

U.S. Government & Politics Syllabus

Miss Curtis: maddisonjcurtis@gmail.com

Welcome to an exciting semester of U.S. Gov. & Politics! My name is Miss Curtis, and I will be your teacher for this course. I am looking forward to our time together to learn and grow as both people and students. Government and politics can be very interesting and, at times, evoke a lot of emotion. I ask all of you to keep an open mind, respectfully consider different perspectives, and freely share your experiences and opinions. My hope is that we can create a classroom environment where everyone feels comfortable participating in thoughtful discussions, asking questions, and developing a deeper understanding of our government and political system.

Course Description: Students in AP U.S. Government and Politics study the foundations and structure of the U.S. government, including the Constitution, the relationship between the federal government and its citizens, and the role of political institutions in shaping public policy. The course explores topics such as civil liberties and civil rights, political participation, elections and political parties, public opinion, and the development of public policy. Students analyze political ideas, data, and primary and secondary sources to develop an understanding of how government functions and how citizens participate in the American political process. The course also emphasizes the development of critical thinking and political analysis skills that help students understand current issues and their impact on American society.

Course Goals: Goals of the course will include developing students' understanding of the principles, institutions, and processes of U.S. government and politics. Students will strengthen their ability to apply political concepts, analyze Supreme Court decisions, and evaluate political texts, data, and visual sources. Students will also develop their ability to evaluate evidence, consider different perspectives, and communicate their ideas effectively. Students will meet these goals through analysis and discussion of political texts and current issues, writing assignments, projects, debates, and various classroom activities.

Units of Study:

- 1) Foundations of American Democracy
- 2) Interactions Among Branches of Government
- 3) Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
- 4) American Political Ideologies and Beliefs
- 5) Political Participation

Required Materials: Students are expected to bring the following materials to class each day:

- Laptop/Tablet (Please talk to me if you do not have a device so we can make accommodations*)
fully charged
- Notebook paper
- Writing utensil
- Binder or folder for any notes or printed assignments/reading material
- School issued textbook (kept at home)

Grading Policy

Progress report and semester grades will follow the following scale, unless stated otherwise:

A: 93% and above

A-: 89% - 92%

B+: 87% - 88%

B: 83% - 86%
B-: 79% - 82%
C+: 77% - 78%
C: 73% - 76%
C-: 69% - 72%
D+: 65% - 68%
D: 60% - 64%
D-: 55% - 59%
F: 0% - 54%

Absences/Make Up Work/Homework

Students are expected to be in class every day. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed, including notes, readings, homework, and other assignments. You may check Jupiter or reach out to me directly via email to discuss missed work. Students will have as many days as they were absent to complete missed work, unless other arrangements have been made.

If you are present in class, homework is expected to be completed by the assigned due date. If there are extenuating circumstances that make an assignment deadline difficult to meet, **you must communicate with me** in advance so that we can create an appropriate action plan. Communication is essential; if I am unaware of a circumstance affecting your ability to complete an assignment, I cannot provide appropriate support, and the assignment may result in a zero.

Office Hours

For quick, clarifying questions, you are encouraged to reach out to me directly via email: maddisonjcurtis@gmail.com. Alternatively, for longer discussions, I am available via Zoom by appointment only. To schedule a Zoom meeting, please email me. I am most often available between 5 and 8pm on weeknights.

Ground Rules/Expectations

- 1) Be RESPECTFUL
- 2) Be HONEST
- 3) PARTICIPATE. This is a team effort and we all need to work together to get the most out of our lessons. Mutual respect will get us far together. On that note, should anything come up, being honest can only benefit the wellbeing of you and of this class. This includes academic integrity.
- 4) Arrive to class on time. You will have one warning, after that, points will be taken from your participation grade each tardy. Continued tardiness will result in a parent/teacher meeting and potential further disciplinary action.
- 5) You are expected to bring all materials necessary for learning, including the right attitude.
- 6) Use school appropriate/professional language in the classroom. We are fostering a healthy learning environment in this classroom and that involves keeping our space positive.
- 7) COMMUNICATE. I highly value communication, and this is a skill that will get you far in life. If there's something I should know, another way I can help you, or just something you want to share, you are always invited to communicate with me.

As a whole - No one has the right to interfere with the learning, safety or well-being of others in our classroom. Every person within the school environment has the right to complete their responsibilities without interference from others. Do what is expected of you and do it to the best of your ability.

Cell Phones & Electronic Device

Cell phones will be collected at the beginning of each class if and when privileges are being abused, at Miss Curtis' discretion. Cell phones may be allowed to be used when your assignment(s) for the day is/are complete and submitted, or when the assignment allows for its use.

Academic Integrity

I expect the work you submit in this class to be yours and for you to be proud of what you turn in! This is part of our honesty expectation. If you need more time on an assignment, talk to me! Don't compromise your academic integrity.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is not allowed. Copying homework or plagiarizing in any form and from any source will not be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing in any form, you will not earn credit for the assignment.

Academic integrity, in the context of **AI use**, means using AI tools ethically, responsibly, and as intended – to *support* your learning, not to bypass it. This implies producing work that is primarily your own, and appropriately acknowledging assistance received from AI. Unattributed use of AI-generated content, over-reliance on AI for your work, or using AI to avoid reading or analysis will be considered violations of our academic integrity policy.

Please sign & date below (digitally or by hand) and return no later than Monday, August 31st.
(In-person or via email). *Do not forget to turn this in with your Syllabus Quiz.*
