

Government 2011-2012

Course Syllabus

Mr. Gorse

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** (with out 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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the Democratic Process as written in the U.S. Constitution including – structure, powers, election/voting, terms, removal, qualifications (voting and offices) for all offices from the local, state and federal levels for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the structure and process of Federalism – including the sharing and separation of power on the federal, state and local levels, what those powers are and what they are limited to, and how this allows them to serve the people of the United States.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the Bill of Rights and the Amendments by examining them through societal issues such as the civil rights movement for minorities, the death penalty, and the rights of persons accused of a crime.
4. Demonstrate a basic understanding of economic principles, global economic interdependence, and basic personal financial management.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen of the U.S. so that they may participate in an informed manner in their society.

IV. Major Course Projects and Assignments

1. Congressional Campaign Project

The focus of this project will be to create a project that encompasses the responsibilities and duties of a member of congress, the political spectrum, and civic participation. This will include voting, participating in a campaign, and being informed about current issues in our society that candidates support.

The students will act as a campaign manager for a member of congress who is up for reelection. It will be their job to investigate the issues the candidate supports, the previous accomplishments of their member as far as committee assignments and legislation passed, political ideology and how that compares to their own and their platform for upcoming elections. They will then promote their candidate through a campaign speech which will include a slogan.

2. 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 facts related to the death penalty. Students will then write a position paper 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 a poster or device, which creatively illustrates their position.

3. Court Room Reporter Project

In this project students will be viewing a movie base on a court room battle. The students will take on the role of a court reporter, who is charged 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.

4. 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 the majority of voters in the United States, and therefore possibly predict the outcome of the party primaries and even the 2008 presidential elections.

5. 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 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.

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

Student signature _____

Parent signature _____

**** Return this portion of this paper signed along with proof of ownership of the appropriate notebook for a HOMEWORK grade of 20 points.***