

United States Government

Zoo Academy

Omaha Public Schools/Papillion La Vista Community Schools

Instructor: Kyle Tredinnick
E-mail: kyle.tredinnick@ops.org
Office Phone Number: (402) 829-5880
Teacher Websites: www.mrtredinnick.com/us-government
Schoology Access Code:
Term: Fall 2016
Meeting Time: A1, A2, A3, B3



I. **Class Description:**

This semester long course will examine the democratic foundations, structures, and institutions of American government at local, state, and national levels. Students will study the political processes to gain understanding of the role of the individuals in the decision-making process of American government. Students will also learn about the rights and responsibilities of the citizens of the United States. By investigate American government though a variety of methods, including examining primary source documents, conducting research projects, class discussion, and written essays students will gain a deeper understanding of the function of the United States Government.

II. **Content Objectives:**

- a. **Political Action:** Examine a public policy issue by defining the problem, developing alternative courses of action, evaluating the consequences of each alternative, selecting a course of action, and designing a plan to implement the action and resolve the problem.
- b. **Government Institutions:** Compare a variety of different content including political parties, forms of government, demographic groups, etc.
- c. **Political Trends:** Use data to make predictions and draw conclusions by conducting research on voting patterns, voter demographics, and examine Supreme Court decisions.
- d. **Political Process:** Identify how public policy is shaped by governmental and non-governmental institutions and political processes.
- e. **Core American Values:** Explain the current and historical interpretations of principles related to American core values (such as due process and equal protection of the law); synthesize why/how those interpretations changed over time.
- f. **Government Levels:** Demonstrate skills that enable people to monitor and influence state, local and national affairs. For example: Working with others; conducting civil conversations; articulating ideas and interests; negotiating differences and managing conflict with people or groups who have different perspectives; using parliamentary procedures; building consensus.
- g. **Political Bias:** Evaluate sources of information and various forms of political persuasion for validity, accuracy, ideology, emotional appeals, bias and prejudice.

III. **Readings and Study Materials:**

United States Government: principles in Practice, Fraga, Luis Ricardo, Holt McDougal, 2010.

Additional Readings and resources will be used throughout the course of the semester

IV. Unit Overviews:

a. Unit I – Foundations of the United States Government (5 Weeks)

This introductory unit will begin familiarizing students with the most basic concepts and understandings of the United States Government. A special emphasis will be placed on the formation of the government and the process that was required to form the foundations of the country.

b. Unit II – The Constitution and its Amendments (5 Weeks)

The second unit of study will focus on the principles and big ideas of the US Constitution. Through looking at the ideas of Checks and Balances, Federalism, Popular Sovereignty, Separation of Power, Republicanism, and Limited Governments the students will gain an understanding of the guiding principles of the United States Government. Special emphasis on the Amendments will give students an understanding of the types of protections and freedoms citizens have.

c. Unit III – The Branches of Government (5 Weeks)

In Unit III students will be examining each of the three main branches of government and their specific functions. Special emphasis on the process of elections, how a bill becomes a law, and the idea of judicial review will connect the ideas of the functions of government to the six principles of the constitution.

d. Unit IV – The Political Process (4 Weeks)

Students will further the roles on citizen action and local government by examining specific issues related to the community and coming up with an action plan on applying the ideas of the preceding units to take political action.

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change

V. Omaha Public Schools Evaluation

Omaha Public Schools students' coursework and assessments are judged based on the level of student learning from "below basic" to "advanced." This course will provide multiple opportunities to achieve at the "proficient" to "advanced" levels. Students are evaluated based on a proficiency scale or project rubric.

A final score for each reporting topic/standard will be determined using a trend score. A trend score looks at the progression of learning throughout the unit of study or the course and puts greater emphasis on the increased achievement at the end of learning. All coursework and assessments are important for student learning and should be completed to provide evidence of learning. If multiple assignments or major assessments (final exam) are not completed, zeros will be given and the grade for the topic/standard will be determined by averaging.

At the end of a grading period, trended scores for each reporting topic/standard will be averaged using assigned folder weights. This weighted average is converted to a letter grade using this grading scale for the 2016-2017 school year.

Proficiency scales for this course are available upon request (teacher will identify location such as parent portal, teacher website, attached, etc.)

