

# American Government

Instructor Kyle Tredinnick

Phone 651-288-4606 ext 7124

Class Room 124

E-mail ktredinnick@stpaulprep.org

Course 8:30-11:40

Course Summer Session: 7/8/13 to 8/2/13

Hours

Dates

Website: [www.mrtredinnick.com](http://www.mrtredinnick.com)

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## I. Description:

Students in this class 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. Students will investigate American government through a variety of methods, including examining primary source documents, conducting research projects, class discussion, and written essays.

## II. Course Objectives

### Content Objectives

1. 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.
2. Compare a variety of different content including political parties, forms of government, demographic groups, etc.
3. Use data to make predictions and draw conclusions by conducting research on voting patterns, voter demographics, and conducting a mock trial.
4. Identify how public policy is shaped by governmental and non-governmental institutions and political processes.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Evaluate sources of information and various forms of political persuasion for validity, accuracy, ideology, emotional appeals, bias and prejudice.

### Language Objectives

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.</li> <li>2. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Identify reputable sources.</li> <li>4. Identify the elements of a reputable source and appraise example sources.</li> <li>5. Write an argument using an assertion, reasoning, and evidence format in paragraph form, using provided materials as support.</li> </ol> |
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### III. Course Schedule:

Week	Topic	Required Reading
1	Introduction and Foundations of American Government <u>Monday:</u> No Class – Welcome to SPP <u>Tuesday:</u> Introduction and Class Requirements <u>Wednesday:</u> Intellectual Foundations of Government <u>Thursday:</u> Early forms of Government <u>Friday:</u> Review and Test	No Required Readings No Required Reading Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Review All Readings
2	Constitution and Amendments <u>Monday:</u> The Constitution <u>Tuesday:</u> The Constitution <u>Wednesday:</u> The Amendments <u>Thursday:</u> Creating an Amendment Activity <u>Friday:</u> Review and Test	Chapter 3 Chapter 3 Chapters 10, 11 Chapters 10, 11 Review All Readings
3	Branches of American Government <u>Monday:</u> The Executive Branch <u>Tuesday:</u> The Legislative Branch <u>Wednesday:</u> The Judicial Branch <u>Thursday:</u> Check and Balances <u>Friday:</u> Review and Test	Chapters 6, 7, 9, 12, 14 Chapter 5 Chapters 8, 13 Chapter 4 Review All Readings
4	State and Local Politics and Role of Citizens <u>Monday:</u> Rights and Responsibilities of a citizen <u>Tuesday:</u> State and Local Government <u>Wednesday:</u> Field Trip to State Capitol <u>Thursday:</u> Field Trip Discussion/Review <u>Friday:</u> Final/Wrap-up	Chapter 16 Chapter 16 - Review All Readings Review All Reading

\*This schedule is a tentative outline of the first semester and subject to change depending on student progress. Additional readings will be given out as needed.

IV. St. Paul Prep School wide Expectations:

1. Respect yourself, others and your school environment.
2. Be in class and on time.
3. Give your best effort every day.
4. Be honest in your work, your relationships and your actions.
5. Help create a safe and productive learning environment.
6. Be a positive leader in our global community.

V. Resources:

During the semester students will receive hand-outs from various resources and be required to find accurate information from appropriate websites.

VI. Text:

Fraga, Luis Ricardo. *United States Government: principles in practice*. Austin, Tex.; Holt McDougal, 2010.

VII. Field Trip

As Part of the class students will be taking a half day field trip to the Minnesota State Capitol where students will get a firsthand look and the political structure of the United States. Along with the field trip students will complete a required assignment.

VIII. Grading Scale:

A		B		C		D		F				
+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-					
97-	93-	90-	87-	83-	80-	77-	73-	70-	67-	63-	60-	Below 60
100	96	92	89	86	82	79	76	72	69	66	62	Percent

IX. Evaluation:

Class Participation - 10 percent

Homework – 45 percent

Tests and Quizzes – 45 percent

**\*Late work – 1 day late= 25% off, 2 days late=50% off, no credit if more than 2 days late**

X. Assignments

**Unit Exams** – Students will have written exams at the end of each unit. Each Unit test will be worth 30 points, with an exception to the final unit test which will only be 10 points. Tests will include a variety of questions including short answer, matching, multiple choice, and essay.

**Final Exam** – The Final exam will be worth 40 points and will be made up of materials from throughout the course of the year.

**Socratic Seminars** – Throughout the course of the year students will be involved in a number of Socratic style discussions where they will be required to participate and be able to bring in relevant questions and comments.

**Predicting the 2016 Presidential Election** – Students will use a collection of data from the 2008 and 2012 Presidential Elections to write an article about which party they predict will win the 2016 Presidential Election.

**Briefs** – Each student will be assigned to write a one paragraph brief on a landmark Supreme Court case. Their paragraph will need to identify the issues, the facts, the decision, and the reasoning of the case.

**Mock Congress** – Students will synthesize the process of policymaking with the process of how a bill becomes a law through congress. Students will choose a topic important to them related to domestic, economic, foreign, or social policy and formulate a plan for implementation. They will then simulate the bill to law process and reflect on why the founders made the process so difficult.

**Class Participation** – Throughout the course of the semester there will be many different readings, activities, lectures and discussions that students will be expected to be engaged and participate in.