COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS

American Government

Examination and Demonstration Course Expectations

Course Description:

How the American people govern themselves at national, state and local levels of government is the basis for this course. Students will examine such topics as public policy, elections and voting, constitutional principles, the Bill of Rights, law and justice, and economics and financial literacy. This course also aims to empower students to be active, engaged citizens by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to successfully participate and create change in their communities. This course is aligned with Ohio's Learning Standards.

Textbook: *Government Alive! Power, Politics, and You* (TCI)

Credit by Examination and Demonstration:

To receive credit for American Government, successfully complete the assignments below.

1. **Written Exam** (proctored) - multiple choice questions, a thematic essay question, and a document-based essay question
2. **Research Essays** (2500-3000 words total) - Students may choose to write 1, 2, or 3 essays from the topics below. The combined total count for the essays should be 2500-3000 words.
    - Explain the foundations of the American political system as outlined in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and the Federalist Papers with emphasis on the basic principles of natural rights;
    - Trace key Supreme Court decisions related to one provision of the Constitution (e.g., cases related to free speech or separation of church and state);
    - Describe how each branch of government has increasingly extended civil rights to marginalized groups and broadened opportunities for participation through American history.
    - Analyze a current issue related to domestic or foreign policy in the U.S. (e.g., human rights, intervention in conflicts between other countries, or health care);
    - Analyze an historical or contemporary example of citizen movements to bring about political change (e.g., MADD, NOW, Common Cause, NAACP and Eagle Forum).
    - Explain how the federal government uses fiscal and monetary to maintain economic stability and foster economic growth.
3. **Media Presentation** (30-40 minutes) - Slide presentation with audio narration that summarizes the content of the research essays with bullet points, images, charts, graphs, and other multimedia.

Scoring Guidelines:

Written Exam – 50% (Multiple Choice – 20%; Thematic Essay – 15%; Document-Based Essay – 15%)
Research Essays – 25%
Media Presentation – 25%

Research Essays Rubric

CATEGORY	4 – Above Standards	3 – Meets Standards	2 – Approaching Standards	1 – Below Standards
Thesis Statement	The thesis statement identifies the argument of the paper and outlines the main points to be discussed.	The thesis statement identifies the argument of the paper.	The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not identify the argument of the paper.	The thesis statement does identify the argument of the paper and does not preview what will be discussed.
Evidence and Accuracy	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position. All supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position. Almost all supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position. Some supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant and/or are not explained. Most supportive facts and statistics were inaccurately reported.
Sequencing	Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author's train of thought.	Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought.	A few of the supporting details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing.	Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing.
Sources	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.	Most sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly.
Grammar & Spelling	The writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

Multimedia Presentation Assessment Rubric

CATEGORY	4— Above Standards	3— Meets Standards	2— Approaching Standards	1— Below Standards
Content and Accuracy	Components of the project cover the topic in depth with details and examples. Subject knowledge is excellent. All supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Includes essential knowledge about the topic. Almost all supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Includes essential information about the topic but there are some factual errors.	Content is minimal or there are several factual errors.
Sources	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.	Most sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	Many sources are suspect (not credible) and/or are not cited correctly.
Organization and Format	Content is well-organized using headings or bulleted lists to group related material. Makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects etc. to enhance the presentation. A professional and academic presentation.	Uses headings or bulleted lists to organize, but the overall organization of topics appears flawed. Makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects etc. to enhance the presentation. A professional and academic presentation employed most of the time.	Content is logically organized for the most part. Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. but occasionally these detract from the presentation content.	There was no clear or logical organizational structure. Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. but these often detract from the presentation content.
Technical Competence	Slide presentation demonstrates competency in technology. A professional look. Operation of equipment runs smoothly.	Slide presentation demonstrates competency in technology. A mostly professional look. Operation of equipment runs smoothly for the most part.	VSlide presentation demonstrates a lack of professionalism. There are several incidents of equipment malfunction.	Slide presentation is poorly organized and executed. There are multiple incidents of equipment malfunction.
Grammar and Spelling	The writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	The writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

Ohio's Learning Standards: American Government

TOPIC: CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Students can engage societal problems and participate in opportunities to contribute to the common good through governmental and nongovernmental channels.

Content Statements:

1. Opportunities for civic engagement with the structures of government are made possible through political and public policy processes.
2. Political parties, interest groups and the media provide opportunities for civic involvement through various means.

TOPIC: CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS

Democratic government is enhanced when individuals exercise the skills to effectively participate in civic affairs.

Content Statements:

3. Issues can be analyzed through the critical use of information from public records surveys, research data and policy positions of advocacy groups.
4. The processes of persuasion, compromise, consensus building and negotiation contribute to the resolution of conflicts and differences.

TOPIC: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Principles related to representative democracy are reflected in the articles and amendments of the U.S. Constitution and provide structure for the government of the United States.

Content Statements:

5. As the supreme law of the land, the U.S. Constitution incorporates basic principles that help define the government of the United States as a federal republic including its structure, powers and relationship with the governed.
6. The Federalist Papers and the Anti-Federalist Papers framed the national debate over the basic principles of government encompassed by the Constitution of the United States.
7. Constitutional government in the United States has changed over time as a result of amendments to the U.S. Constitution, Supreme Court decisions, legislation and informal practices.
8. The Bill of Rights was drafted in response to the national debate over the ratification of the Constitution of the United States.
9. The constitutional amendments known collectively as the Reconstruction Amendments extended new constitutional protections to African Americans, though the struggle to fully achieve equality would continue.
10. Constitutional amendments have provided for civil rights such as suffrage for disenfranchised groups.
11. Constitutional amendments have altered provisions for the structure and functions of the federal government.

TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Three branches compose the basic structure of the federal government. Public policy is created through the making of laws, the execution of the laws and the adjudication of disputes under the laws.

Content Statements:

12. Law and public policy are created and implemented by three branches of government; each functions with its own set of powers and responsibilities.
13. The political process creates a dynamic interaction among the three branches of government in addressing current issues.

TOPIC: ROLE OF THE PEOPLE

The government of the United States protects the freedoms of its people and provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.

Content Statements:

14. In the United States, people have rights that protect them from undue governmental interference. Rights carry responsibilities that help define how people use their rights and that require respect for the rights of others.
15. Historically, the United States has struggled with majority rule and the extension of minority rights. As a result of this struggle, the government has increasingly extended civil rights to marginalized groups and broadened opportunities for participation.

TOPIC: OHIO'S STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The State of Ohio acts within the framework of the U.S. Constitution and extends powers and functions to local governments.

Content Statements:

16. As a framework for the state, the Ohio Constitution has similarities and differences to the federal Constitution; it was changed in 1851 to address difficulties governing the state.
17. Individuals in Ohio have a responsibility to assist state and local governments as they address relevant and often controversial problems that directly affect their communities.

TOPIC: PUBLIC POLICY

Federal, state and local governments address problems and issues by making decisions, creating laws, enforcing regulations and taking action.

Content Statements:

18. A variety of entities within the three branches of government, at all levels, address public policy issues that arise in domestic and international affairs.
19. Individuals and organizations play a role within federal, state and local governments in helping to determine public (domestic and foreign) policy

TOPIC: GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY

The actions of government play a major role in the flow of economic activity. Governments consume and produce goods and services. Fiscal and monetary policies, as well as economic regulations, provide the means for government intervention in the economy.

Content Statements:

20. The federal government uses spending and tax policy to maintain economic stability and foster economic growth. Regulatory actions carry economic costs and benefits.
21. The Federal Reserve System uses monetary tools to regulate the nation's money supply and moderate the effects of expansion and contraction in the economy.