

“Without common ideas, there is no common action, and without common action men still exist, but a social body does not. Thus in order that there be society, and all the more, that this society prosper, it is necessary that all the minds of the citizens always be brought together and held together by some principle ideas”

Alexis de Tocqueville-Democracy in America

U.S. Government Course Information



Introduction

(1) *In United States Government, the focus is on the principles and beliefs upon which the United States was founded and on the structure, functions, and powers of government at the national, state, and local levels. This course is the culmination of the civic and governmental content and concepts studied from Kindergarten through required secondary courses. Students learn major political ideas and forms of government in history. A significant focus of the course is on the U.S. Constitution, its underlying principles and ideas, and the form of government it created. Students analyze major concepts of republicanism, federalism, checks and balances, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights and compare the U.S. system of government with other political systems. Students identify the role of government in the U.S. free enterprise system and examine the strategic importance of places to the United States. Students analyze the impact of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media on the American political system, evaluate the importance of voluntary individual participation in a constitutional republic, and analyze the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Students examine the relationship between governmental policies and the culture of the United States. Students identify examples of government policies that encourage scientific research and use critical-thinking skills to create a product on a contemporary government issue.*

(2) *To support the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills, the use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material such as the complete text of the U.S. Constitution, selected Federalist Papers, landmark cases of the U.S. Supreme Court (such as those studied in Grade 8 and U.S. History Since 1877), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, speeches, letters, and periodicals that feature analyses of political issues and events is encouraged.*

TEACHERS:

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classroom.google.com (open through Chrome, app in Webdesk/Digital Backpack)

- Log in using your school information – first.last.1@mypisd.net and password
- Click on the + in the upper right corner, and select “Join class”
- Enter code for your class period, see below

○ 6th Period: ytt2zho

○ 7th Period: jiupocb

TEXTBOOK: McGraw-Hill’s US Government - Our textbook is available online. Students will use their PISD network login to access the book and related assignments.

Viewing options:

- On campus:
 - PISD issued chromebook or student provided electronic device.
- At home via personal computer or chromebook:
 - Website: Students may log in through www.connected.pisd.edu and use their PISD username and password to log into the website
 - App: Digital backpack/webdesk tile

REQUIRED SUPPLIES: There will be usage of technology in the classroom setting through the Chromebooks issued to each student. Students will be expected to have their Chromebook EACH CLASS MEETING. Handheld devices may be used in the classroom setting in lieu of Chromebooks on a case-by-case basis as allowed by the instructor (or as dictated by curriculum). Students will be expected to use their technology (Chromebooks and/or handheld devices) responsibly at all times in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. Most daily grades (and selected major grades) will be posted,

accessed, turned in, and graded through Google Classroom. Official grades on daily and major assignments, which determine letter grades, grade point average, and matriculation, will only be accessible through Pinnacle.

CALENDAR AND OBJECTIVE SHEET: A calendar and objective sheet for each unit will be posted on the class' google classroom prior to the beginning of each unit. The objective sheet will list all topics that will be covered on the unit test.

GRADING POLICY:

60% - Major Grades

1. Unit Tests – multiple choice tests
2. Major Project/CAP -- student created projects

40% - Daily Grades = Class Activities and Homework – *It is the student's responsibility to read the calendar and keep up with due dates.*

LATE WORK: Students will have the opportunity to submit graded assignments for the loss of 10points for each day for 4 days. After the 4th day, if the assignment is submitted BEFORE the unit test, a max score of a 60 will be earned. Students who submit work for a unit after the unit's test will earn no more than a 50%. *It is the teacher's discretion to stop acceptance of late work the week prior to the end of the 9wk grading period so that teachers can have time to grade completed assignments.*

TUTORIALS: Individual tutorials are available, see google classroom or teacher for times.

MAKE-UP POLICY:

Make-up work is the student's responsibility. Check the calendar!

--Daily work: Students have **two days** to make up missed daily assignments for excused absences.

--Tests: Students who miss only the review day prior to the test will be **expected to take the test on the assigned day**. Students who miss the day of the test will take the test during class the **following day** while the other students work on test corrections.

-- **No notes** will be allowed on **make-up quizzes or tests**, even when allowed on the original quiz or test.

-- Students who miss the make-up day will have 1 week to arrange a makeup test appointment with their teacher. Only students with excused absences will be eligible to arrange a makeup appointment for missing the class make-up period.

RE-TESTING POLICY: Students will have the option to retest ONCE per quarter for any unit if the original unit test score is lower than desired. Students who complete the listed tasks will be eligible for re-testing. Students may earn full credit (up to 100%) on the retest. The grade earned on the retest will replace the original lowest test grade.

Test corrections will be completed in class on the following school day. Students wanting to take the quarter re-test must have completed unit test corrections, complete any missing assignments, and the unit review packets; bring the completed packetS on the day of the optional quarter test. **Thoughtful completion (and handwritten) of the packets are mandatory for retesting.**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: *"A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized*

communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students.”-Plano ISD Academic Achievement: Grading/Progress Reports To Parents (2016)

Any students caught plagiarizing (or copying from another student) classwork, homework, or test material will receive a “O” in the gradebook REGARDLESS OF THEIR ROLE IN THE INCIDENT. Further consequences for academic dishonesty can and will be applied when appropriate, and in accordance with campus and district policies.

CONTENT STATEMENT -- This class, to be properly informative and enriching to students, will delve into controversial topics and emotional issues. All students will be expected to participate in the discussion of all topics in good faith, and in a respectful, appropriate manner consistent with the Student Code of Conduct. Every instructor, student, and parent at this school holds some bias towards their own viewpoint. I will do my absolute best to present this course from as objective a viewpoint as possible. I aim to give students the facts, vocabulary, and context necessary to enable a view of the American government from a holistic perspective in hopes that they will be equipped to form their own thoughts and make their own decisions.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY USE -- The Government teachers want to help you learn personal responsibility when using electronic devices during class time. That being said, if a class period demonstrates to their teacher that cell phones and other electronic devices are distracting to learning then cell phones will be picked up by the teacher as needed (see below for additional information.).

- **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure an effective learning environment and academic integrity.
- **PURPOSE:** Instructional time is lost, and your child suffers when the teacher has to stop and ask a student to put away their cell phone. Students are often unaware how many times they access their vibrating cell phone during a class period.
- **PROCEDURE:** The teacher collects each cell phone at the beginning of class. Cell phones are kept in a designated “phone box.” The teacher distributes cell phones 5 minutes before the end of class.
- **Positive Consequence** - Student is not distracted and is more successful in class.
- **Negative Consequence** – Students who refuse to hand in their phone and are caught using it during class will have their phone sent to sub school for a parent to pick up.
- Teachers are not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones.
- **Research:**

<http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2011/09/cell-phones-in-classrooms-no-students-need-to-pay-attention264>

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/cell-phones-in-the-classroom-what-s-your-policy/>

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-03-06/health/sc-health-0306-cell-phone-gpa-20130306_1_text-messages-researchers-smartphone