

American Government Syllabus

Instructor: Mr. Dellorco
Classroom B-107
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**Textbook: United States Government: Democracy in Action
or United States Government**

Material needed for class:

3 ring binder to keep paper, assignments, handouts and other related items

Notebook paper kept in binder

Pen or pencil

Textbook

Not being prepared for class will result in loss of participation points

Binder sections must be TABBED and labeled.

Section 1: Syllabus

Section 2: Daily questions

Section 3: Classroom notes

Section 4: Handouts

Section 5: Projects

Section 6: Tests/quizzes

Section 7: Misc.

I. Course description

This course is designed to give students a background in general Democratic principles, civic responsibility, civil rights, as well as general economic principles and basic financial responsibility. Students will acquire this knowledge through bookwork, lecture, group work, projects, research papers, computer productions, and guest speakers. Internet research will be used in a number of ways as we explore different topics in this class.

II. Classroom Policies

Attendance: School Policy requires that student absences be limited to **18** per year unless excused by a **medical** or **court** document that verifies the absence for that day. Any student who exceeds 18 days without such verification will be subject to **loss of credit** in the course.

An **unexcused** (without medical, court or parent/guardian note) absence will result in a **zero** for any work completed on that day.

Tardy: After your **second** tardy to class, you will be subject to loss of points based on teacher discretion for each assignment.

Make-up Work: Make up work will be allowed based on school policy, one day for each day of absence.

Grades: Grading will be done on a point system with grades averaged according to the school-grading policy. The grading scale is as follows.

92 – 100 A

83 – 91 B

74 – 82 C

66 – 73 D

0 – 65 F

Rules: Follow all class rules as distributed by the teacher and stated in the student handbook of the Trumbull Career and Technical Center

III. Course Goals

The goals of this course are set in the nine concepts. These are listed below, and will be used as a guide to reach an understanding of purpose of this course.

1. Investigate the purpose of government and be able to:
 - a. Explain the purposes of government.
 - b. Understanding how government powers are acquired, used and justified.
 - c. Understand how government provides basic rights and liberties guaranteed in the Constitution.
2. Understand the significance and impact of the Constitution on your everyday life by:
 - a. Understanding the significant ideas and events that influenced the creation of the United States Constitution.
 - b. Listing the key events that lead to the creation of the Constitution.
 - c. Explaining the importance of popular sovereignty and limited governments in a democratic society.
3. Investigate the structure and function of federal, state and local government and be able to explain:
 - a. The difference between the national government and the state governments.
 - b. The idea of federalism and how it relates to federal, state and local governments.
 - c. The role of local government in the United States federal system.
 - d. The power given to local governments.
4. Understand the protections and privileges of individuals and groups in the U.S. by:
 - a. Explaining the freedoms and the rights guaranteed in the United States Constitution.
 - b. Know the Bill of Rights and understand how these rights and liberties affect my life.
 - c. Understanding the importance of the first and fourteenth Amendments in protecting individual rights of Americans.
 - d. Explaining how civil rights and freedoms have been changed through court decisions. (Ex. Brown v. Board, Miranda, Gideon, etc.)
5. Understand the different power among the national, state, and local governments in the United States federal system and show that I know the different responsibilities of each level of government by:
 - a. Examining the relationship between the national government and the states.
 - b. Explaining the concept of federalism.
 - c. Analyzing the role of local government in the United States federal system.

- d. Describing the powers given to local governments.
- e. Describe the structure and function of local government.
- 6. Understand the responsibilities of citizens in the United States by:
 - a. Understanding why I need to obey laws.
 - b. Understanding the election and voting process.
 - c. Understanding the major political parties and their ideas.
 - d. Knowing that to be a responsible citizen I need to participate in activities that make a difference.
(i.e. The voting process, jury duty, community service.)
 - e. Understanding the methods, I can use to respectfully deal with differences in my community.
- 7. Understand basic economic principles and how they influence everyday life by:
 - a. Understanding how the major economic systems work (capitalism, communism, socialism, and mixed economic systems).
 - b. Explaining how supply and demand affects the availability of goods and services
 - c. Examining the problems of newly developing economies in today's world.
- 8. Understand the relationship between the United States and the international systems by:
 - a. Examining the major government structures and functions outside the United States.
 - b. Analyzing and evaluating conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict.
- 9. By comparing different political systems with that of the United States; (e.g., dictatorship, democracy, theocracy, monarchy, totalitarianism) I can:
 - a. Describe the main characteristics of a democracy.
 - b. Describe how democracy is different from other forms of government

IV. Major Course Projects and Assignments

1. Death Penalty Project

In this project students will thoroughly examine the 8th amendment as it relates to cruel and unusual punishment and the death penalty. Using the internet, students will explore the death penalty through topics designed to get the students to consider all sides of the issue along with researching the specific court rulings related to the death penalty. Students will then write debating points explaining and defending their position in support of or opposition to the use of the death penalty in the United States. Students will also create some type of display that illustrates their position.

2. Court Room Reporter Project

In this project students will be viewing a movie based on a court room battle. The students will take on the role of a court reporter, who is assigned with writing a news story on the case. This assignment will require students to be aware of how the justice system works in the United States and require them to use appropriate terminology in order to accurately report on the case. The final product will be a news article written by the student that accurately depicts the events of the case.

3. Primary Elections

In this project students will be following the leading candidates from each party in the race for their party's nomination to run for President of the United States. Students will examine each candidate's ideological stance on a number of key issues in the upcoming presidential election. Students will be looking at the characteristics and ideology that they feel will have the most direct appeal to the majority of voters in the United States, and therefore possibly predict the outcome of the party primaries and even the 2008 presidential elections.

4. Action Plan/Civic Participation/ Community Service Project

In this semester long project students will be required to sequentially complete several components of the project over the course of the semester. Students will be required to find out the names of the elected officials in their communities along with the public meeting times of those officials. Students will then be required to attend the meeting of their elected officials. After researching your local community, you will also be required to complete a specified number of community service hours in a chosen and approved facility or organization. Upon completion of these activities you will reflect on your experiences as they relate to the importance of active citizen participation; this reflection will take the form of an essay.

Units of Study:

Unit 1: Foundations of American Government

- Countries throughout the world develop different types of governments.
- The practical experience and writings of philosophers influence the development of a new government.

Unit 2: Political Parties and Media Influence

Unit 3: The United States Constitution and Federalism (Historical Documents)

- The power of the U.S. government is limited by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Unit 4: The Bill of Rights

- A bill of rights guarantees fundamental individual rights to citizens.

Unit 5: Legislative Branch

- Each branch of government has its own unique powers and structure.

Unit 6: Executive Branch

- Each branch of government has its own unique powers and structure.

Unit 7: Judicial Branch

- Each branch of government has its own unique powers and structure.
- Judicial review protects and extends constitutional rights.
- Individuals commit crimes for different reasons.
- Due process rights are an essential part of the civil justice system in a democratic society.

Unit 8: The Rainmaker

Unit 9: Civil Liberties

- The evolution of freedoms granted by the Government and how they came to be.

Unit 10: State Courts

- The organization and duties of the court system of Ohio.

Unit 11: State and Local Government

- The powers and structure of the state government often reflect the powers and structures of national governments.
- Local governments are created to help carry out the responsibilities of the state government.

Unit 12: Economic and Financial studies

- How global economies work.
- Financial responsibilities.

Unit 13: Civic Responsibility

- To participate effectively in civic life, American citizens participate in the political process (voting), perform public service, are informed about current issues, and respect the opinions of others.
- Various groups influence American voters in local, state, and national elections.

Unit 14: Action Plan/Community Service Project

Mr. Dellorco's Classroom Rules

1. NO coats, sweatshirts, 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 with loose-leaf notebook paper

b. Pencil and pen (blue or black)

c. 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.

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! Every day 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.

I have read and understand the rules and syllabus of Mr. Dellorco's classroom.
Please contact me if you have any Questions. Email: aaron.dellorco@neomin.org

Student signature _____

Parent signature _____

**** Return this portion of this paper signed by September 9th for a HOMEWORK grade of 20 points.***