

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

COURSE SYLLABUS

2009-2010

Mrs. Petty

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

American Government is the study of the government of the United States. This course will emphasize the evolution of the government of the United States from British rule to the Articles of Confederation and finally the United States Constitution. This course will also cover voting practices and political parties, public policies, as well as modern global governmental and economic policies. Students will also learn about the philosophical foundations upon which the government of the United States was created. This course has been designed in accordance with rigorous national, state, and local standards, and, in challenging students, will encourage them to strive to achieve their potential. I welcome each one of you to this class and look forward to working with you!!

INSTRUCTIONAL PHILOSOPHY:

I firmly believe that all students can succeed in my class, or any class. The Social Studies, more than any other discipline, is about you and me and how we interact in our society. Government is especially important because, through this course, we learn about voting, politics, federal and state governments, as well as our rights and responsibilities as citizens. This course will include a variety of instructional strategies. Students will work individually and in groups, listen to lectures and create their own notes, discuss ideas, create graphic organizers, make presentations, write essays, read at least 4 books and complete book reviews, and read a variety of primary and secondary source material. Information will be available throughout this course on my School Notes page, which will link to the class webpage.

MAJOR COURSE GOALS:

The following are the major goals for this course:

- Students will construct complete sentences and paragraphs
- Students will recognize the theories of the origin of government
- Students will analyze the philosophical foundations of government
- Students will analyze and explain origin of the Declaration of Independence and the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation
- Students will be able to analyze the United States Constitution and the Missouri Constitution, comparing and contrasting the two documents
- Students will identify American political parties and explain elections and voting practices
- Students will explain the concept of Federalism and the formation of State and Local governments
- Students will identify the three branches of government and explain each of the branch responsibilities
- Students will analyze the political and economic systems in the world today

MAJOR COURSE OBJECTIVES/BENCHMARKS BY QUARTER:

1ST QUARTER:

- Foundations of Government
- Origins of American Government
- United States Constitution
- Missouri Constitution

2ND QUARTER:

- Constitutional Freedoms
- Federalism
- Political Parties
- Elections and Voting

3RD QUARTER:

- Legislative Branch
- Bills Becoming Laws
- Executive Branch
- Roles of Presidents

4TH QUARTER:

- Judicial Branch
- Supreme Court Decision-Making
- State and Local Governments
- Political and Economic Systems in Today's World

The instructor reserves the right to amend the course direction at any time to accommodate student learning

MAJOR COURSE PROJECTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Throughout this course, students will participate in a variety of class projects and activities. Students will conduct research using various primary and secondary sources, primarily via the Internet. Students will work individually and cooperatively with classmates to complete essays, poster projects, graphic organizers, homework assignments, and Webquests. Students will also be given opportunities for Bonus points throughout this course.

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Throughout the duration of this course, students will be required to read selections from their textbook, *United States Government: Democracy in Action*, as well as other selected material from outside sources. These materials will be provided in class.

Students are required to read 1 book per quarter and complete a book review on that book. Please refer to the Learning Resource Center link on the Central High School homepage for a complete list of books for the Social Studies.

COURSE ASSESSMENT PLAN:

Student grades will be based on an average of assignments, projects, cooperative learning class projects, quizzes and exams. Students will also be required to read 1 book per quarter and complete a book review on that book. The list of books available for class can be accessed through the Central High School webpage. Click on Learning Resource Center, then Core Class Reading for a list of book for the Social Studies. Grades will be determined by each student's demonstration of mastery of the course material. If a student has not shown competency in an area, he or she will be given an "incomplete" until the student has mastered the material.

Students will also be responsible for maintaining a Bellringer notebook or binder. These assignments should be kept separate from class notes, assignments, and other course information. Bellringers are daily assignments and will be completed daily. Students will submit their Bellringers for grading every grading period (Mid-Quarter, Quarter). Students should also be prepared for random Bellringer checks throughout the grading periods.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS:

Students are expected to enter the classroom everyday with all of their required materials: Class Notebook, "Bellringer" binder or notebook, a writing utensil, and their textbook. Students are required to respect everyone in the classroom and the classroom itself. Disrespect of teacher, classmates, or classroom will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action being taken. Students are expected to take notes during class daily and actively participate in classroom discussions. Students are also expected to turn in all assignments by their due date unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher. My goal is to create a safe environment in which all students can learn.

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS NEEDED:

Students are required to have the following supplies for this class:

- 1 spiral bound notebook or 3-ring binder for class notes and assignments
- 1 separate spiral bound notebook or 3-ring binder for daily work, which we will refer to as "Bellringers".
- Pencils or Pens (Please do not use red ink pens to complete assignments or daily work)
- Textbook: *United States Government: Democracy in Action*

HOMEWORK POLICY AND GRADING SCALE: Please refer to the Student Handbook for the Homework Policy. Students who miss class and are allowed to make up their work will find all assignments and handouts in the "Makeup Work" binder for their class. Students are responsible for any Bellringers they miss during any absences. Students can access missed Bellringers by checking the course schoolnotes page or by asking the teacher. The grading scale is as follows:

A	100-95	C	76-73
A-.....	94-90	C-.....	72-70
B+.....	89-87	D+.....	69-67
B.....	86-83	D.....	66-63
B-.....	82-80	D.....	62-60
C+.....	79-77	F	59-0

COURSE GRADING SYSTEM: Students will be graded on a variety of assignments throughout the year including, but not limited to, Bellringers, homework assignments, book reviews, projects, essays, tests, quizzes, and final exams. The grading system for this course will be as follows:

Tests/Quizzes.....	35%
Homework.....	25%
Projects/Essays/Bellringers/Book Reports.....	20%
Final Exams.....	20%

EXTRA HELP:

I normally arrive at school around 7:00 a.m. and my conference period is 5th hour.

TIME AND PLACE TO BE REACHED BY PARENTS:

I can also be reached at bpetty@central3.org, which is the easiest way for parents/guardians to contact me. I can also be reached at 431-2616 extension 4159 where a message can be left for me. I will return all calls or emails as soon as possible.