

The Law and You

Mr. Tripodi
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www.mrtripodi.org

DESCRIPTION

"The Law and You" is designed to give students a fundamental knowledge of the American legal system. Students will leave this class with an understanding of how the courts – both civil and criminal – operate, and full knowledge of their rights within the system.

CONTENT

This class will focus on the fundamental question of all organized societies: How can government balance the right of the individual with the safety of the community at large? Students will study why law exists, a brief history of law, and civil liberties in the United States as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights – and limited by institutions like public schools.

Students will analyze legal cases – actual and hypothetical, historical and contemporary – to distill the inner workings of the American legal system. Of intense focus will be the criminal justice, the complex legal machinery that sorts the innocent and the guilty. Students will also consider practical legal issues, including DUI, jury duty, contract law, conflict resolution, self-defense, and the sharing and downloading of copyrighted material.

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Civics and government:

- 5.1.12: Principles and documents of government
- 5.2.12: Rights and responsibilities of citizenship
- 5.3.12: How government works

RESOURCES

Class website: <http://www.mrtripodi.org>
Current events (via newspaper, internet)
Legal dramas and dramatizations

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- **Folder or binder:** Students will receive many handouts, notetakers, supplemental readings, and content guides. It is the student's responsibility to collect these materials, and organize them as they see fit.
- **Pen or pencil:** No yellow, pink, lavender, or disappearing ink.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

1. **Homework and in-class assignments are** never "busy work." Consequently, everything assigned is chosen specifically to introduce or reinforce key ideas. A student's success hinges on completing homework and in-class work, and both should be taken quite seriously.
2. **Quizzes** are given at least once every two weeks, usually at 25 points each. Occasionally one will be unannounced. It is the student's responsibility to stay on top of the material.
3. **Mock trials** will occur roughly once a month. Details will be provided upon assignment.
4. **Tests** will be given at the end of each unit – roughly once every three weeks. Each test will be worth at least 75 points. A cumulative **final exam** will be given at the end of each semester.
5. **Projects** are assigned a maximum of once per grading period, and offer every student an opportunity to showcase his or her individual skills and creativity. Each project will be explained in depth upon assignment.

LATE WORK

I accept late work only until the Friday after which it is assigned. No late work will be accepted once the weekend has passed. Credit given for late work is half of what an on-time assignment would have been graded. *Homework submitted later the same day – or later in the class – is considered late.*

GRADING

According to district policies: A: 100-92%, B: 91-83%, C: 82-74%, D: 73-65%, E: below 65%. A 91.5% will be rounded to 92%. A 91.4% will be rounded to 91%.

CLASSROLL.COM

Assignments for each week will be noted online by the first school day of the week. Student grades will be updated online as soon as possible, depending on the length of the assignment.

Please monitor Classroll.com regularly. If your child is absent, this will also give you the opportunity to check on the assignment for that day. If you have lost your user classroll.com ID or password, please contact the high school office for a replacement.

MRTRIPODI.ORG

Assignments and class documents are **updated daily** at the class website, www.mrtripodi.org. This is a great convenience for many students and parents, but it also means that "I didn't know about the assignment" and "I lost my copy" are not acceptable excuses.

GUIDELINES/BEHAVIOR

We work bell-to-bell in my class. When the late bell rings, students should be quiet, in their seats, and ready to begin.

All facets of the Blackhawk Student Handbook apply to this class. Classroom expectations include promptness, readiness to work, and respect for self, for others, and for the learning environment. In short, students should adhere to Blackhawk's Expect/Respect policy.

CONTACT

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. You may reach me by telephone at 724-846-9600 or by email at tripodij@bsd.k12.pa.us