



CHARLES H. MILBY HIGH SCHOOL FALL 2021 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: United States Government

Instructor: Mrs. Stacy Gallegos

Website: www.milby.org

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This course, at its very core, once you've stripped it bare, is about **POWER**, and the **POWER TO DECIDE**. The **struggle for the power to decide who gets what, when, and how** is what the **whole political game** is all about, and that is why billions of dollars are spent year after year. And whether you know it or not, whether you like it or not those decisions have, will, and do affect your life. My mission is to make this course as exciting and interesting as I believe it can be and to create an everlasting desire to know what's going on in your community, your country, and the world and thus become active critical thinking participants in the world. My goal is that you (1) learn and master the content of this course, not just pass the class with a 70, (2) develop your critical thinking skills, and (3) become inspired lifelong learners.

Students successfully completing this course will:

- know important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics
- understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the components of political behavior, the principals used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures)
- be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics
- be able to critically analyze relevant theories and concepts, apply them appropriately, and develop their connections across the curriculum

COURSE CONTENT

This course will focus on the United States Government. The Constitution of the United States is the foundation and legal authority for the United States of America. The Constitution of the United States is built on six basic principles of government: popular sovereignty, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, and federalism. The Framers (writers) of the Constitution drew on their knowledge and experience to craft a document that serves as "the supreme law of the land."

INSTRUCTIONAL SCHEDULE – OVERVIEW

This U.S. Government and Politics class is taught in one semester. There are approximately 49 instructional days in this fall 2021 semester. We will meet twice a week for 90 minutes and 46 minutes on Fridays.

Unit 2: Democracy in Action: The People

Unit 1: Foundations and Principles of US Government

Unit 3: The Institutions of Government: The Legislative Branch

Unit 4: The Institutions of Government: The Executive Branch

Unit 5: The Institutions of Government: The Judicial Branch

Unit 5.5: The Bureaucracy

Unit 6: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

SCHOOL RULES/CLASS NORMS

Mutual respect and common sense are essential to an effective classroom. Students should be **Positive, Prompt, Prepared, Polite, and Productive (Five Ps)**. Students need to also be **BUFFALO S.M.A.R.T.**, that is, Show respect, have Magnificent manners, Arrive on time, Rock your grade, and be Tailored. School wide and HISD rules apply in the classroom as well. **The use of Cell Phones is prohibited in class.** See *Student Code of Conduct* for more information.

Group norms are a set of agreed upon standards and procedures under which the group will operate. The class will periodically evaluate its adherence, its faithfulness to the norms.

“Having a set of norms—or ground rules—that a group follows encourages behaviors that will help a group do its work and discourages behaviors that interfere with a group’s effectiveness.

SUPPLIES

1. A one inch three ring binder or a three-prong folder. Make sure that you have your binder or folder in class every day. The binder will be for taking notes and maintaining in chronological (sequential) order everything I handout to you, such as, assignments, quizzes, tests, worksheets, pictures, etc.
2. Composition Notebook or Notebook paper in your binder, a #2 lead pencil, and a blue or black pen.
3. Laptop

TEXTBOOKS

The primary textbook we will be using is: *American Government*. 3rd ed., openstax, 2021, openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e. This book is available online and you will be downloading and saving it on your computers.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

National Constitution Center: <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution>

50 Core Documents: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/50docs/>

Supreme Court of the US: <https://www.supremecourt.gov/>

Crash Course U.S Government and Politics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrk4oY7UxpQ>

Supreme Court Cases: <https://www.oyez.org/>

Other sources: FiveThirtyEight.com; 270towin.com; realclearpolitics.com

ANALYZING AND INTERPRETING DATA AND OTHER INFORMATION

Students are expected to practice analyzing and interpreting data and other information relevant to US government and politics. Students will also be tested on their understanding of quantitative and visually-presented information (maps, graphs, tables, etc) at regular intervals in weekly or semiweekly quiz assignments and in classroom activities.