VI. Grading Procedures

- a. Redoing/Revising Coursework: Students are allowed redos and revisions of coursework for full credit during that unit of study. Scores for student work after retaking, revising or redoing will not be averaged with the first attempt at coursework or assessment but will replace the original student score.

- b. Late Coursework: Students are expected to complete missing coursework. Late coursework is accepted for full credit until the end of the unit. Once late coursework is turned in, the zero will be replaced with the score earned by the student. Late work completed during the unit of study will not result in a reduction in grade. Work that is not turned in during the unit of study will receive a score of zero.

Missing Coursework: Work not turned in at all will receive a score of M. An M is weighted the same as a zero in the gradebook. Students have until the end of the unit to hand in any missing assignments. Accommodations due to extended illnesses are to be arranged with the teacher.

VII. Grading Scales

Omaha Public Schools	Papillion La Vista Community Schools
A = 3.51 – 4.00	A = 100% - 90%
A- = 3.01 – 3.50	B = 89% - 80%
B = 2.51 – 3.00	C = 79% - 70%
B- = 2.01 – 2.50	D = 69% – 60%
C = 1.51 – 2.00	F = 59% - 0%
D = 0.76 - 1.50	
F = 0.00 – 0.75	

VIII. Course Requirements

- a. Daily Warm-Ups: Each day of the class students will be required to do daily warm-up questions from the class forum that can be found at the bottom of the course website or by using the following link <http://www.mrtredinnick.com/us-government-forum>. These daily forums will have questions to help connect the materials that will be covered in the day's lesson to the students' own personal pre-conceptions or ideas.
- b. Assignments: All assignments can be completed and handed in a variety of ways. They be completed by printing off the assignments from the course website and handing in physical copies to the teacher. Students can complete assignments and submit them digitally using the assignment form at the bottom of the course website. Or students can see the teacher for physical copies of the assignments that can then be handed in physically or digitally.
- c. Tests/Quizzes: Tests will be taken in class on a designated date. If a student is unable to complete the test during the testing time due to illness or other factors it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor to come up with alternate arrangements for the test.

IX. Academic Dishonesty/Cheating

Any students caught cheating, or attempting to cheat, will be given an automatic zero on the assignment. Further action may be taken depending on the situation.

X. Honors option

Students have the option to take the course as an honors class that would be labeled as such on their schedule/transcript. Honors students would have additional assignments which they would have to complete along with the assignments of the normal class (unless otherwise stated). Honors classes help improve a student's marketability when applying for colleges.

XI. Assessments and Weights

Assessment Type	Category Weight (%) OPS/PAPLV
Summative Assessment: assessments/assignments are major end of learning unit tests or projects, (e.g., a research paper, an oral report with a power point, science fair project). Summative assignments are graded for accuracy. Summative assignments assess the student's progress on grade level standards.	65% / 70%
Formative Assessment: assessments/assignments are done for learning. They are minor assignments, (e.g., a three paragraph essay, written responses to guiding questions over an assigned reading, completion of a comparison contrast matrix). Formative assignments are graded for accuracy and descriptive feedback is provided. Descriptive feedback provides the student with the necessary information to improve their learning. Formative work is at the student's instructional level and/or grade level standards.	35% / 30%

Multipliers: All assignments will be the standard x1 multiplier unless otherwise stated. Assignments will be listed in the gradebook with labeling as either a formative or summative assignment, and any special multiplier will be explained in the explanation of the assignment. All end of unit examinations will be counted as a Summative Assessment with a x2 multiplier.

XII. Targeted Learning Standards

SS12.1.1 *Students will analyze and evaluate the foundation, structures, and functions of the United States Government as well as local, state, and international governments.* (Indicator 12.1.1a, 12.1.1b)

SS12.1.2 *Students will address local, state, national or international issues and policies through meaningful civic participation.* (Indicator 12.1.2 a, 12.1.2b, 12.1.2 c, 12.1.2e)

SS 12.2.10: *Students will analyze the role and responsibilities of government in various economic systems* (Indicator 12.2.10.d)

SS 12.2.11 *Students will examine the government's influence on economic systems through fiscal policy* (Indicator 12.2.11 b)