

OHHS Social Studies Department
Course Syllabus

Course Name: American Government

Course Code: SSO401

Course Description: This course is designed to give students an understanding of how the American Government system works. It will give the students an opportunity to become aware and understand the inner workings of the government. Students will be encouraged to read daily newspapers, watch newscasts and read current periodicals. They are also expected to participate in classroom discussions that promote the democratic process.

Prerequisites

None; *Graduation Requirement*

Course Resources

- Textbook: *United States Government: Democracy in Action*
- Media, Supplemental, Periodicals and Video Resources
- Primary/Secondary Sources (*were available*)
 - Internet
 - ❑ American Government – <http://www.glencoe.com/sec/socialstudies/govciv/usgov2002/>
 - ❑ Access to the internet is required to complete assignments.
 - ❑ Access to a USB “jump drive” and printer are not required but **highly** desirable.



Course Outline/Instructional Units/Essential Questions (EQ):

Pre-Unit 1: The Constitution and Federalist Papers

- *EQ:* How open to interpretation are the Bill of Rights?
- *EQ:* Why did the founding fathers develop the three branches of government?

Unit 1 (Chpt 1-4): Foundations of American Government

- *EQ:* How has history help shape American Democracy?
- *EQ:* How does the structure of the U.S. Constitution shape the government?
- *EQ:* What is the significance of the constitutional amendments?
- *EQ:* Examine the use of Checks & Balances in the three branches of government.

Unit 2 (Chpt 5, 7): The Legislative Branch

- *EQ:* Describe the structure of Congress.
- *EQ:* How does the organization of Congress persuade and dissuade the passage of legislation?
- *EQ:* What knowledge and skills do people need to participate effectively in our political system?

Unit 3 (Chpt 8, 10): The Executive Branch (and the Federal Bureaucracy)

- *EQ:* How have executive powers changed over time?
- *EQ:* What is the importance of federal agencies and how persuasive are they?
- *EQ:* To what degree does the President have control over the Federal Agencies?

Unit 4 (Chpt 11-12): The Judicial Branch

- *EQ:* Identify ways the Supreme Court shapes public policy and explain the limits on the Court’s power.

Unit 5: Liberal vs. Conservative – Which are you?

- *EQ:* What is the significance of party platforms?
- *EQ:* What are the pros and cons of a two-party system?

Major Assessments

- Midterm & Final Exams.

Research Papers – require research. Writing papers void of any evidence of research **guarantees** a bad grade.

Evidence found while researching topics is expected to be used within your paper to support your thesis. Sources must be cited!

Minor Assessments

- **American Government Current Events** – Only **one** current event report can be turned in **per week** for a total of **12**
- **Citizenship/Participation** – this part of your grade is measured in various ways over the duration of the class. Tardies and disruptive behavior can adversely affect this portion of your grade.
- **Quizzes** – are **closed** notes.

OHHS Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93% and above
A-	90% - 92%
B+	88% - 89%
B	83% - 87%
B-	80% - 82%
C+	78% - 79%
C	73% - 77%
C-	70% - 72%
D+	68% - 69%
D	60% - 67%
F	59% and below

Social Studies Weighted Categories

Daily work	20 %
Regular Assessments tests, papers, essays, projects, quizzes, oral presentations, group projects	65 %
Major Assessments midterm + final	15 %

Re-Do & Late Work Policies

- **Re-Do Policy** – If student work is not up to the teacher’s standard (and an honest effort has been made - as deemed by the teacher) that student has **2 weeks** to re-do that assignment. The student may retrieve **50%** on missed questions by answering the following questions in sentence format.
 1. Why is the answer given wrong? *Connect it to the right answer.*
 2. Why did the student pick the wrong answer? *What made you think it was the right answer?*
 3. What is the correct answer and where can it be found? *Include the page number in your answer.*
- **Late-Work** – Students have two weeks after an original due date to turn in late work. The maximum possible credit is **75%**. No credit after two weeks. If a due date falls on a planned absence the assignment is due **prior to the absence**. It is the student’s responsibility to get make-up work on days absent.

Extra Help - Students whose overall grade $\leq 60\%$ will be required to attend tutoring. As well, one-on-one help will be offered in class.

OHHS Plagiarism Policy - Any student, who knowingly turns in any work that has been done by someone other than himself or herself, and fraudulently represents it as his/her own, shall be considered to have cheated. Cheating also includes: aiding someone else in cheating, the use or preparation of written, pictorial, or other materials not authorized by the instructor during a test or assignment, the use of testing materials obtained previous to the test date, or plagiarism of any kind. **In my class:** plagiarism equals a **zero** on the assignment and it is **not** re-doable. Students found cheating will also be subject to an office referral, which could result in a suspension.