

## Course Syllabus

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### American Government CP

Spring Semester 2010

January 11, 2010 – May 21, 2010

Instructor:	Mr. John McDonnell	Office:	A.B. Miller High School Room F-6
Phone:	909-357-5800 x10531	Office Hours:	Monday through Friday, 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM and by appointment
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#### TEXT

McClenaghan, William A. *Magruder's American Government California Edition*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006. Print.

#### WEB SITE

Information about this class and current grades are available at:

**JMcDonnell.net**

#### DESCRIPTION

In this course, students apply knowledge gained in previous years study to pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government. In addition, students compare different systems of government in the world today, drawing on American history and other societies. This course should be viewed as the culmination of the civic literacy strand that prepares students to vote, to reflect on the responsibilities of citizenship, and to participate in community activities.

#### REQUIREMENTS

You will take lecture notes using the Cornell note format and maintain all class materials in a notebook. You will need to bring your textbook and notebook to every class meeting in order to participate in and receive credit for class activities.

#### RESOURCES

In addition to the textbook, various written resources will be provided in class. A wide variety of supplemental materials and activities related to each topic we study can be found at: **www.phschool.com**

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## ***American Government CP Course Syllabus (cont.)***

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Students are encouraged to make use of the Internet and other technology resources available in the A.B. Miller library, computer labs, and room F-6 during regular office hours and by appointment.

### **EVALUATION**

Your grade in this class will be based primarily upon your performance on written examinations. Examinations covering material presented in class and in assigned reading will be administered approximately every two weeks during regular class periods. Grades on these examinations as well as frequent multiple-choice quizzes will be based on a standard grading scale: 90-100% = A; 80-89%=B, etc.

In addition to written examinations, you will be evaluated on your participation in classroom activities, completion of in-class and homework assignments as well as completion of a semester project. Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Examinations and Quizzes	60%
Homework, Participation and Attendance	30%
Semester Project	10%

### **ABSENCE**

In the event of an absence, it is the responsibility of the student to determine what assignments need to be completed. The instructor will not devote class time to explaining assignments missed due to an absence; students are welcome to come in during office hours for this information.

Students will be afforded one day to complete make up work for each day of an excused absence. Assignments submitted after this period of time will be considered late.

Assignments turned in late will not receive full credit. Late work will not be accepted for unexcused absences.

Examinations missed during an excused absence must be completed on the first day you return to class.

Pursuant to District policy, students with excessive absences will be dropped from the course.

### **TERM PROJECT**

Specific details will be provided at a later date.

## ***American Government CP Course Syllabus (cont.)***

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### **FINAL EXAMINATIONS**

May 17 – 21, 2010

### **STUDY ASSISTANCE**

All students are encouraged to obtain additional assistance with class assignments and/or test preparation during regular office hours.

The instructor will also be available at other times by appointment.

### **A FEW MORE ABSURD, UNREASONABLE REQUIREMENTS**

These things should go without saying I suppose, but since some people prefer explicit instructions please take a moment to review the following:

1. **Arrive to class on time.** It's honestly insulting when students arrive late. They might as well hand me a note reading "I'd rather be in the hallway than in your class, please go die."
2. **Write in black ink.** Colored ink is okay, too... for your love letters.
3. **Use complete sentences.** Assignments that contain answers like "*they landed*" are not very meaningful. Answers like "*The Apollo 11 astronauts landed on the moon on July 20, 1969*" make much more sense.
4. **Do your own work.** Submitting the work of another as your own is known as plagiarism. This puts you on the fast track to expulsion in any respectable learning institution.
5. **Eat during lunch.** I honestly don't understand why anybody would think it is acceptable to eat during class. Would you eat in church?
6. **Deal with your own bodily functions.** You have a fundamental right as a human being to use a toilet when necessary. Geneva Convention Accords (Chapter 3, Article 29) dictate that prisoners of war are afforded this right and, of course, so are you. Do not ask me if you can use the restroom as denying you access would be a clear violation of your human rights – simply sign out for the pass when it is available. Please refrain from taking the pass during the first and last ten minutes of class to comply with school policy.
7. **Pay attention.** Everything in your life will be better if you do. Trust me.

### **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

I will be very happy to write a letter of recommendation to a prospective school or employer if you are earning an "A" in my class. If you are not earning an "A" you should work on improving your grade before asking me to sing your praises. If you do not intend to actually send the letter to someone and only want the letter to stick in a portfolio for another class, don't bother asking – this is a waste of time.

# ***American Government CP Course Syllabus (cont.)***

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## **COURSE OUTLINE**

This course follows the curriculum guidelines contained in the *California History and Social Science Framework* for twelfth-grade American Government.

### **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: Government By the People**

- Chapter 5: Political Parties
- Chapter 6: Voters and Voter Behavior
- Chapter 7: The Electoral Process
- Chapter 8: Mass media and Public Opinion
- Chapter 9: Interest Groups

### **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: Government at Work: The Bureaucracy
- Chapter 16: Financing Government
- Chapter 17: Foreign Policy and 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

### **Unit 6 - Comparative Political and Economic Systems**

- Chapter 22: Comparative Political Systems
- Chapter 23: Comparative Economic Systems

### **Unit 7 - Participating in State and Local Government**

- Chapter 24: Governing the States
- Chapter 25: Local Government and Finance