

# **Government - Syllabus**

## **Guidelines for Mr. Wood's 2017/18 Government Course**

The words that shape our Constitution are as potent now as they were when the founding fathers met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787. Unfortunately, American citizens and those who govern this nation are today a long ways removed from those ideals. The core of our problem is that the government of the United States is so fully disengaged from the people they are sworn to serve. The reasons for this are numerous; however the single greatest cause is certain; public policy and public interest are virtually disengaged.

"We the People" are barely involved in the process of governing. Good portions of us are ignorant not only to the chronicling of our founding, but the history that has shaped us since. We don't vote nearly in the numbers that a healthy democracy would necessitate. Maybe most dangerous of all, we allow others: in television and news media, on blogs, twitter, radio talk shows, even friends on Facebook to tell us how to think. A large majority of Americans have given up on the political process, except maybe to vote for a presidential candidate once every four years; and often then inspired by message of a 30 second TV commercial. The result is an impotent democracy manipulated by lobbyists, and corporate and special interests dollars. It will be our mission here to challenge this dysfunction. In order to do so, we will roll up our sleeves and dig in not only to our political history but your current role in that play. And we will act! We'll work to secure that the relationship between citizens' rights and responsibilities gets the focus that it deserves and that our final product is not a standardized score on a standardized test but the nurturing of an informed and enlightened and involved citizenry.

We will focus on the following topics:

**MP#1** - Civil Rights Movement up close culminating with Selma, AL. (concentration on 14th Amendment)  
**MP#2** - The words and the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution and Bill of Rights.  
**2017/18 Ongoing** - International / National / State and Local Issues and Public Policy Debates

**SCHOOLGY** - We will use Schoology as our primary source of organization in this course. Lesson Plans, Course Standards, Word of the Week, tests, quizzes, and homework will all base from the web. Buddha Blog posts will often be linked to Schoology as support reference. Get comfortable with the program and check regularly for messages.

### **VOCABULARY - PODCAST POSTS on the Buddha Blog**

*I have been working diligently in the past couple of years to incorporate the Buddha Blog into your comprehension of course terms. Nearly all of the terms posted on the front white board for Economics and Government, are defined by me in audio podcasts located on my blog. The podcasts generally run 3:00 to 5:00 in length. Make sure to listen and review these terms regularly through out the course as they will be the basis for all quizzes, and as a review for chapter tests and the Final Exam.*

### **HOMEWORK - 25%**

Focus Questions will account for a large majority of your homework grade. Focus Questions are a series of four or five questions and accompanying reading assignments (10 to 12 pages) usually two chapters. Focus Questions will be assigned prior to class discussion, so that when we discuss a concept, our discussion will be active. I expect that you will answer these questions in detail and in your own words. Assignments are worth 50 points.

## **QUIZ & TEST - 25%**

We tap into a variable array of quiz and tests for our Government course. You will be required to learn two substantial memorizations - the 14th Amendment (MP#1) and the Declaration of Independence (MP#2). All of our tests and quizzes will be administered online through the Schoology program. Most of are the short answer essay variety. Consequently you'll be expected to understand and articulate public policy concepts and theories of government. Class Discussion will be an important part of understanding.

## **PROJECTS - 25% / Civil Rights Movement / Declaration / Bill of Rights**

We spend a significant portion of MP #1 on the study of the American Civil Rights movement. No other event in American History is as vital at demonstrating the power of the individual to change history. The players, foot soldiers and leaders of the movement, demonstrated an enormous amount of courage to take on unjust institutions in order to achieve freedom and justice for themselves and those to come. The lessons learned from this movement are essential if you are to remain engaged in your government today and in the future. We will look hard at this time period in American history and how it is relevant in today's world.

In Marking Period #2 - our concentration of study, while it will encompass all of government, will turn to the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. We will slow down and take these three documents on with clear focus.

*It is my goal to focus the study of Government on the following five targets...*

- *Civil Rights Movement & 14th Amendment*
- *Declaration of Independence*
- *The Constitution of the United States*
- *Bill of Rights*
- *Active Participation in your current Government*

## **COMMON ASSESSMENTS - 25%**

Four common assessment exams will concentrate on the basic terminology and fundamental concepts of Government. These common assessments will not be Open Notes.

## **OHS Proficiency Policy for passing Government**

- 1 - According to OHS student handbook, student must average over 60% on two MPs and Final
- 2 - All students must take the final exam.
- 2 - A 60% average on Common Assessments is a requirement for passing the course.
- 3 - Student must satisfy the high school attendance policy.

## **Primary Materials Provided: Textbook**

McClenaghan, William A., American Government, (Department of Political Science, Oregon State University. 2002)

## **Common Assessment Topics / Topics**

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| #1 - 14th Amendment and American Civil Rights Movement | Outside sources                |
| #2 - Origins and Foundations of American Government    | Chapters 2, 3                  |
| #3 - Structure and Function of American Government     | Chapters 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18 |
| #4 - Citizenship in the United States of America       | Chapters 19, 20, 21            |