

# American Government

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## DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to be an American citizen? Why does government even exist, and how does it work? This course is designed to provide an understanding of our government, from its principled founding and the ideals that shaped this nation. Upon completion of the course, students will be prepared to enter the decision-making process of the electorate, will better understand how government functions on a national and local level, and will emerge an improved, well-informed citizen.

## CONTENT

American Government I:

- Role of government
- Origins of the U.S. government
- The U.S. Constitution
- Federalism
- Role and powers of congress
- Congress at work
- The presidency
- The executive branch at work
- Foreign policy and national security

American Government II:

- The federal court system
- Protecting civil rights
- Public opinion
- Interest groups
- Political parties
- The electoral process
- Comparing political and economic systems

## PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### History:

- 8.1.11: Historical analysis and skills development
- 8.2.11: Pennsylvania history
- 8.3.11: United States history
- 8.4.11: World history

### Civics and government:

- 5.1.11: Principles and documents of government
- 5.2.11: Rights and responsibilities of citizenship
- 5.3.11: How government works
- 5.4.11: How international relationships function

### Geography:

- 7.1.11: Geographic literacy
- 7.4.11: Interactions between people, places

## RESOURCES

Primary textbook: *American Government*; Holt, Reinhart, and Winston

Class website: <http://www.mrtripodi.org>

Textbook website: <http://go.hrw.com/hrw.nd/arbitr/pRedirect?project=hrwonline&siteId=695&pageId=6279>

## 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:** Blue, black, or gray ink/lead only, please.

## 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. **Tests** will be given at the end of each unit – roughly once every three weeks. Each test will be worth at least 100 points. A cumulative **final exam** will be given at the end of each semester.
4. **Projects** are assigned 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](http://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](mailto:tripodij@bsd.k12.pa.us)