

United States Government Syllabus

Fall 2010

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Text: McClenaghan, Wm. *Magruder's American Government*. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009.

Needed Materials: Three-ring binder, Dictionary (to be kept at home).

Course Description: This course provides students with the opportunity to pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government. The course compares systems of government in the world today and analyzes the history and changing interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government. The course will result in the culmination of civic literacy as students prepare to vote, participate in community activities, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship

Assessment: Students will receive grades for in-class assignments and activities. Many of the tests are take-home essays. Multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and matching tests will also be given. Daily assignments and tests are to be graded by the parents before submitting to the instructor.

Homework assignments will be returned to you. You should keep daily assignments in a three-ring binder. These assignments will make up a portfolio that you may use to prepare for the comprehensive final.

Grading: Grades are computed using the following weighted categories:

Parent grade on Essay Tests	15%
Teacher grade on Essay Tests	25%
Homework	40%
Quizzes	10%
Participation	10%

Semester letter grades will be computed using the school's adopted formula:

A = 93 – 100%	C = 73 – 76
A- = 90 – 92	C- = 70 – 72
B+ = 87 – 89	D+ = 67 – 69
B = 83 – 86	D = 63 – 66
B- = 80 – 82	D- = 60 – 62
C+ = 77 – 79	F = Less than 60% of points possible

Late Work: Late assignments will be accepted only if the student could not turn them in due to illness, approved school activity, or any other legitimate excused absence. You will have two weeks from the time of your return to complete any missing assignments. Late work will not be accepted from students without a valid excuse. I do not give extra credit assignments to

students who waste opportunities to do the work at the appropriate time. However, I occasionally put extra credit questions into tests, homework and in-class assignments.

Expectations for this Course:

- Parent
 - o The parent will help devise assignments appropriate to the student’s abilities and to the assigned topics.
 - o The parent will check the student’s progress daily.
 - o The parent will make sure that the student does more than just complete the paperwork portion of the assignments; i.e. the parent must make sure that the student understands the major concepts and vocabulary of each unit.
 - o Parents are expected to grade all essays and portfolios before the student submits them to the instructor. The instructor will provide grading rubrics for these major assignments.
 - o The parent will check the student’s progress using the online program that the school makes available to all families.
- Student
 - o The student will be on time and on task at every session.
 - o The student will complete the assigned readings prior to coming to class.
 - o The student will complete the assigned written exercises prior to coming to class.
 - o The student will bring the textbook and notebook to every session.
 - o The student will show printed progress reports to the parent.

Scope and Sequence:

Specific reading suggestions/assignments will be given at the Friday class sessions. This list of topics might undergo a few minor modifications as the year progresses to accommodate holidays, testing schedules, and the overall pace of the class.

Week	Topics	Chap.
1	Principles of Government / Origins of the American Constitution	1,2
2	The Constitution / Federalism	3,4
3	Political Parties / Voters and Voter Behavior	5,6
4	The Electoral Process / Mass Media and Public Opinion	7,8
5	Interest Groups / Congress	9,10
6	Powers of Congress / Congress in Action	11,12
7	The Presidency / The Presidency in Action	13,14
8	Government at Work: The Bureaucracy / Financing Government	15,16
9	Foreign Policy and National Defense	17
10	Federal Court System / Civil Liberties: First Amendment Freedoms	18,19
11	Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights + Equal Justice	20,21
12	Comparative Political Systems / Comparative Economic Systems	22,23
13	State Governments	24
14	Local Governments	25
15	Final Paper Topics	-
16	Submit Final Paper and take Final Exam	All
17	[No Friday class]	-