



United States Government – Fall 2021

Mrs. Candace Fikis

U.S. Government is a state-mandated, one-semester course which explores the question: “What is effective engagement?” The nationally recognized hands-on course is structured to promote your interaction with other members of the class as you examine political materials, methods and problems. You are expected to show growth in your knowledge, understanding and application of the subject matter and active civic engagement and to demonstrate your problem-solving, decision making and critical thinking skills.

Course Units/Questions:

1. ***The Political Spectrum***: What is the balance between individual rights and the common good?
What distinguishes the differences between liberals and conservatives?
How should local, state and federal governments share power?
2. ***Elections***: How do elected officials represent us?
Why does my civic participation matter?
3. ***Legislating Change***: How does a bill become a law?
How do people and institutions influence the legislative process?
4. ***The Judicial System*** How are powers of the government checked?
How can abuse of power be avoided?

Process Objectives:

By the end of the course, you will have demonstrated your ability to:

1. Ask questions and evaluate political and news resources.
2. Do research and identify reliable resources.
3. Organize and present material to others.
4. Explain cause and effect relationships.
5. Use persuasive techniques to participate in online and in-person discussions using civil discourse.
6. Know and be able to apply a decision making model to problem solving.
7. Resolve conflicts/problems in a logical manner.
8. Analyze and interpret maps, graphs, data, charts and tables.
9. Develop and support claims and counterclaims.
10. Work with others in a responsible, cooperative manner.

Activities:

The major activities of the course include:

1. writing (letters, speeches, papers, essays, etc.)
2. critical reading
3. speaking
4. research

5. simulations, debates, role-playing
6. class discussions
7. multi-media analysis
8. assessments

Evaluation:

Students are graded on a **total point system**, which means no weighted categories. Points can be earned by the activities listed above using the following grading system:

100-90% = A

89-80% = B

79-70% = C

69-60% = D

below 60% = F

All work must be turned in on time. Some assignments are time sensitive and will NOT be accepted late. Students are also REQUIRED to show mastery (75% or higher) on 4 specific Constitutional assignments throughout the semester in order to meet the state mandated Constitutional requirement. All grades will be updated in Powerschool so you should check grades weekly.

Assignment Passes

Most work can be completed during class, but sometimes students will need to complete work outside of class time. Sometimes events happen that will keep you from completing assignments by specific due dates. Therefore, you will be provided a Late Assignment Card that will allow you to be late (at no penalty) for four assignments this semester (1 per unit). You can use the Late Assignment Card for late assignments, but these assignments must be turned in at the end of the specific grading period they were assigned in. If you do not to use the pass, you will be awarded 5 points extra credit for each late assignment NOT used (20 points total). So plan wisely and do not lose your card because they are irreplaceable and non-transferable.

Attendance:

Weekly calendars will be posted at the start of the week and will list expectations for students. Because a large portion of your evaluation is in-class performance, absences will hurt your progress and final grade. If you are absent, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to obtain all missed assignments. You should check Google Classroom and/or with me for an update of assignments and all due dates. As per school policy, if you are TRUANT from class you will NOT be able to make up work you missed.

Participation:

This class is not a traditional class and is designed for you to be an active and engaged student in class to prepare you to be an active and engaged participant in our democracy. It requires you to not only be present but to be a member of groups, to express your opinions, to share your knowledge, to discuss and debate topics and make informed decisions. Students are expected to be focused on class (without distractions, like phones) and will be required to practice civil discourse and follow specific etiquette for online and in class discussions and debate. This class also allows you to develop your leadership skills and you will be rewarded for it. You will be asked to reflect on your civic engagement after every unit.

Materials:

You will be required to keep a 1-inch binder, specifically for this class, to help you stay organized throughout the semester. You will be taking some notes, doing some research and those materials will be needed for your 4 Constitutional assessments (required for graduation). It should also contain your class contract and late passes.

Technology

Every day you should have your Chromebook in class and charged as it will be used frequently. There is no need to use your phone in class, and it should be turned off and kept stored away during class time. There is no need to have headphones/earbuds on in class. Don't let technology be a distraction and negatively impact your performance and participation in the class.

Work Ethic:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in class. Students are expected to show their own work and demonstrate their own understanding. Any instances of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and a referral to the dean written. Sometimes you will be working with your classmates on certain assignments. However, under no circumstances will assignments that are substantially similar be accepted for a grade. All work should be original and your own. While you might be working in groups, group grades are not given and students will be responsible for their own work in groups.

Have a problem or need some assistance

I am available during the school day during my prep periods in Room 2612. I can meet some days before or after school, but due to obligations with extra-curriculars and some meetings, you must schedule time directly with me before or after school. If you have a quick question, please feel free to contact me via email at cfikis@d94.org and I will respond within 24 hours. If you send an email after school hours or on the weekend, do not expect a response until the next school day morning.

I look forward to an excellent and engaging Fall 2021 Semester!

Candace Fikis

US Government, Economics, & AP Macroeconomics Teacher

Student Council and Personal Finance Challenge Team Advisor

Classroom: 2612

Email: cfikis@d94.org

630-876-6454

Prep Times: 2nd and 9th Periods