

Government Course Syllabus

Mr. Bettura -- 2011-2012

Course Description

Overview:

The purpose of this course is to get students to become informed and active citizens. This is accomplished through discovering and reflecting upon the powers, practices, and reactions of the United States and world. Students will have the opportunity to analyze and reflect upon the global economy and current social issues during the school year. Students will participate in individual reflective activities, group projects, Internet assignments, community service, and guest speaker presentations.

Course Goals:

- ◆ Students to analyze and reflect on the concepts, principles, and ideas concerning the structure, powers, and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments.
- ◆ Students to discover their role in the governing of the country and be empowered to assume the responsibility given by the Bill of Rights.
- ◆ Students to determine how the government's decisions affect daily life.
- ◆ Students to reflect upon the importance of economics from a global level to a personal level.
- ◆ Students to deconstruct ideology to reconstruct individual truth and meaning in the real world.

Topics Covered:

- ◆ Power relations between the three branches of government at each level of government.
- ◆ The evolution of the U.S. Constitution and its interpretations.
- ◆ Election practices, voter responsibilities, civil discourse, citizen participation.
- ◆ The Civil Rights Movement and how civil rights are being challenged today.
- ◆ Economic systems, with particular emphasis on the basic principles of capitalism.
- ◆ Consumer economics, focusing on financial goal setting, credit use, money management, and investment strategies.
- ◆ Critical Analysis of Current Issues
- ◆ Death Penalty
- ◆ Ideology, media bias, disinformation, post modern context.

Classroom Policies

Grades:

Grading is done on a point system. Grades will be averaged and distributed in accordance the school grading policy. The scale is as follows:

100--92 = A

91---83 = B

82---74 = C

73---66 = D

65---00 = F

Extra Credit:

There will be no extra credit available to save a grade. Example: Student has a 64% at the end of the grading period. Student or parent asks for an extra credit project to get a higher grade. The answer will be **NO! Absolutely NOT!** Extra credit will be offered during the grading periods in small increments (extended research, bonus questions, etc.) They may be worth small values but they will add up at the end of the nine weeks.

Attendance/Participation Grade:

A class participation grade may be factored into each nine week grading period.

This grade will be comprised of:

- ◆ Student's attendance; unexcused absences will result in a loss of points
- ◆ Student's participation; this class relies on student input, discussion, and participation so conduct that violates class guidelines and hinders the participation of students will result in a loss of points and disciplinary action by the teacher.

Absence- School policy requires that student absences be limited to 18 days per year unless excused by a medical or court document that verifies absence for the day. Any student who exceeds 18 days without the documentation will be subject to loss of credit for the course. An unexcused absence (without court or medical document or guardian note) will result in a zero for any work completed on that day.

Tardy- After a warning on the first tardy, students are subject to detention for any additional tardy along with the loss of participation points.

Late Work- Late work may be accepted with loss of points at the **teacher's discretion**.

Make-up Work- Make-up work will be accepted as stated by school policy; one day for each day of absence, with appropriate excuse. Student is responsible for acquiring the work as outlined in the class rules.

Classroom Rules:

Students will follow the rules and expectations as distributed by the teacher and as listed in the **handbook** of the Trumbull Career and Technical Center.

Mr. Bettura's Classroom Rules

1. NO coats, headgear, beepers, headsets, cell phones, electronic devices, book bags, forms of book bags, chains from the pants or other items specified in the student handbook is permitted in class.
2. No eating or drinking will be permitted in class. A detention will be given. Gum chewing is allowed as long as good manners prevail.
3. **Students need the following items for class:**
 - a. A three ring binder
 - b. Pencil and pen (blue or black)
 - c. Paper

Students are expected to bring these items with them to class every day along with whatever textbook or workbook is required for the day's class. **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO GO TO THEIR LOCKERS TO GET SUPPLIES!**

4. Homework and assignments are to be turned in when called for to receive full credit. Any work turned in after this time is considered late and subject to loss of points or no credit (a zero).
5. In any circumstances students are expected to **remain seated until the teacher dismisses the class. Always push their chair in and check their area before leaving the class. If** students need to use the restroom, get a tissue, sharpen a pencil, etc. please ask permission.
6. If textbooks or handouts are lost or stolen it is the student's responsibility to replace them or make compensation for their loss.
7. Periodically, students will be excused from class to attend vocational meetings, field trips, etc. Students will be excused on the following conditions:
 - a. Students must notify the teacher as soon as the field trip is scheduled.
 - b. This must be confirmed by appearing on the weekly calendar.
 - c. Assignments or test must be made up prior to the excused absence unless otherwise state by the teacher.

*** If these conditions are not met, the students will receive a zero for the day. Students must understand that his or her presence is excused NOT the work. If a student is missing class due to a club meeting, any assignment due that day must be turned in that day. Tests are made up the day you return.

8. Visitors will be in the room at times. Students are expected to be courteous and on their very best behavior.
9. **Sleeping is not permitted in class.** A detention will be issued.
10. Please inform the teacher of any medical problems that might arise. If you need special consideration as to seating because of hearing or sight problems, please let me know. We want to be prepared in order to assist your education.
11. This class operates on principles of mutual respect. When the teacher is talking, everyone listens. Likewise, when the student has permission to talk everyone listens. (Doing nails, reading magazines, doing other homework, talking to neighbor are not acceptable forms of behavior. When you work in groups talk quietly.
12. If you need additional help, please ask! Everyday we will be adding new material for you to become familiar with.
13. Records are kept to stay on top of discipline problems as well as your successes.
14. Computer Use – Students may use the computers to work on government assignments or activities deemed appropriate and with permission of the instructor. No Printing is allowed in the room. Students must have completed the Student Computer Use Policy form.

Letters of Recommendation and Using Me as a Reference

Note: There is a difference between a letter of recommendation and a reference. The former is obvious and the latter is using my name on an application or such.

Letters of Recommendation: I will write you a letter of recommendation if you get an "A" in the course and did extremely well on the major assignments. I will tell you if I will write you a letter after you ask and I review your performance (This may take a day or two to decide).

I take this position because I want my letters to be credible to those handing out scholarships, hiring, or admitting you to post-secondary school. I write very candid and honest letters which means the better you are in my judgment, the better the endorsement in the letter. There is nothing I enjoy as much as writing a great letter for a great student.

Using Me as a Reference: If you got an "A" in the course, feel free to use me as a job application reference. If you got a "B" but did well on the major assignments, you may also use me as a reference. However, please notify me if you use my name so that I am not caught off guard if someone calls me. The same applies to scholarship and post-secondary school applications.

****Contact Information**

If you have any questions, concerns, or information you need to share with me. Please feel free to contact me. You may contact me via phone at (330)847-0503.

You may also contact me using email at joseph.bettura@neomin.org/. If you choose to contact me via email please follow this format:

Student First and Last Name and Class Period

If this information does not appear in the subject line I will delete the message without reading it.

Remember to leave your name and return email.

*I do not give student grades over the phone or via email but I will give an estimated range of performance. I will give an actual grade to a legal parent/guardian in person or in a progress report provided by the office.

I have read and understand the course syllabi of Mr. Bettura's Government Class and understand that it can be altered in good faith by Mr. Bettura at his discretion.

Student Name (Print) _____

Student signature _____

Parent Name (Print) _____

Parent signature _____

***Return the bottom portion of this paper by September, 6 2011 for a homework grade of 15 points.**

***I reserve the right to change, add to, or delete any part of the syllabus.**