

American Government and Politics (Semester 1) & Economics (Semester 2) Syllabus 2018-2019

This American Government and Politics course serves as an introduction to the US national government and political process. It is taught with the conviction that students want to know not only who governs but also what difference it makes who governs. This course is designed to enable students to develop a critical perspective towards government and politics in the United States. Students will examine general political concepts as well as specific case studies. It is important that every student in this class stay abreast on current political events in order to be able to intelligently and logically discuss current events in the context of what we are learning in class. The course is one semester long.

Required Materials:

1. A three ring binder or a section in a three ring binder for this class (for your notes, handouts, etc.)
2. Binder Paper
3. Two different colored pens for writing
4. Two different colored highlighters
5. At least two #2 pencils (mechanical pencils are great)
6. School planner (either the PHS version or your own)

Textbooks:

Government in America by Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry
Economics -New Way of Thinking by Roger A. Arnold

Government and Politics Course Objectives:

Students will be able to demonstrate...

- A knowledge of the principles, institutions and processes of the national, state, and local levels of government in the United States.
- Strong analytical skills, which are expressed through writing and in oral communication.
- An understanding of the organization and functions of the American government; branches, bureaucracy, and budget.
- A familiarity with the complexities of the US Constitution and development of federalism.
- An analysis of media and the linkage institution process.
- Recognition of and acceptance of competing viewpoints on issues, and the ability to distinguish convincing evidence from unsupported opinion.
- Knowledge of the role of politics, political parties, and interest groups in the public policy process.
- An understanding of the court system and evolution of public policy concerning civil liberties and civil rights.

Methodology

Challenging assignments involving reading, analysis, synthesis, writing, and presenting will give you the opportunity to develop along the lines of the course objectives. Lectures will be given in order to develop the course curriculum and make clear any themes or objectives not understood by you. Group discussions and presentations as well as Socratic discussions based on primary and secondary readings will be used in class. Class simulations, debates, and videos will be used in order to enrich and expand your knowledge.

Students will be engaging with online material on a regular bases to overserve and learn about the government, political, and economic processes.

Classroom Policies:

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. Academic dishonesty includes: copying assignments, sharing questions and answers from tests with another student (including someone in another period, looking at another student's test/quiz, talking during a test/quiz, having notes out during a test/quiz when instructed not to, using an electronic device during a test, using another person's words without proper citations, allowing another student to cheat off of your own work), or not following appropriate test/quiz procedures. Any student caught engaging in academic dishonesty will receive a zero on the assignment and be reported to the Assistant Principle of Discipline.

Tardiness: If you are not in your seat when the bell rings, you will be marked tardy. Go to the office to get a tardy slip if you are tardy. This will mean that your 1 minute tardy may turn into a 10 minute tardy. If you miss instructions or work due to tardiness, it is your responsibility to meet after class with the teacher to get necessary work. Furthermore, if you miss the opportunity to turn in an assignment due to tardiness, you may only receive up to a C- on the assignment.

Cell Phones and other such electronics:

Cell phones, smart watches or devices to listen to music are not permitted during the class period. Students will be expected to put these devices away in their bags so devices left on your desk, pocket, etc. can be confiscated. Students need to complete all texts and phone calls before walking into class and may not start using their phones until they are excused from class. Parents please note: If a student is communicating with their parent they will still have their phone taken away. If parents need to contact students during the day for any reason please call the attendance office and the message will get to the classroom.

Chromebooks are used extensively in R11. Students are to use the Chromebooks for the academic task and may not go to personal use websites, play video games, or code on the computers. They are meant to engage students in the material of the class not distract them. Students responsible for following these expectations and will get consequences for not follow them.

Restroom Use:

Students will receive three restroom passes. If restroom use is necessary, fill out a pass, show the teacher the pass, rip off the pass from the rest of the sheet and deposit cell at teacher's desk, use the restroom and through pass away in classroom trashcan.

Ideally use these facilities during break, lunch, or between classes. Students how lose the restroom pass and have an emergency restroom need may still go but will have to stay after class/school to make up the time they were absent from class (e.g. if a student is gone for 5 minutes they owe 5 minutes after class). On quiz and test days, students are encouraged to use the restroom before class, in order to receive the entire given time. Students will be asked to give up cell phones during restroom breaks.

