at local, state, and national levels, including that of the state of Tennessee. Students will study the political processes to gain understanding of the role of the individuals in the decision-making process of American government. Students will also learn about the rights and responsibilities of the citizens of the United States. By investigating American government through a variety of methods, including examining primary source documents, conducting research projects, class discussion, and written essays students will gain a deeper understanding of the function of the United States Government.

Unit Overviews:

I. **Unit I – Foundations of the United States Government** (~3-4 Weeks)

This introductory unit will begin familiarizing students with the most basic concepts and understandings of the United States Government. A special emphasis will be placed on the formation of the government and the process that was required to form the foundations of the country.

II. **Unit II – The Constitution and its Amendments** (~3-4 Weeks)

The second unit of study will focus on the principles and big ideas of the US Constitution. Through looking at the ideas of Checks and Balances, Federalism, Popular Sovereignty, Separation of Power, Republicanism, and Limited Governments the students will gain an understanding of the guiding principles of the United States Government. Special emphasis on the Amendments will give students an understanding of the types of protections and freedoms citizens have.

III. **Unit III – The Branches of Government** (~3-4 Weeks)

In Unit III students will be examining each of the three main branches of government and their specific functions. Special emphasis on the process of elections, how a bill becomes a law, and the idea of judicial review will connect the ideas of the functions of government to the six principles of the constitution.

IV. **Unit IV – Civil Liberties** (~2-3 Weeks)

In Unit IV students will identify various liberties that are ensured through the Constitution and analyze court cases specifically involving teenage students that have impacted the ways our liberties are protected.

Class Format: In this class students will engage in a classroom where materials will be presented primarily in a digital format, and discussions will be held during class time. This class will also include project-based learning as a major component. Students will utilize technology, work collaboratively, and work to solve real-world problems.

Grading Policies: Grades will be decided by the following mixture of formative and summative assessments:

1. **Quizzes** will be given throughout the semester and will count for **20%** of the final grade.
2. **Assessments** (Unit Exams/Projects) will be given after each unit and will count for **40%** of the final grade.
3. **Classwork Assignments** will account for **15%** of the final grade and will include bell ringers, primary source work, daily assignments, and collaborative group assignments.
4. **Class Participation** will account for **10%** of the final grade and will include active participation during class.
5. **Final Exam** will be given at the end of the semester and will account for **15%** of the final average. The exam will be cumulative.
6. **Extra credit** will be available to students, however, only students that turned in all assignments will be granted this opportunity.

Grading Scale for the 2023-2024 School Year:

A= 90-100

B= 80-89

C= 70-79

D= 60-69

F= 0-59

Classroom Procedures:

1. Please make sure that you are adhering to the dress code, attendance, and device policies.
2. Bell Ringers will be displayed daily before class begins. Students will be expected to begin working once they arrive in the classroom.
3. Assignments will either be turned in digitally on Teams or collected by the teacher. Late assignments will be accepted after the due date, but with a 10% deduction for each day behind schedule.
4. Following an absence, **it is the student's responsibility to ask the teacher for the missed work.**
5. Students leaving the classroom must have the teacher's permission and must take a hall pass.
6. When working collaboratively, it is the responsibility of the group to remain on task. If the group is unable to stay on task, the teacher may choose to dismantle the group.

***Additional Information:**

1. Assignments, due dates, and learning targets will be posted daily.
2. When you are absent, **it is YOUR responsibility** to contact the teacher or utilize Teams for missing assignments.
3. To succeed in this course, you will need to be an active learner in class daily. Notes, PowerPoints, screencasts, primary sources, and videos will be found in Teams.

Ms. Hofmann's Classroom Rules:

1. Be on time for class!
2. Bring your materials to class daily.
3. Make sure you are adhering to the school policies regarding dress code, attendance, and electronic devices (see student handbook)
4. Do not text or be on your phone when I am teaching. There will be time for students to have appropriate technology breaks during class.
5. Students should not include me or the class in pictures/videos/Snapchat/TikTok or any other form of social media without my permission.
6. Students show respect for the teacher and fellow classmates; it is your responsibility to be active listeners.
7. Students use appropriate tone and language in the classroom.

***Please return this syllabus with a parent signature:**

Student Name: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____