ASSESSMENT/GRADING POLICY

Your course grade will be determined using the following percentage breakdown:

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| Tests: | 30% | Homework: | 10% |
| Quizzes: | 15% | Classwork: | 45% |

Students are offered many opportunities to succeed. I will use a variety of methods to evaluate student achievement. Students will be graded on tests, projects, journals, quizzes, discussions, and class work. There are three grading periods per semester, each six weeks long. *See Milby Grading Policy for more details.*

MAKEUP WORK / MISSING ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be given the opportunity to make up work for missing assignments. Students will also have the opportunity to re-take tests and/or quizzes they have failed, Students will have one week (five school days) from the date the test is returned to the student and/or the grade is publicly posted. Students will receive the higher grade of the two tests. **The highest grade that a student can earn for makeup work is a 75 for missing assignments that are more than three weeks late.**

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Entering the Classroom

1. Be in the room and seated at your desk before the bell rings.
2. Have your binder and writing implement ready.
3. Begin work on the activity that is on the board, on your desk, or given to you by the teacher.
4. Quietly work on this activity until I signal for your attention.

Daily Assignments

Assignments and daily agenda will be written on the board as well as on the HUB. During teacher lectures, power point presentations, prezis, etc. students are expected to take notes either on the handout provided or in your notebooks.

Turning In Assignments

Turn in your completed work by putting it in the tray that corresponds with your period, the paper ministers will collect them, or the teacher will collect them. When turning in assignments please follow the following format:

Name:
Period:

Date:
Subject:

Returning Assignments

Graded work will be returned to you individually.

Finding Out Grades Status in Class

Grades will be posted every three weeks. Individual progress reports will also be distributed every three weeks. Grades are also available online through your pconnect account which is on the Houston ISD website. This will show your current grade in the class and any missing assignments. Missing assignments will appear as “0.” However, on rare occasions a student can actually earn a zero.

Your Responsibilities after an Absence

Any time you are absent, it is the responsibility of the student to make up their missing assignments. Assignments will be available from the teacher and also on the HUB.

Ending Class

Two minutes before the end of class, you will put your materials away, turn in any assignments, and please clean your desk area. *After* the bell rings, I will dismiss you from class, not the bell.

COURSE CONTENT OVERVIEW

This is a one-semester course that is broken down into nine units. I will supply an academic planning calendar in addition to the unit breakdown below which will detail exact dates for all major course assignments and activities. Academic planning calendars are subject to change. You will be notified of any changes in class and on my website.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Week 1: | Intro./Syllabus/Diagnostics/What is Government & Politics? |
| Week 2: | Unit 2: (Part 2) Democracy in Action: The People |
| Week 3: | Unit 2: (Part 2) Democracy in Action: The People |
| Week 4: | Unit 2: (Part 1, 2, 3) Democracy in Action: The People |
| Week 5: | Unit 2: (Part 1, 2, 3) Democracy in Action: The People |
| Week 6: | Unit 2: (Part 1, 2, 3) Democracy in Action: The People |
| Week 7: | Unit 2: (Part 1, 2, 3) Democracy in Action: The People |
| Week 8: | Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy |
| Week 9: | Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy |
| Week 10: | Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government |
| Week 11: | Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government (<i>End of cycle 2</i>) |
| Week 12: | Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government |
| Week 13: | Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government |
| Week 14: | Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights |
| Week 15: | Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights |
| Week 16: | Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights |
| Week 17: | Dead Week - Review |
| Week 18: | Final Exam Week |

REMEMBER

“Without struggle there is no progress.”—Frederick Douglas

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”—George Santayana

“The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of dusk.” – Hegel

“He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past.”—George Orwell from 1984

ATTESTATION CLAUSE

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read, understand, and AGREE with the course expectations, information, and policies outlined in this syllabus. By signing below you also AGREE to follow all Milby High School and Mrs. Gallegos policies and procedures.

Student's Signature

Date

Period: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name Printed: _____

Parent's Phone Number: _____

Parent's Email: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____