

Honors American Government

Mary G. Montgomery High School
For Mr. Rose
Course Syllabus
Spring, 2008

Course Description:

Do you need to brush-up your knowledge of the American political system? Have you forgotten or feel slightly 'hazy' about the structure of the American government, the details of the Constitution or the exact division of the three branches of government? Are you interested in discovering how our current political parties were formed or the impact of public opinion, mass media and special interests groups on today's American policies? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions then you are in the right class.

This course was written with the belief that understanding the foundations of the America system of government is necessary to fully comprehend America's current political system.

In this course, you will learn

- Why, when, and how the American Government was established
- The structure of the Constitution
- Constitutional meaning to the individual
- The structure of the Legislative Branch
- The organization of the House of Representatives
- The organization of the Senate
- The structure and organization of the Judiciary Branch
- The organization of the state courts
- The organization of the federal courts
- The organization and structure of the Executive Branch
- The role in the political process of public opinion
- The role in the political process of the mass media.
- The role in the political system of Interest Groups
- The role in the political system of Political Parties
- The process of voting and elections
- Introduction to American Economic, Foreign, and public policies

Because we have only nine weeks together, we will have to move through the system of government rather quickly.

The Honors American Government courses at Mary G. Montgomery High School are designed to provide students with a thorough understanding of the foundations of the United States government, its institutions, the political processes, and how policy decisions are reached.

Course Policies:

Obviously these are not all of the policies, procedures and subtle nuances that exist in my classes but these are a fair example of what I expect to happen in my classes. The bottom line is that I expect you to take your educational experiences seriously. You are your responsibility, not mine, not your parents, not this school's, not the government's. Do your best.

1. Attendance is a serious matter. It is your responsibility to attend class. There will be some type of activity that will require your attendance every single day that the class meets. In addition, credit for this class will be given according to

the school's attendance policy. If you are absent for more than 50 percent of any given class period, you will be marked absent. This includes early dismissals.

2. In the event that you are absent, find out what you missed by looking in the file near the windows. Your name will be placed on any printed material that you may have missed. It is your responsibility to find out about any other missed work. Generally that type of material will be placed on your assignment calendar. Complete any of the assignments and get them back to me on the next make up day.
3. Tardies will be recorded daily and will be dealt with according to the school's policy. Please read it and be aware that it is being followed to the letter.
4. ALWAYS SIT IN YOUR ASSIGNED SEAT. I take attendance using the seating chart in my computer. As a result, it is very important that you sit in the correct seat.
5. If you are planning on spending time in retract, you should be aware of my feelings regarding retract. Retract is not study hall! It is not a place to catch up on your homework! It is supposed to be place of incarceration. Since there is some type of meaningful activity happening everyday in psychology, if you miss it, you are truly missing out!
6. I do not like early dismissals. Again remember that if you are gone for more than half of my class period, I will mark you absent.
7. Your attitude in class is important to me. I expect that you will have a great attitude while in my classroom. An attitude of apathy or disrespect will not be tolerated.
8. Come to class with your materials everyday. Your materials include the following things: The courses text book, A three ring binder, A number two pencil, plenty of three ring binder style paper, your homework assignment...
9. I have a learning disability when it comes to names and faces... NO REALLY! Please be patient with me if I call you by the wrong name. I will be taking a significant amount of time at the beginning of the semester to learn your names. This is very important to me and will help you as well.
10. Assignments are to be turned in on the day that they are due. I will not accept assignments that are turned in late unless the circumstance warrants it. If you are absent, I expect that you will turn in your late work after school on Thursday during the tutorial session. That way I can give you any extra assistance that you might need catching up.

American Government Schedule

Standards and Objectives:

Unit 01

Week 1 - Philosophical Foundations

- COS 1.0 Identify the origins and functions of government.
- COS 2.0 Analyze the purposes, organization, functions, and principles of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 1, 2 and 3

Unit 02

Week 2 - 3 - Structure of the Constitution

- COS 3.0 Explain how the federal system of the United States divides powers between national and state governments, including the areas of taxation, revenue distribution, federal grants, distribution of entitlements, regulation of interstate commerce, and enforcement of contracts.
- COS 9.0 Identify constitutional provisions of the legislative branch of the government of the United States.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 2, 3 and 4
Common Sense
The Declaration of Independence
One of the Federalist Papers

Unit 03

Week 4 - The Legislature

- COS 9.0 Identify constitutional provisions of the legislative branch of the government of the United States.
- COS 9.1 Comparing rules of operation and hierarchies of the House and Senate.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 5, 6 and 7
The Constitution

Unit 04

Week 5 - The Executive Branch

- COS 9.1 Comparing rules of operation and hierarchies of the House and Senate.
- COS 10 Identify constitutional provisions of the executive branch of the government of the United States.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 8, 9 and 9
The Constitution

Unit 05 and Unit 6

Week 6 and 7 - The Judicial Branch

- COS 11 Identify constitutional provisions of the judicial branch of the government of the United States.
- COS 11.1 Identifying the impact of landmark Supreme Court cases on constitutional interpretation.
- COS 5.0 Trace the expansion of suffrage and its effect on the political system of the United States.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 11, 13 and 14
The Constitution
Twenty Courts Cases

Unit 07

Week 8 - The Amendments

Unit 08

Week 8 - Alabama State Government

- COS 12 Contrast the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a representative democracy.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 16
<http://www.alabama.gov/portal/index.jsp>

Unit 09: Criterion Reference Test

Review for CRT
Criterion Referenced Test will be given here

Evaluation

Your grade will be based on your performance. During the term, if you earn 90% of the total points possible, you will be given an A for the term.

100% - 90%	= A
89% - 80%	= B
79% - 70%	= C
69% - 60%	= D
59% - 0%	= F

I strongly suggest that you keep accurate records. For those of you who do not keep good records, I will be giving you a progress report at mid-term whether you are failing or not, so you can see where your average is.

Assignment Descriptions

1. Study Guides make up about 24 Percent of the grade in this class.
2. Class participation makes up about 8 percent of the class grade. I expect you to actively engage in the class discussions and activities.
3. The other 48 percent of the grade pretty much comes from test grades. They are an essential part of my ability to assess whether you understand the materials that we are going to explore together.
4. The final exam is 20 percent of the Quarter (GNA) Grade.

Materials

You will need the following things to succeed in this class:

- A 1 or 1.5 inch three ring binder is required.
- A bunch of lined paper is a must.
- A pencil and or pen... duh.
- Access to internet is suggested.
- A good attitude is required.

Additional readings as provided by instructor

Daily newspaper (Washington Post, New York Times, etc.) and weekly newsmagazines (Newsweek, Time, etc.)

In addition, students are expected to utilize other media outlets to keep abreast of current political events. Meet the Press, Crossfire, and Washington Week in Review are good television programs, and there are also numerous websites devoted to current issues related to government.

Students are required to keep a three-ring binder for the class. The binder will be organized as instructed and all material, notes, quizzes, tests, and assignments will be kept in the binder. Binders will periodically be checked for content and organization. In addition, students are expected to bring their textbook and other necessary material to class daily.