

# American Government

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*It is the duty of every patriot to protect his country from its government.*  
*Thomas Paine*

*Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*  
*Lord Acton*

**Goal: It has been recognized since the founding of the nation that education has a civic mission: to prepare informed, rational, humane, and participating citizens committed to the values and principles of American constitutional democracy.**

## Content:

1. **Foundations:** Basic principles of government, philosophies and structures, political spectrum
2. **History of government:** Events and people that created the American government, viewing the Constitution from the federalist/anti-federalist point of view, the compromises made during this time
3. **Constitution and Constitutional theory:** What is in the Constitution, what principles it exhibits, how it is structured?
4. **Federalism:** What is federalism? How does it work? How is power divided? How is money gained and spent by political systems?
5. **Three branches:** What is the basic structure of each branch? What are the basic powers of each branch? What role does bureaucracy play? What policies has the US used in the past? How is foreign policy made? When is force used? Why? How has the US interacted in the world?
6. **Law and civil rights:** What is rule of law? What are the rights of American citizens? How are rights protected in the US? How have people reacted when they have felt their rights were threatened?
7. **Electoral Process:** Understanding the two party system, how candidates are nominated and elected, elections, including campaign finance, understanding the electoral college, understanding what media does and what bias is, why people vote how they do, how do you measure public opinion, voting trends, media supports the two party system, major political issues in the media

## Requirements

- The number one most important requirement is that you **be here**, both physically and mentally. Each day we will build off of the day before, so missing one day can really hurt you.
- This class requires a certain level of **organization**. I highly recommend you get a notebook that you can take notes in that has a pocket you can put handouts in.
- We will have tests over the different units that we do. Some will be objective, some will be essay, and some will be group projects. All will be announced ahead of time. You should **ALWAYS study** for upcoming assessments.
- The last requirement that I really want to emphasize is that you come to class with the understanding that **you are here to learn**. Bring your notebook and a pencil and your book every day, as well as any material you were asked to complete outside of class. We work as a team and if someone isn't prepared, it slows us all down.

## I. Policies

**Late work/making up tests and quizzes:** You have one full day to make up any assignments if you have an *excused* absence. For example, if you miss Tuesday, work that was due Tuesday is due for you on Wednesday. Also, any work assigned for Wednesday is due Thursday for you (assuming you come back to get it!!).

\*\* REMEMBER TO ASK FOR MISSING WORK. Ask people for notes or homework questions. USE THE LATEWORK CALENDAR also to find this important info.

\*\* Any assignment not turned in on time can still be turned in for late (points will be taken off, but anything is better than nothing!).

\*\* If you miss a test or quiz, plan on coming in at lunch or **immediately** after school or before school **the day you return** to make it up. Not doing so may result in a zero.

**Notebooks/Journals/Binders** (whatever you wish to call them): Each time **before** we take a quiz, your notebooks will be due. If notebooks are not turned in before the quiz they are considered late and in being late they are marked down 25% each day until they are turned in. Notebooks are all of your work for the unit and are usually worth a lot of points. Each answer on your handout must also have a page number or some sort of reference to where you found the answer. If you do not reference the answer it will not be counted. EXAMPLE: On page 836, under the heading "A New Plan" I found that ...

**Food:** There is absolutely **NO** food or colored drink in carpeted areas of the school. Since this room is carpeted there is no food or colored drink allowed in this room. Water is ok.

**Cell phones:** Luckily we are in a computer lab so you will not need your cell phone for any reason. Usually I would This is your warning. There are **NO** cell phones are headphones allowed in the classroom. If I **SEE** them they will be taken and given to Mr. B. and your parents will have to come and pick them up for you. **DO NOT HAVE THEM OUT SITTING ON YOUR DESK.**

**Tardies:** You are marked tardy if you are not **in your seat** when the bell rings. Three tardies equals an absence. I don't like to waste class time waiting for people to get here. Remember, three tardies could also mean a call home!

## II. Grading

Your grade will be based on your total points. Each assignment or task will have a point value. Tests - will be double weighted so usually around 100 pts, Notebooks = usually about 100 points, and FRQs = 20 pts. . The grading scale is as follows:

93.5-100 = A	69.5 – 73.4 = C-
89.5-93.4 = A-	67.5 – 69.4 = D+
87.5-89.4 = B+	63.5- 67.4 = D
83.5-87.4 = B	59.5 – 63.4 = D-
79.5-83.4 = B-	59.4 and below = failing
77.5 – 79.4 = C+	
73.5 – 77.4 = C	

We will have some assignments in class that you will keep in your journal/notebook.

Your grade is for you, it is an indicator of effort, participation, understanding of material, and time spent studying and paying attention. Your grade is not indicative of what you can achieve.

The final exam for this class will be **20 PERCENT** of your final grade. It is extremely important that you feel prepared and learn things from the whole trimester. Memorizing things just until we take the unit test will not work!!!!