

Course Description:

American Government is a required, one-semester course designed for seniors. This course is designed to be a capstone for all students in preparation for active participation in local, state, and national civic life. Knowledge of the fundamentals and principles of the U.S. political system as well as the Iowa political system prepares students for their future responsibilities as citizens of this state and country.

In this course, students study politics and the political processes which underlie United States democracy. Following this introduction, students explore each of the major branches of government - Executive, Legislative, and Judicial as they interact both in cooperative and, at times, adversarial ways. The learning processes of this course include discussion of text and other up-to-the-minute readings, timely audio-visual presentations, simulations, local political involvement opportunities and analysis of contemporary current events.

Alignment to the Iowa Core in Political Science/Civic Literacy Grades 11-12: Understand the rights and responsibilities of each citizen and demonstrate the value of lifelong civic action.

DCSD Standards Met:

Academic Standard 1: The students will evaluate the impact of culture and cultural diversity.

Academic Standard 2: The student will use historical perspective and habits of thinking to analyze how humans view themselves in and over time.

- 2.1- Analyze historical events by identifying and using primary sources and other various credible sources of information**
- 2.2- Analyze an issue using both historical and contemporary viewpoints**
- 2.4- Analyze a significant period and or pattern of change within a civilization.**

Academic Standard 3: The student will analyze geographical information about people, places, and environments.

- 3.1- Analyze various data sources such as, atlases, maps, charts and graphs to generate and interpret geographical data.**
- 3.3- Analyze how people adapt societies to reflect their current values and ideals**
- 3.5- Analyze the geographic impact upon people's lives, their values, culture, wants and needs.**

Academic Standard 4: The students will analyze the interactions between groups, institutions, individual human development, and personal identity.

- 4.2 Analyze the interactions of ethnic, national, or cultural influences on an individual.**

Academic Standard 5: The student will analyze the interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions and their impact on society.

- 5.1- Analyze how roles, status, and social class affect interactions of individuals, groups, and institutions in society.**
- 5.3- Evaluate situations in which conflict occurs between individuals' beliefs and institutional norms.**

Academic Standard 6: The student will explain how people create and change structures of power, authority, and government.

- 6.1- Evaluate issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare and differing conceptions of a just society.**
- 6.2- Analyze how governments manage conflict and establish order and security and provide for citizens needs.**
- 6.3 Compare different political systems with that of the United States, and identify representative leaders from historical and contemporary settings.**
- 6.4 Evaluate conditions and motivations that lead to cooperation and conflict among groups and nations.**

Academic Standard 7: The student will apply the economic principles of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

- 7.1- Evaluate how the scarcity of productive resources requires economic systems to make decisions about how goods and services will be produced and distributed.**
- 7.3- Analyze relationships among institutions that form an economic system.**

Academic Standard 8: The student will analyze the relationship between science, technology, and society.

8.2- Evaluate the relationship between science and technology and core values and beliefs.

8.3- Evaluate the ethical standards of policies that deal with social change resulting from new technologies.

Academic Standard 9: the student will evaluate the impact of globalization and interdependence.

9.1- Compare and contrast positive and negative aspects of global interdependence for the United States and people of the world.

Academic Standard 10: The student will demonstrate citizenship in a democratic republic.

10.1- Evaluate the sources and the examples of citizens' rights and responsibilities.

10.2- Interpret the continuing influence of key ideals of a representative democracy

10.3- Participate in a public, civic event that is consistent with the ideals of a democratic republic.

10.4- Evaluate the effectiveness of various forms of citizen action and public opinion on public policy.

10.5- Synthesize information from multiple points of view on public issues that lead to the development of government policy.

Evaluation

Each student will be responsible for all the assigned work and activities in this course. The instructor evaluates an overall grade by the percentage of total points. The semester grading system is as follows:

<u>Points Per Unit</u>	<u>Points Per Semester</u>
500 points objective/fill tests	1400 points semester test
100 points projects	1000 points midterm exam
10 points per question quizzes	1000 points research paper
10 points or face value written work	
100 points maximum extra credit	
10 points daily class activity (minor infraction is 3 points each)	

A student's grade is cumulative from the first day of the class until the end of a semester (semester ends with the exam). Periodic grade updates reflect the student's quarter grade standing at the time. **All grades will be updated only at the end of each major unit or after the midterm, final paper, and semester test!!!** You will be evaluated by a variety of means. You will be expected to take all tests and quizzes on the date announced. *Cheating, plagiarizing (see school policy), copying, facilitating copying, changing answers, or other improper practices will result in a zero for all points awarded. Any and all electronic device usage while tests or answer sheets are in your possession will result in a zero as well. All tests and quizzes are to be completed in one sitting (not to be started & resumed – if you look at it, you must take it). If due to time issues a test needs to be split into parts, the teacher must be notified in advance (before the test is started). If additional time on tests is legally required, please be sure that the teacher knows in advance.*

Learning Goals:

- Students will be able to describe the fundamental features of the American Government and the processes by which decisions are made.
- Students will be able to communicate with their elected officials on a local, state, and federal level.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation for all residents of this nation.
- Students will be able to make informed, responsible decisions when participating in the American Political Process.

Course Outline/Major Topics of Study:

- Foundations of American Political System
- Legislative Branch
- Linkage Institutions
- Judicial Branch
- Executive Branch
- State and Local Government
- Current Public Issues in Government

Core Materials Used:

Holt McDougal United States Government: Principles in Practice

General

You are young adults and will be treated as such. It also means that you have the responsibility to act as young adults as well. This class, like all things in life, is what you make of it. My job is to teach and your job is to learn. We may even have a little fun. Remember that there is a time and place for everything.

Basic Classroom Rules

1. Be in your seat and quiet when the bell rings (*if you leave the classroom without my permission and then enter after the bell rings, you are tardy*). **If you come in after the bell rings, it is your responsibility to remind the teacher to fix the attendance.** At the end of the hour, please stay seated until the passing bell rings (*no lining up by the door*).
2. Raise your hand and be called on before speaking.
3. Respect the property of (*teacher, school electronics, blinds & thermostats too*) and be courteous to others.
4. While conscious (*no head down*), focus on the task or activity at hand. No electronic devices are allowed in the room (no cell phones, musical headphones, calculator games, etc.).
5. ***Keep the rooms clean. No food or beverage other than water in a clear container. Please clean up after yourself.***
6. No hats are allowed in the room.

Basic Expectations

1. Have all your materials ready: bring a pen/pencil, paper, your textbook, and planner/agenda to class each day. (no planner/agenda = lose class activity points)
2. All students must have a notebook/folder in order to keep notes & handouts in an organized manner (***take notes in your own words***) (notebook evaluated periodically).
3. Cover your textbook to prevent excessive wear (please keep papers out of your textbook). Points will be awarded for covered textbooks (checked periodically).
4. ***In order to leave the room, you must have your own planner/agenda (signed pass)& student ID in advance. Only one person may be allowed to leave the room under your own personal planner/agenda pass.***
5. ***You are expected to properly wear your school IDs.***

School Attendance Policies

A tardy will be awarded when a student is not in the classroom when the bell rings. Interventions could occur if tardies and/or absences become excessive. The administration has a number of interventions at their disposal and could eventually result in a loss of credit if interventions are unsuccessful. I want you here and on time please.

Attendance

For absences, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor about work missed. It is a student's responsibility to make sure he/she gets caught up (**including missing group copies**). ***This also includes getting the news notes from a classmate for any days missed.*** Label make-up work as such and please turn it in separately. **All tests/quizzes will be made up during a mutually agreed upon time under the direct supervision of the instructor.** Students who need to make up tests must go to the SSLRC when we are going over tests (not in the hallway). ***In order to be eligible to receive full credit, make-up quizzes must be taken by the day before the class takes the test, and make-up tests must be taken by the day before the class takes the next quiz/test. After that it is only eligible for partial credit.*** It is your responsibility to correct unverified absences. Removal from the classroom will result in zero credit being awarded for all points that day. Finally, in order to qualify for any leveler, curve, or bonus (if it applies), one must take the test or quiz the same time as the rest of the class. **Make-up tests & quizzes can be given in a slightly different format. Make-up assignments will be due 1 day after the date of returning to school for a 1 day absence (generally 1 day for each day missed). Remember, all make-up work must be completed by the day before the class takes the test (after that it is awarded zero credit).**

Late Policy (come late with a pass or leave on a pass/with permission, is your responsibility to turn work in immediately) **All work is due at the beginning of the period (if the teacher has to wait for something, it will be considered late).** I will only grade assignments once (you make the choice). ***Assigned work that is late will receive half credit up until the day before the class takes the (first) day of the test (zero after).*** ***For the research paper, half credit will be awarded to the day before the next deadline (zero after).*** Label late work as such and please turn it in separately. In addition, papers & tests without names will be assigned half credit if the instructor cannot readily determine whose paper it is – a lesser reduction will occur if the instructor can easily determine whose it is. ***Please put first and last names on all papers (individual and group).*** **All unapproved (tests too) will be considered/counted late!! All work missed due to being tardy will be considered/counted late!!!**

Homework Policy (due means completed **and turned in on time** to the instructor in person as a hard copy – not emailed, put in mailbox, put on office desk, etc.)

Homework will not be returned to students after it is graded. This is to minimize time devoted to paper shuffling and to maintain security of assignments for future classes. Students will have periodic grade updates and are encouraged to ask the instructor when time permits how they scored on particular assignments. Usually, on the day that assignments are collected, the material will be discussed so the student should know how they did on the assignment. Finally, these assignments are lower level and the answers are easily found by reading the text. More difficult and open-ended questions will be handed back upon grading or used for extra credit purposes. **Unless directed otherwise by the instructor, all written work must be handwritten.**

Class Activity Grading – can lose more than 10 points in a day.

If a student follows the basic classroom guidelines, and does not have any **unexcused absences or tardies**, he/she will not have any problems. However, students participating in class verbally other than through the appropriate procedures will have problems. In addition, students who purposely try to sabotage or stifle the discussion will have problems. This also relates to small-group work (coops and presentations, etc.). Students are expected to do their fair share and utilize class time wisely. This also means staying awake at all times during class. The instructor will not notify a student if he/she has lost the points. At the grade update, the instructor will merely tell the student what his/her total is. The key is to stay quiet, follow directions & rules, follow the school attendance policy, and pay attention in class (excused absences?). ***Class activity points will not carry-over from unit to unit. Any class activity points from the midterm, paper, or final will transfer to the appropriate unit.***

Extra Credit

You may choose to complete extra credit to supplement your grade. Extra credit may not be substituted for missing assignments. For each unit, I will evaluate extra credit on a maximum scale of 100 points. ***Extra credit is always at the discretion of the instructor. Extra credit will not carry-over from unit to unit. Any extra credit from midterm, paper, and final will transfer to the appropriate unit.***

Accommodations

If you need to sit in a particular area because of sight or sound, please notify me as soon as possible. In addition, if you need tests read to you, please make advance arrangements for each test with me (the day before?). If problems arise, or you need assistance, feel free to discuss them with me before or after class or school (you need to arrange a time that will work for both of us). To contact me, my e-mail address is joelmiller@dbqschools.org. My school phone number is 552-5350. My prep period is 1st hour (from 7:35-8:22 on a normal school day).