

**American Government**  
**Ms. Hix (lhix@chsfalcons.org)**

**Course Purpose:** There is no more important duty of a citizen in a democracy than *participating*. But participation without *understanding* is hollow at best, dangerous at worst. During this course you will receive an understanding of the organization and function of government, in order to acquire a deeper meaning and appreciation of what it means to be an American citizen, and to prepare you to participate. This course will challenge you to identify the concepts that shape our government, and the roles they play in our lives.

**Textbook:** Magruder's American Government, Prentice Hall, 2005

**\*\*YOU ARE REQUIRED TO WRITE YOUR NAME INSIDE THE TEXT'S FRONT COVER**

**\*\*YOU ARE REQUIRED TO COVER YOUR TEXT & WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE OUTSIDE FRONT COVER**

**Course Curriculum:**

Unit 1: Foundations of American Government

- Chapter 1 – Principles of Government
- Chapter 2 – Origins of American Government
- Chapter 3 – The Constitution
- Chapter 4 – Federalism

Unit 2: Political Behavior

- Chapter 5 – Political Parties
- Chapter 6 – Voters & Voter Behavior
- Chapter 7 – The Electoral Process
- Chapter 8 – Mass Media & Public Opinion

Unit 3: The Legislative Branch

- Chapter 10 – Congress
- Chapter 11 – Powers of Congress
- Chapter 12 – Congress in Action

Unit 4: The Executive Branch

- Chapter 13 – The Presidency
- Chapter 14 – The Presidency in Action
- Chapter 15 – The Bureaucracy
- Chapter 16 – Financing Government
- Chapter 17 – Foreign Policy & National Defense

Unit 5: The Judicial Branch

- Chapter 18 – The Federal Court System
- Chapter 19 – Civil Liberties & First Amendment Freedoms
- Chapter 20 – Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights
- Chapter 21 – Civil Rights: Equal Justice Under Law

Extra Lessons:

- Comparative Political & Economic Systems (Chapters 22 & 23)
- State & Local Governments (Chapters 24 & 25)

## **Grading Policy:**

### Unit Tests

Each test will be worth 100 points (60%)

### Homework, Quizzes & Assignments

Worth up to 50 points each, depending upon the assignment. (40%)

### Assignments will include:

#### “Political Dictionary”

You’ll be quizzed on the vocabulary terms associated with each chapter. To understand this subject it is important to understand the terminology.

#### “Connecting Current Events”

At various times throughout the semester, you’ll be asked to bring in a news story that connects a government concept to a current event. You’ll need to attach a brief paragraph explaining the connection and present it to the class.

#### “Government Journal”

You’ll be asked to write down your thoughts and opinions on various topics that we’ll touch on throughout the semester. The journal entries are intended to be written during class. These are not full-blown researched essays, merely “think pieces” that will give you the opportunity to ponder various government & political-related topics that you may never have given any thought. **\*\*YOU WILL NEED TO BRING A SPIRAL NOTEBOOK TO CLASS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT** – the notebook will be kept in my room.

## **Binder & Planner:**

You will be responsible for keeping an organized binder and an up-to-date planner. **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE A DEDICATED 3-RING BINDER** clearly labeled for Government, and your CHS-issued planner, which you must bring to each class. **DO NOT** bring other class work.

## **Final Exam:**

A 100-question multiple choice test, each question worth 1 point

## **Final Grade:**

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter = 40%

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter = 40%

Final Exam = 20%

## **MAKE-UP WORK & ABSENCE POLICIES:**

- Late work is penalized 50%.
- If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to check my STI homework page for that day’s assignment, complete the assignment, and **turn it in the day you return to class**. If you have a question about the assignment, it is your responsibility to e-mail me your question. I check my e-mail frequently, but if I don’t see your question & answer it in a timely fashion, complete the assignment as best you can and bring your question to class.
- If you miss a class when an assignment was due, it is your responsibility to turn in that assignment **the day you return to school, not the day you return to class**.
- Some assignments will require they be turned in by the due date **even if you are absent**. If that’s the case, I will accept submission by e-mail by the scheduled class time. Assignments that fit into this category will be identified clearly for you in class.

## **TEST POLICIES:**

### Excused Absence Due to Illness

Anticipate taking the test immediately upon your return to school, usually after school or during a study hall period. It is your responsibility to see me **the day you return to school** – not the next class day – to schedule a make-up time.

### Planned/Scheduled Absence

If you miss a test for an approved, scheduled, and/or school-related purpose (such as a pre-scheduled medical appointment)... it is your responsibility to notify me *in advance* and make arrangements to take the test you will miss, either before or immediately after your scheduled absence, at my discretion.

**Unexcused Absences & Scheduled Absences Without Advanced Notice**

Tests missed as a result of unexcused absence may not be made up and will earn a test grade of zero. This policy also applies to all scheduled absences where you have not obtained permission to take the exam at a different time in advance.

**Class Rules:**

1. R-E-S-P-E-C-T, for the instructor & your classmates
2. Obey all school rules, including dress code
3. You will be required to store your cell phone in my “cell phone camp” inside my room during class. You will take your phone with you when you leave. If tell me you do not have a phone to “check” and I catch you with one during class, I will consider this a “lying” offense – subject to much harsher punishment than a simple cell phone violation.
4. Be to class on time & ready to work
5. Participate actively in all class activities & discussions
6. Enjoy yourself & open your mind to learning new things!

*AMERICAN GOVERNMENT – Ms. Hix*

**I have read the description of course policies and procedures, including the policies governing absence on test days, the scheduling of make-up tests, and due dates for assignments.**

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Student Signature

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Parent Signature