Substitutes: This year I will be gone several times for district training so there will be a need for a substitute teacher. Students are expected to treat substitutes with respect, and obey all class rules in my absence. Unless there is an emergency, students expect to receive written directions from me about what to do that day and therefore will need to follow them completely. Students or classes who don't follow directions will receive consequences.

Food, Drink, and Gum: Students are allowed to eat or drink in class with limitations. For food students may have items that are easy to snack on while taking notes or writing in other forms. Drinks can be consumed as long as it is a reliable drink container like a water bottle, etc. Gum is never allowed and takes away from a productive discussion environment. If food interferes with the classroom environment this policy is subject to change.

Food is never allowed during Socratic Seminars, class discussions, quizzes and tests. Students should never have food around the Chrome Books/computers.

Classroom Conduct:

Each student has been in school now for a number of years and have a comprehensive understanding of what type of behavior is accepted. It is my goal to establish a sense of community within our class where we all help each other in learning. Students are not only students, but will be teachers as well. This community will be one that is cooperative, respectful, and accepting of everyone.

Classroom Expectations:

Respect the people and materials in class.

Be prepared for class with the necessary attitude and materials.

Follow directions and policies.

Argue ideas not people.

Consequences:

First Step: Student is given verbal warning.

Further Steps: Student is asked to step out of class, parent notified, student is sent to OCS and in some cases further consequences are discussed with AP of Discipline.

Grading Policy:

The course grade will be determined by total point performance achieved by the student on class projects, tests, quizzes, handouts, oral participation, debates, essays, etc. Grades are based on weighted categories in the following areas:

Readiness (10%)

Readiness is a vital component of the class, and can be a subjective part of your grade. This category encompasses a variety of components hence the vague title. It includes coming to class with your homework complete, participating in class discussion, being prepared with materials for the day, being ready to connect class material to current events, and following political events as they happen in real-time, etc.

Late/Absent Policy: Points in this category are given for students that are in class. Frequent absences will affect this grade.

Homework/Class Work (40%)

During class, students will need to participate in all activities and will be graded on them. In some cases class work will be for studying use, and in other cases it will be collected. Students will be expected to do the readings and assignments in order to be prepared for classroom activities. Many times, students will need to get the background information at home in order to participate in class; therefore, not doing homework can get you very behind and leave you out of group work.

Textbook reading, articles or other texts will be assigned each week and will need to be completed by the assigned due date. Students will need to take reading notes or annotate (will depend on the assignment). Notes can be on a piece of binder paper or typed. It has to be done independently by students to receive credit unless the teacher otherwise states. Expect to always be accountable for notetaking and annotating. These type of assignments will be collected frequently and returned to students for preparations for assessments.

Please keep in mind that some homework and class work assignments will be short term and others long term. Most classwork is collected at the end of the unit. So students get multiple assignments graded at once less frequently. This allows students time to study from or use homework or class work for other assignments and exams. Bring all classwork and homework to class every day.

A significant amount of writing assignments are completed on Google Classroom with due dates indicated. Most of the times indicated are in the evening to allow students plenty of time to complete assignments. Students are expected to complete these and submit them on time and will lose points when this is not the case.

Late/Absent Policy: Late work is generally not accepted but in rare situations that include extenuating circumstances late work is collected with a grade deduction that allows you to only receive up to a C-. If a student is absent and wants to turn in an assignment late, then you must turn it in the day they return, and show proof of an excused absence. Work that is passed out during an absence is a student's responsibility.

Assessments (40%)

Assessments include quizzes, tests, writing assignments, creative projects, and presentation (some individual and some group).

Quizzes will occur to test knowledge and understanding of the information in each unit. They will be shorter than tests and often include fill-in, short answer and multiple choice. Most of quizzes will be announced but some will be pop-quizzes. Tests will include multiple choice, short answer questions and/or essay questions.

Assessments will go beyond just tests and you will be expected to use knowledge of the English language to convey your ideas in essays. Often essays will include analyzing historical situations and primary source documents, comparing different parts of history and drawing upon personal experiences and ideas.

Projects will be both individual and group based. You will be expected to show understanding of the topics discussed in class by using art, theater, and formal presentations. For each project students are assigned they will receive written directions and a rubric that tells them what is expected of them.

