

Course Syllabus – Government & Civics

Instructor: Mr. Messina
Room Number: 137
Office Hours: Before school, by appt.

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Course Description: The Government and Civics course prepares students for informed and responsible participation as citizens of our constitutional democracy. Students deepen their understanding of the democratic values expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other foundational documents of the United States. They learn the purposes and structures of government within the federal system. They also learn how citizens exert influence on public affairs and decisions. As a result of this course, students are prepared to exercise the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship.

Materials: Students are expected to come to class prepared every day with the following materials:

- Textbook
- Spiral notebook
- Loose-leaf paper for assignments
- Binder or folder
- Pens, pencils, and erasers

Grading: Students will be graded on a weighted scale, as outlined below. A brief description of each grading category follows.

Tests	35%
Quizzes	25%
Homework	25%
Participation	15%

The semester grade will be calculated as follows:

Quarter 1	40%
Quarter 2	40%
Final Exam	20%

Homework: Homework will be assigned regularly to help students master the content. It is imperative that students keep up with the homework assignments to prevent falling behind in class.

Quizzes & Tests: Quizzes and tests will be given periodically, with advance notice, to assess students' levels of understanding. Projects will also be assigned, and will count either as a quiz or a test, depending on the scope of the assignment. See below for the test/quiz make-up policy.

Class Participation: All students are expected to come prepared to class and be active learners in order to get the most out of classroom instruction. Students are required to take notes during class, follow all classroom guidelines, and in general, contribute positively to the class. Points will be deducted from this grade for not coming prepared to class, refusing to participate or take notes, working uncooperatively with other students, etc.

Academic Expectations: Students are expected to put forth their best effort on all assignments. All work submitted for a grade **must** be the sole work of the student's. **Cheating and plagiarism are not accepted.** If cheating or plagiarism is suspected, the student will receive a zero for the assignment and an administrative referral. Studying for tests with a partner or group of peers helps many students and is therefore acceptable.

Behavioral Expectations: Learning takes place when students feel comfortable in a positive classroom environment. In order to achieve this, *all students* must demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior.

Students who do not abide by the district Code of Conduct, or otherwise negatively contribute to the classroom environment, will be subject to the appropriate consequences.

Attendance: Students must attend class daily in order to keep up with the material and benefit from the planned instruction. Students must arrive on time and be ready to work when the bell rings. Those who arrive late or are not prepared for class at this time will be marked tardy. Arriving more than five minutes late is considered an absence for the class period. In the case of excessive absences or tardiness (three or more), the THS attendance policy will be closely followed, including Saturday school, phone calls home, administrative referrals, loss of credit, etc.

In addition, students are not allowed to leave the classroom during instructional time. In the case of an emergency, the student may be dismissed with a written pass. All other issues (using the restroom, talking with a counselor, getting materials from a locker, etc.) must be taken care of before or after class.

Late & Make-Up Work: It is understood that high school students have busy lifestyles and schoolwork for several classes, therefore ***students may turn in up to two assignments late per marking period without penalty.*** Use this privilege sparingly, as it is difficult to catch up once you are behind in assignments. Beyond two assignments, late work will NOT be accepted, and you will earn a zero on those assignments. If you have any extenuating circumstances, please talk with Mr. Messina privately about this.

In the case of an **excused absence**, the student will have one day for each day absent to make up the work. For example, if a student is absent on Tuesday, he or she must get any assignments on Wednesday and turn them in by Thursday. **The student is responsible for finding out what assignments were collected or assigned during their absence.** Students should consult their peers, check the course website, or come before school to find out what was missed, instead of interrupting instructional time. Make-up work is not accepted for skips or unexcused absences.

If a student has an excused absence on the day of a quiz or test, **it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to take the quiz or test within one week.** Students may not make up the quiz or test during lunch. An alternative quiz/test may be given. Failure to do so will result in a score of zero. *Students will earn a zero on a test or quiz if their absence is unexcused.*

Contact Information: Students are much more likely to achieve success when their parents and/or guardians take an active role in their education. I will do my best to keep open lines of communication with the students and parents. However, I will not interrupt instructional time to discuss the personal issues of one student. Parents are encouraged to contact me before or after school hours, during my prep (1st hour), or by e-mail. *E-mail is the preferred method of contact.*

**Government & Civics
Mr. Messina
Troy High School**

Student/Parent Agreement

I, _____, have read this syllabus, agree to its terms,
(please PRINT student's name) and will work to do my best in this course.

I, _____, have read this syllabus, and will help my
(please PRINT parent/guardian's name) student to achieve success in this course.

(Student Signature)

(Date)

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date)

(Student E-Mail)

(Parent/Guardian E-Mail)

Please return this form to Mr. Messina by Friday, September 5, 2014.