

# 11<sup>th</sup> Grade US Government

Mr. Berry

Room: 301

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## Course Description:

Welcome to U.S. Government. Together we will work our way through the basis of our governing structure by making connections between past and present. The goal of this class is to better understand our government, so that we can create change through the democratic process. Sitting back and saying “I don’t care” will only serve to hurt you and your community. If you don’t like something, you can change it.

This class looks to help students place themselves in the political spectrum and learn how they can participate to create change in our world. We also focus on injustice which is often the catalyst for political upheaval and ultimately a change to our form of government. Additionally, opening up to other ideas and listening instead of arguing is a key component to fully understand how our society works and where we can go next. Right now our country is very split and few will listen to someone they do not completely agree with. Some of you may be surprised by your agreement with others you never thought you would.

This class is about collaboration, open dialogue, discussion, debate, and close study into how and why our government and society acts and reacts the way they do. Many different people helped shape the U.S. we know today and without their achievements or actions we may live in a vastly different place. We must know the ins and outs of our government to know how to change things. Lastly, we will be open and active! Most of all I want you to find out what YOU believe in and search for ways to make sure those things happen.

## Class Expectations:

It is my expectation that all students be *respectful* of other students and the teacher as well. Respectful actions include being on time for class, being in uniform, having the needed materials, and being prepared to participate in class. Debates will occur in class but they will be handled as open-minded world citizens and dealt with professionally. You may disagree with another person but it is not your place to scream or yell at them. Please respect talking time and our speaking protocol.

Generalizations and negativity toward other people and cultures is not tolerated and we must treat all those we discuss with respect, even if we do not fully agree with their life or ideas. I cannot stress this enough.

## Grading:

Your final grade will comprise three categories. The categories have various weights but together they represent your mastery of the material and your contribution to your class and classmates.

- Assessments (70%)
  - Quizzes- these will be used 2-3 times per unit.
    - Retakes are offered for any grade under a C. Students will have to retake the ENTIRE quiz again and the format will be slightly different.
  - Projects- this will be our typical end of unit assessment and will involve both group and individual work. Some units will have smaller projects attached as well.
  - Papers- there will be several papers throughout the year for this class as writing is a large part of work in college so this course will seek to prepare you for what lies ahead.
  - Exit Tickets- we will have 2-3 exit tickets a week. These may seem small but they affect your grade quite a lot.
- Homework / In-class work (25%)
  - Homework will be given to either, practice a skill, prepare for a lesson we will cover, or reflect on a concept you have learned.
  - I will not assign homework every night; therefore, when I assign it, it must be completed to the best of your ability.
  - Homework will typically not be more than 30 minutes of work. Ever!
  - The majority of our work will come from in-class and time will be given daily to finish homework.
  - I suggest students keep all papers we fill out every quarter as they will be used as notes for quizzes and projects.
  - Late work will be accepted within the grading period but it will only be for half credit.
- Classroom Habits (5%)
  - Your attendance is needed to be a successful student at any level as is timeliness. Handle missed time with professionalism and make up for it.
  - Group work is vitally important to our class and every team member must carry their own weight and do their part. I am a stickler about this.
  - Participation will be judged by your class behavior. Being off task or neglecting your group will result in a lowered participation grade. Discussions will happen to correct behavior then points will be taken away if not fixed.
  - Daily bell work will also be a part of this grade.

## **Classroom Rules and Consequences:**

- Our class will be observing the school wide restorative practices strategy. By not being **Respectful and Responsible** will result in the following:
  1. A conversation about a behavior that is disrupting your or other student's learning.
  2. A warning that your behavior is beginning to become a problem for the class.
  3. An OSS Referral and a mediation to discuss how we can better work together.
- Tardiness will be addressed if it becomes a habit. You are responsible for daily bell work which will only be displayed to students on that day so attendance is a necessity for a good grade. Bell work points will be taken off if you are tardy.
- **Cell phones will not be used in class** Students will place their phones in the rack everyday. If a phone is being used in class Berry will ask for the phone and place it in an envelope. Depending, you will have it at the end of class or the day. If this continues to happen the student will be referred to OSS.
- Do not cheat or plagiarize on any homework, quiz or project. Duh! Any notice of this will result in a zero on the assignment or quiz. Further instances will result in a meeting with administration and parents.

## **Respect and Responsibility:**

All students will show **Respect** for your classmates and teacher. If the teacher says “**Respect**” in class this means that all actions should stop and attention needs to be paid to the teacher or fellow student who is speaking. **Responsibility** will be applied to all work and lecture done in the class. Students are **responsible** for the assigned work, projects, and quizzes while the teacher is **responsible** for creating lessons to make sure students can understand the content. If you do not understand something ask the teacher. He is pretty good at explaining things in different ways so everyone can understand.

## **Units:**

Week 1: Skill building and how to write for Government class.

Unit 1: Why even have a Government?

- The theories and basis of our government.
- Locke and Hobbes' views on law and human nature.
- Analysis of the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Constitution, and Bill of Rights.
- Create class Constitutions held during a constitutional convention.

## Unit 2: Political Parties and the Democratic Process

- Federalist and Antifederalist papers. Basis of our political parties.
- Finding our own political ideologies
- The Democratic and Republican switch
- How do different demographics vote?
- What is the deal with the Electoral college
- Voting
- Project of creating a political advertisement.

## Unit 3: Civic Responsibility

## Unit 4: The Constant Fight within our Government

**Signature that you agree to all parts of the syllabus.**

By signing this you show that you have read and fully agree to uphold the expectations of your Government course. If problems arise then Mr. Berry will refer back to this signature and the agreement you have made.

Student PRINT name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_