AP U.S. Government and Politics

Course Guidelines and Overview

Mr. Charron

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Free Period: B (extra help available by appointment), Period C (Study Hall)

**Course Overview:**

In general, this course is about the American political system and how citizens behave as part of our representative democracy. Throughout the course, you will gain an understanding of American politics and the processes of government that help shape our public policies.

Naturally, the study of various political positions is bound to cause classroom debate and differences of opinion. This is great! However, we must always engage in such democratic practices in a respectful and responsible manner.

*Why care about government?* First, journalists, public servants, economists, lawyers, businesspeople, and a multitude of other professions rely on at least a basic understanding of government. Also, since we are a democracy, how well would our country run if voters were ignorant or completely misinformed about our political process and the important issues at hand? Don’t you personally want to have a say in how our communities are run and how they can improve? This course will help you learn how to take advantage of our political system’s greatest attribute; the right (& responsibility) to actively participate in shaping our nation’s future.

**Tests:**

Students will be notified at least two days in advance of a test. Students absent the day of a test are responsible for scheduling a make-up the day they return. Failure to report to a scheduled make-up the first time will result in a warning. Failure to report to a scheduled make-up a second time will result in a 25% reduction in the test grade. Failure to report to a scheduled make-up a third time and each time after will result in a 50% reduction. The same policy applies for quiz make ups. Missing class the day before a test will not be an excuse to make up the test some other time if the student is present on the day of the test. Tests are rated as difficult, and require a variety of skills and knowledge. *For success, be sure to set aside ample time to prepare and schedule time after school for review.*

**Quizzes:**

Quizzes generally assess student attentiveness and content knowledge. Students may or may not be warned in advance of a quiz. *For success: listen in class. What you miss in a minute of inattentiveness may mean the difference between an A and a B on a quiz.*

**Projects:**

Several projects will be assigned throughout the year. Projects will be weighted according to the degree of time and effort required to complete the assignment. *For success: Project grades are usually directly correlated to the degree of effort put in by the students. Challenge your creativity and produce a product that you and I will be proud of.*

**Participation:**

You will be graded on participation. It is important that you take part in classroom discussion/activities, exhibit appropriate behavior, and stay on task. These components will all factor into your overall participation grade for the quarter. Preparation for class will also be factored into your participation grade. You will need to bring a charged chrome book and something to write with to class each day. I also recommend that you carry some extra lined paper in your backpack in case you run into issues with your chrome book.

**Homework:**

Homework assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class to be considered on time. It is the student’s responsibility to acquire any materials missed during an absence from class *on the day they return*. Whereas homework will not be assigned nightly, it is imperative that every homework assignment is completed with due effort. Homework will be graded for quality in addition to completion.

**Late/Retake Policies**

1) Homework assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class to be considered on time. Students asking to go to their locker after the bell has rung will receive a maximum of half credit.

2) Late homework assignments will be accepted up until one week (five school days) late for a maximum of half credit (50%). Assignments submitted more than one week late but before the end of the quarter they were assigned in will receive a maximum of 25% credit.

3) Students may retake every test or quiz once. The retake grade will count as 1/3 of the grade, and the original grade will count as 2/3 of the grade. Students must submit a note or email from a parent confirming they studied for at least one hour before attempting the retake. See me when you are ready to schedule the retake.

**Absenteeism:**

Students will receive the same amount of time for all assignments unless unexpected circumstances arise. If an assignment is given and due the next class, the absent student will have two days for each day absent to complete the work. If the student is present when the assignment is given but out on the due date, work is to be handed in at the beginning of the next class the student is present. If a student arrives to school after class or is dismissed before class occurs, homework is still to be handed in that day as long as the student is in the building at some point. If the absence is unexcused, the student will have the opportunity to complete the assignment missed for a maximum of half credit.

**Rules:**

Standard school rules apply to our classroom. Overall, being respectful toward me and your classmates is the most important rule that applies here. Respect is shown in many different ways. For example, students must raise their hand and be called on before speaking in class. Respect is not reserved for only the teacher. I expect students to respect each other. Students should not talk while another is talking. Students should try to listen to views with an open mind. Students should be trustworthy group members and come to class prepared. Students should not talk poorly about other students, teachers, or administration—this is not tolerated in my classroom, nor is it ever an appropriate use of time.

Cell phones and other electronic devices aside from chrome books will be confiscated and result in disciplinary action. Being late to class and/or inappropriate behavior will result in after school detentions. Permission may be granted for a restroom visit, but requests should be made in emergency situations only. More than ten requests per quarter for use of the restroom is considered excessive, and parents may be contacted if loss of class time due to leaving the classroom too often is having a negative impact on a student’s grades.

**Extra Help:**

I am available during Period B by appointment only. I also have a study hall during Period C. Give me at least one day’s notice if you would like to meet with me for extra help during one of these time periods, and I will be glad to help you out. I encourage all parents/guardians to contact me to discuss your child’s progress. This can be done by phone or e-mail (mcharron@thompsonpublicschools.org). Do not hesitate to inquire about your average grade for the quarter at any time, as we can determine what areas you need to improve on to bring your grade up. I want everyone in this class to be successful and happy with their results.

**Grading Breakdown:**

Pop Quizzes 10%

Announced Quizzes 15%

Participation 15%

Homework/Classwork 30%

Tests, Projects 30%

I am looking forward to working with all of you, and I am confident that this class will be a positive experience for everyone involved.

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### **Confirmation Sheet: Due Wednesday, 9/2 (homework grade)**

*The signature below indicates that you and your parent/guardian understand the requirements of the course. In addition, if you or your parent/guardian would like to write any questions or comments at this time, you are more than welcome to include that in the space provided below.*

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Student Name Parent/Guardian Name

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Student Signature Parent/Guardian Signature

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Parent Email

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Phone Number(s)

Parents/Guardians:

Throughout the year, we will be watching some historical and political films to supplement our studies on American Government. There are some great films that have been released over the years. I would like to show some of these films or clips from a variety of films to bring a visual component into the class. Films that may be used include but are not limited to The Patriot, 12 Angry Men, Thirteen Days, and similar films.

Some of these films may be rated R for graphic violence and language. If you have any objections to your son/daughter watching these films please let me know, and I will have them complete an alternate assignment. My email is mcharron@thomspsonpublicschools.org. Please sign in only one place below. Thank you.

M. Charron

I **do not object** to my son/daughter watching these movies. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(signature) (date)

**Or**

I **object** to my son/daughter watching these films and would prefer an alternate assignment.

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(signature) (date)