

American Government
Mr. Amorosa

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Academic Office: Clay Center

Basketball Office: Athletic Center

Course Description

The course will pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government in order to prepare the student to become an effective citizen in American society. The student will focus on the development of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and study the court cases defining our rights and limitations. Students will have a thorough understanding of our nation's political party system, as well as the governmental relationships within our federal system and the separation of powers/checks and balances within our national government.

Textbook:

MAGRUDER'S AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. Student Edition E-Text

Grading:

Your grade will be comprised of tests, quizzes, daily written assignments, various projects and the final exam. Your final grade for the semester will be a running average of quarter one and two.

Tests: 60% (including Unit Exams and Project)

Daily Work, Quizzes and Homework: 40%

IPAD Use:

Students are required to use their IPAD to read the text, take notes, read current events, research public policy topics, and complete assignments. IPAD's should be brought to class on a daily basis, along with a pen or pencil. The Acceptable Use Policy will be in effect throughout a class period, and students will be held accountable to the rules of community life.

Materials:

Binder, E-Textbook and Headphones

Course Outline- 1st Quarter

Unit 1, Foundations of American Government- Chapter 1 (1 week)

- *Examine structures, functions & processes of the national, state, and local government*
 - *Analyze advantages & disadvantages of federal, confederate, and unitary systems of government*
 - *Analyze advantages & disadvantages of presidential and parliamentary systems of government*
1. Types of Government Structure: Parliamentary vs. Presidential
 2. Kinds of Democracy: Direct vs. Indirect democracy
 3. Systems of Government: Unitary and federal governments
 4. Theories on the Origins of Government
 5. Path to Independence (Revolution, Declaration of Independence)

Unit 2, Foundations of American Government- Chapters 2, 3, and 4 (3 weeks)

- *Examine the debates and compromises that impacted the making of the founding documents*
 - *Identify the contributions of the political philosophies of the Founding Fathers*
 - *Identify how the American beliefs and principles of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution contribute to both national and federal identity currently*
1. Constitutional Convention (compromises and ratification)
 2. The U.S. Constitution (Structure and principles of the constitution, including separation of powers, checks and balances, and judicial review)
 3. Federalism (federal, state and concurrent powers)

Unit 3, The Judicial Branch, Civil Liberties and Civil Rights- Chapters 18, 19, 20, and 21 (2 weeks)

- *Analyze the structure and functions of the judicial branch of government*
 - *Analyze selected issues raised by judicial activism, judicial restraint and judicial supremacy*
 - *Review landmark cases about individual rights, rights of the accused, due process and equal protection*
1. Types of Federal Courts
 2. The Supreme Court (Case studies of landmark cases)
 3. Judicial Review (Activism v Restraint)
 4. Civil Liberties: First Amendment Freedoms
 5. Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights and Rights of the Accused
 6. Civil Rights: Equal Justice Under Law and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment

Unit 4, Political Behavior: Government by the People- Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 (2.5 weeks)

- *Identify opportunities for citizens to participate in political party activities*
 - *Understand the factors that influence an individual's political attitudes and actions*
 - *Examine different points of view of political parties and interest groups*
 - *Give examples of the processes used by different entities to affect public policy*
1. Political Parties (one party system, two party system, multiparty system)
 2. The Right to Vote (extending suffrage, voter qualifications, civil rights, and voter behavior)
 3. The Electoral Process (primaries, open and closed primaries, raising money, the general election)
 4. Mass Media and Public Opinion (how public opinion is formed, polling, the role of mass media)
 5. Interest Groups (role, value, types, lobbying)

Course Outline- Quarter 2

Unit 5, The Legislative Branch-Chapters 10, 11, and 12 (3.5 weeks)

- *Analyze the structure and functions of the legislative branch of government*
 - *Identify the leaders of in both houses of Congress*
 - *Explain the process of how a bill becomes a law*
 - *Examine public policy issues affecting Congress*
1. Congress (Constitutional powers)
 2. The House of Representatives (Qualifications and the way the House works)
 3. The Senate (Qualifications and the way the Senate works)
 4. Powers of Congress (Expressed, Implied and Inherent)
 5. Oversight Function (The way Congress operates)
 6. Committees (Types, structure and powers)

Unit 6, The Executive Branch- Chapters 13, 14, and 15 (2.5 weeks)

- *Analyze the structure and functions of the executive branch of government*
 - *Explain the process of electing the president of the United States*
 - *Analyze the Electoral College*
1. The Presidency (Constitutional powers and the birth of the modern presidency)
 2. How the Electoral College works
 3. The Presidency in Action (The rise of the imperial presidency and the growth of power)
 4. Government at Work: The Bureaucracy

Current Events will weave throughout the entire course.

Extra Credit Opportunities: Volunteer in the 2016 Election Houston City Council and Mayoral Election

Projects: Political Cartoon Analysis, 2016 Presidential Candidates, Supreme Court Case Study