Absent Policy: If students miss a quiz, they will not need to make it up. Instead, your grade from the next quiz or test (whatever comes next) will count as the quiz grade. If students miss more than one quiz in a unit students may not receive credit on the additional quizzes. If students miss a unit exam expect to make-it up during the period the student returns to school.

For projects and presentations make-up work is more difficult so missing these can grade more heavily affect a student's grade. Students in a group work setting MUST communicate with other teammates in a reliable manner in order to get some credit for their work.

Final Exam (10%)

More details will be shared during the semester.

Absences:

Students should consistently keep the teacher in the loop regarding absences. A convenient way of doing this is emailing me. For both planned and unplanned absences email the teacher to help me plan the class.

During an absence students need to stay in touch with their partner about what is being/was missed. After returning to class get papers from the folder of the date missed and use these papers to complete the make-up work. Please see me after class to get any information missed after speaking to another student and going to the bin for extra handouts.

If students miss work while absent they must turn in that work in the “absent” bin.

Absences for School Related Activities: If students are absent from class due an extracurricular activity such as robotics, band, drama, choir, art, sports, leadership, etc. students will need to inform me of the absence at least 2 days ahead of time. For exams or projects students will need to arrange to take the test or submit the project before the absence. *Students who do not arrange this with me beforehand will be in jeopardy of losing points on the exam.*

Leadership students who are setting up or taking down items for rallies or other school activities must clear their absence at least 2 days before the event with Ms. Talreja; or you may jeopardize losing points. Students who leave early 6th period for after-school related activities are responsible for getting all the day’s work and homework before leaving for the activity and/or arrange with a person in class to get what you miss the night of the absence. All homework is still due on the date it was assigned for. If a test is scheduled for this day the student needs to take it before they leave for the sport (make arrangements ahead of time).

Unexcused Absences: Unexcused absences will not be tolerated. If you a student does not get the absence cleared, then any work due on the day of the absence will not be accepted and students are completely responsible for getting what they need from that day to still be successful in class. Ms. Talreja will not be very accommodating.

Computer Access

Students will be expected to type essays, and do certain assignments using technology including accessing Google Classroom. Furthermore, there will be many assignments that will require access to the Internet. There are a lot of great study resources online including blogs, media sources, etc. so I will be updating information about these sources on Google Classroom.

If students do not have access to a computer at home then students can download apps on their phone to be able to access some of the material from outside the classroom. My classroom has a few desktop computers and several chromebooks that are always accessible- FLEX is a great time to use these resources. The library media center is also a great place to do work and can be accessed before, after and during the school day. This computer lab allows you to type papers, use the Internet and print for free. The lab is usually open during school hours (including lunch) and after school until 4pm (sometimes later). Students will need to plan ahead to make sure you are able to finish your assignments on time. PLEASE NOTE: Because of the computer lab resources students will be expected to complete work on time.

Note the school does not provide an email address rather the “@sjusd.org” account is merely for Google Drive access. Students should create a reliable email address to be able to communicate with other students and the teacher.

Getting Support for the Class

Students are expected to work with students in class and come during FLEX to get help.

The best time to get extra help from me is during FLEX and S-Period I am also in my room most days afterschool. If students want to be sure I am there, just check with me on the day you want to meet with me and we can set a time. I can also meet students during lunch but please just let me know in advance so I am actually in room.

Please contact me and be proactive about getting help.

This class is not organized to be taken online or in isolation so come to class, keep me in the loop and stay ahead of the game and you will most probably be successful.

Feel free to email me at ptalreja@sjusd.org. Another way to get some support from me is on Google Classroom.

Students will need to keep their syllabus in their binder for easy access.

Student Name:

Student Period:

Student Section:

I, _____ (student name), have read and understand Ms. Talreja's syllabus and class expectations. I will do my best to do what is expected of me in order to be successful in US Government and Economics.

Student's Signature:

Student's Email Address:

One goal for the School Year:

Parent/Guardian Section:

I have read, understood, and will support Ms. Talreja's classroom syllabus, policies, and expectations. I will also support my student in government and economics, so that they can complete their homework on time, participate in class, and truly engage with the curriculum.

Parent's Signature:

Parent's Name:

Parent's Phone Number:

Parent's Email Address:

One goal for School Year:

If the student lives in more than one household during the school year please share the name, phone number and email of their other parent or guardian with whom they share their time, in the space below.

Name:

Relation to Student:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Comments/Questions:
